



# Opening Cracks for the Transgression of Social Boundaries: An Evaluation of the Gender Impacts of Farmer Research Teams in Honduras

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**Summary.** — Participatory agricultural platforms, such as farmer research teams and farmer field schools, offer the potential for change that goes far beyond agriculture. The paper reports on a mixed method approach to examining the gendered impacts of a long term farmer research project in Honduras. We show how collective action around food security has the potential to support gendered social change. We argue that mixed gender research teams provide a space where generative empowerment permits both women and men to challenge unequal gender roles and to open cracks for transgressing social boundaries.  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Studies of agricultural development show that participatory platforms such as farmer field schools and farmer research teams not only support a wide range of production outcomes but also point to broad socio-economic benefits, including empowerment (Classen *et al.*, 2008; Davis *et al.*, 2012; Friis-Hansen, 2008; Friis-Hansen & Duveskog, 2012; Van den Berg & Jiggins, 2007). Benefits accruing to women appear to occur at the convergence of certain characteristics common to participatory approaches. High initial drop-off rates from such initiatives noted in a number of studies (Classen *et al.*, 2008; Friis-Hansen, 2008; Sanginga, Tumwine, & Lilja, 2006) associated with the hard realities of experiential learning, effectively remove the “usual project joiners”, typically the least poor and most powerful who sign up on the expectation of free hand-outs, vacating a space for others, including women. In East Africa, where women are normally excluded from extension services, studies show that farmer field schools not only attract women but also reward female-headed households with better outcomes in the areas of crop productivity, livestock production, and related-income than male-headed households (Davis *et al.*, 2012), while farmer research teams, which were originally dominated by men, have been shown to fill up with women once men started dropping out (Sanginga *et al.*, 2006). However, given the breadth of social impacts—typically, increased participation in organizations and networks, greater self-confidence, enhanced decision-making—that contribute to empowerment, few studies have convincingly demonstrated empowerment to be a direct attribute of these approaches

(Van den Berg & Jiggins, 2007: 674; cf. Friis-Hansen & Duveskog, 2012). Given the substantial expansion of these platforms throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America, more studies are needed to provide an understanding of the breadth of social impacts and their relationship to empowerment. This study responds to the call for empirical evidence of what *actually* happens in development practice (Cornwall, 2002), particularly the *practice* of participatory development where claims of success in the past have been greater than evidence to support them (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). Specifically, we show how collective action around a concern where gender is of secondary importance has the potential to support gendered social change. We draw on Foucault’s (1986) concept of “heterotopias” (Jones & SPEECH, 2001 in Cornwall, 2002: 7) to argue

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that mixed gender research teams provide a space where both men and women can challenge unequal gender roles. The paper follows recent practitioners in understanding “empowerment” as “a journey rather than a product” (Cornwall & Edwards, 2010: 2).

The study is based on the findings of a mixed method approach to *social change* in communities targeted by a farmer research team project (local agricultural research committees [Spanish acronym, CIAL]), ongoing for more than 18 years, and flows from an earlier study (Classen *et al.*, 2008) that sought to assess the socio-economic impacts of the program. While the project, which is located in the highlands of north-central Honduras, was not set up as a “gender project”, it became one in which women had a strong participation. Along with marginalized men, women were encouraged to become actively engaged in searching for sustainable solutions to chronic food insecurity. Notwithstanding acknowledgment of women’s limited customary involvement in crop agriculture, the expectation was that women would bring their own needs and goals into the research and that these would likely be different to those of men. And over time, it was also recognized that women’s presence added to the effectiveness of the different groups (see Westermann, Ashby, & Pretty, 2005),<sup>1</sup> further encouraging the incorporation of women.

Ethnographic research over more than 15 years and interviews with women in these communities about the project, its activities, and agricultural impacts revealed a strong, joyous sentiment among women project participants, that they had more confidence, more friends, more knowledge, and more power in their families and communities. Quantitative research in 2004 affirmed gendered impacts. The study found correlations between project participation by men and women in local organizations, primarily farmer research teams, and perceptions that gender roles had changed in ways that supported increased “*libertad*”,<sup>2</sup> or freedom, for some women to engage in certain activities and their increased participation in household decision-making. Longitudinal data gathered since the quantitative study showed not only that sustained gender role change had occurred in households of women CIAL participants but also evidence of men’s unmistakable pride in their wives’ self-confidence and achievements, helping to confirm CIAL participation as the best explanation of gendered change. Here we report on how this change happened. In particular, we found the project aligned itself with the social context in ways that opened opportunities to challenge traditional gender inequalities for different women *and men* at different times and in different ways.

Critical enabling factors for opening small cracks of opportunity for gender change in the context of the CIAL project, we argue, include the unique “heterotopic” spaces (Foucault, 1986) created by the focus on collaborative research within project teams. The spaces created by mostly mixed-gender research teams were found to be less stringently gender-defined than spaces outside of the project and were important for increasing men’s confidence and respect for women’s capabilities, increasing women’s *libertad* from their husband’s authority to make decisions, and for increasing women’s self-esteem, enabling them to take advantage of new opportunities for education, participation, or action. Additionally, emphasis on building strong social relations within the agricultural research groups enabled participants to face resistance to gender change from both men and women in their communities. In discussing these findings and the extent to which change extended beyond the safe spaces of the project (Kesby, 2005), this paper also provides methodological insights for measuring and understanding gendered change as defined and valued by

women in project communities as occurring within *and beyond* the space of participatory programs.

## 2. GENDER EMPOWERMENT

The literature on gender empowerment is extensive and replete with contested meanings (Batliwala, 2007; Cornwall & Edwards, 2010; Rowlands, 1997; World Bank, 2002, among others). As Mosedale (2005) reports, however, there is agreement that empowerment generally implies that one group or individual is disempowered relative to others, that it must be claimed rather than given, it includes making decisions of importance to the claimant(s) and having the necessary agency to carry it out, and it is a process and not a product (p. 244). While women have been the main focus of empowerment owing to their powerlessness relative to men, as Ahmed (2008) points out, marginalized women seeking to make change in their own and their families’ lives, almost always require change in their spouses’ attitudes and practices to achieve this. This calls for more attention to facilitating change in men as well as in women in order to achieve gender equality (Chant & Guttmann, 2000; Cleaver, 2002; Cornwall, 2000, 2007).

Notwithstanding recent support for the involvement of men, the focus of gender empowerment initiatives to date has generally been on women-only groups. Women-only groups are recognized as being instrumental in building women’s self esteem, especially in cultural contexts where they are isolated from relationships outside the immediate family (Agarwal, 2000, 2001; Kabeer, 1985). Researchers who support the formation of women’s groups, however, also acknowledge that they may sharpen existing gender segregation and, to the extent that they are regarded as “women’s groups”, in some ways may help to perpetuate women’s subordination (Agarwal, 2001) and traditional gender-specific activities (Jakimow & Kilby, 2006). Segregated social networks may provide other disadvantages for women given the gendered nature of social capital (Molyneux (2002), and women’s exclusion from more powerful men’s networks (Silvey & Elmhirst, 2003). Additionally, participants of women’s groups may face difficulties sustaining empowered performances once they are exposed to different sets of power relations (Kesby, 2005: 2057). Problems arising from segregation, Agarwal (2001) suggests, may be overcome by integrating established women’s groups into mixed groups with the help of external facilitation to safeguard women’s position (p. 1643–4). This requires ensuring a critical mass (calculated to be between one-quarter to one-third) of women to permit them a strong voice in mixed groups (Agarwal, 2010).

One obvious benefit of mixed gender groups is that they have the potential to highlight the *generative* nature of power (Nelson & Wright, 1995). The generative conception of empowerment is clearly found in Freire’s (1972) ideas of “*concientización*”, although he ignored gender entirely as a component part of human liberation (Batliwala, 2007). *Concientización* involves expanding a person’s capacity for thinking critically about their oppression by combining action with reflection. As an educator, Freire believed that dialog between teacher and student was the key to liberation. The teacher was a facilitator who created “a space in which the oppressed educated themselves and each other” (Blackburn, 2000: 9). The “space” created by mixed gender groups may, in particular, help to increase the *visibility* of decision-making options available to women *and men* within “an expanding framework of information, knowledge and analysis” (Batliwala, 1993 in Rowlands, 1997: 23), and illustrate that empowerment is not necessarily a zero-sum game. In other

words, if the exercise of informed choice is recognized as part of the *expansion* of human capacities, mixed gender groups may demonstrate that the growth of women's power does not have to come at men's expense.

Notwithstanding recognition that empowerment involves an ongoing process of learning, the critics charge that it has increasingly been subverted in favor of measurable outcomes that are quick and easy to evaluate as results-based management has come to dominate development (Batliwala, 2007). This is most evident in the support for micro-finance programs that narrowly focus on service provision, especially prevalent in South Asia (Batliwala, 2007). However, in the absence of change in the allocation of property rights, such programs may actually disempower women and in some cases increase the risk of violence against them (Garikipati, 2008). Certainly Holvoet (2005) study shows that individual credit provision does nothing to challenge existing patterns of decision-making, independent of whether men or women receive it. However, when women's membership in micro-finance groups is combined with financial and social group facilitation, household decision-making shifted from men-only to joint and women-only decisions, and longer term group membership and social intermediation increased these tendencies (Holvoet, 2005, p. 97). Kabeer and Haq (2009) report that changes in awareness by women and men involving long term collective learning, observation, analysis, and reflection around social injustice issues in Bangladesh led to changes in household decision-making and a willingness on the part of some of the men to listen to their wives (p. 44). In this case, gender and class awareness training served to promote solidarity and respect among both men and women and to bring about changes in customary gender practices (p. 60), turning "communities of fate" ascribed by birth, into "communities of practice" (p. 49).

The trigger for bringing both women and men into a "community of practice" where empowerment is generative in nature is arguably best provided by collective action around a concern where gender is of secondary importance. In Honduras, collective action through farmer research teams, CIALs, focused on food insecurity has united women and men in an ongoing search for local solutions over two decades (see Humphries, Jiménez, Sierra, & Gallardo, 2008). Today there are 105 adult and youth CIALs<sup>3</sup> involving 486 women/girls and 627 men/boys supported by la Fundación para la Investigación Participativa con Agricultores de Honduras (FIPAH).

The methodology for CIALs was developed at the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture in the late eighties under the leadership of Jacqueline Ashby (Ashby *et al.*, 2000). Based on problem identification by the group/community, experiment design, evaluation and analysis, feedback to the community, and reflection, the methodology involves CIAL members in a continuous cycle of learning, action, and reflection. Since 2000, Honduran CIALs have taken up participatory plant breeding as a continuation of the experiment process, developing multiple maize and bean varieties for local release (Humphries *et al.*, 2005, 2008). CIALs and farmer field schools (FFS) share a number of commonalities, but also differ according to Braun, Thiele, and Fernandez (2000) with FFS tending to focus more on inductive learning associated with effective integrated pest management and general agroecological education compared to a more deductive learning style derived from controlled comparisons practiced by the CIALs. Additionally, while FFS are formed for a finite period, CIALs continue to experiment without a specific time frame. More recent studies of FFS in S.E. Asia, however, show that they too may engage in experimentation, either during or after the schools have ended, as well as in more

specialized participatory plant breeding over long periods (Pellegrina *et al.*, 2006; Van den Berg & Jiggins, 2007; Visser, Bertuso, Smolders, & Dana, 2006), while in Honduras CIALs form farmer field schools from time to time as funding for these becomes locally available. In other words, there has been a convergence in practice between the two platforms. Both provide a "space" where gender is subordinate to the immediate priority of resolving problems of food insecurity within local environmental and institutional constraints.

### 3. SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN HONDURAS

In Honduras, gender relations are strongly shaped by the nature of the rural context and poverty that dictate the livelihoods of a large percentage of the population. Approximately one half of the country's 7.5 million inhabitants resides in the countryside, making Honduras one of most rural economies in Latin America and also one of the poorest (FAO, 2008). Eighty per cent of the rural population is located on hillsides where average per capita daily income is estimated to be as low as \$0.65 and the poverty rate as high as 90% (World Bank, 2004). Two-thirds of rural households own less than seven hectares of land and are generally among the extremely poor, although larger hillside properties far from roads are no guarantee of wealth. The mountainous terrain that defines the vast majority of the Honduran landscape has led to the concentration of infrastructure along a band across the northern coastal plains and down the center of the country, leaving most rural communities isolated from this development artery and lacking access to roads, markets, and basic services, such as health, secondary education, potable water, sanitation, electricity, etc. (World Bank, 2004). The concentrated nature of development has also severely limited the share of income accruing to rural families from nonfarm employment (Reardon, Berdegue, & Escobar, 2001) leaving the vast majority of households to derive their livelihoods from subsistence agriculture, especially from the cultivation of maize and beans, which is characterized by extremely low yields relative to other Central American countries (Ruben & Van den Berg, 2001) and pervasive food insecurity (United Nations World Food Program, 2010).

### 4. AGRICULTURE AND GENDER RELATIONS

The isolation and poverty of most small-scale farmers has perpetuated traditional agriculture in Honduras. Until quite recently, slash and burn *milpa* (subsistence) agriculture was often conducted at considerable distance from the home as land was rotated in and out of fallow (Humphries, 1998; Jansen, 1998). The nature of traditional agriculture has undoubtedly influenced the division of labor. While men have worked in physically demanding tasks often far from the house, women's work has generally been confined to the home: they have risen before dawn and made up large batches of corn tortillas for the men to take to the *milpa*, while they stayed to mind the home, taking care of children and small livestock, and attending to men's needs when they returned. Thus in Honduran rural households relying on *milpa* agriculture, men and women have often known little about each other's work (Bradshaw, 1995; Roquas, 2002; Sturzinger & Bustamente, 1997).<sup>4</sup> This division of labor associated with *milpa* agriculture was quite similar throughout most of Central America and in parts of Mexico until more recent decades. And it is in Honduras, where the population is more heavily concentrated in the rural sector than elsewhere in the region that gender patterns



continue to be characterized as more “traditional” compared with neighboring countries (Ortega Hegg, Centeno Orozco, & Castillo Venerio, 2005).

The 2005 study of masculinity conducted by Ortega Hegg *et al.* for the United Nations, surveyed 4,790 men in four Central American countries—Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica—to gauge “representations of paternity”, understood as perceptions about the hierarchy within the family, sexuality and ultimately, a vision of the world (p. 173). The traditional notion of “paternity” or masculinity, is conceived by respondents in biological terms, encompassing the idea that man’s role is that of indisputable family head and responsible—as the material provider—for the welfare of the family. As a “right” bestowed by biology, men are perceived as having ultimate authority within the household.

This “natural division” between males and females is reflected in a conception of the world governed by God, over which human beings have little influence. Thus it is natural to have wealth and poverty coexisting in a society; natural disasters are God-given and certain diseases the result of supernatural forces; success in life is a matter of luck. In short, human beings are conceived as having little control over events. Rather they are part of the natural order and life is a matter of chance (p. 175). Needless to say, for those mired in poverty this conception of the world, governed entirely by natural rather than social forces, leaves little room for optimism and is commonly associated with what is referred to as *conformismo*—a level of fatalism or resignation toward events over which one is considered to have no control (p. 67) (see also Classen *et al.*, 2008).

This traditional view of the world is associated with poverty and is most marked among men with the least amount of education, who largely reside in rural areas (Ortega Hegg *et al.*, 2005, 61–62; 167). Among the four Central American countries surveyed, Honduras has the highest percentage of the population living below the poverty line in the rural sector where access to education has been least adequate (p. 53). It also exhibits the most traditional profile of masculinity with 61% of men conforming to the traditional representation of *paternidad*, compared to 52% of Salvadoran men, 49% of Nicaraguan men, and 27% of Costa Rican men (Ortega Hegg *et al.*, 2005: 143, Table 28).

While only men were included in the survey described above, attitudes of Latin American women have been described as a counter-image to those encapsulated by *paternidad*. Earlier referred to by Stevens (1998) as *Marianismo*, the concept described women whose ideal characteristics lay in their spiritual strength, infinite capacity for self sacrifice and humility, and their moral superiority to men. And while the essentialism inherent in the Marian stereotype detracts from its usefulness in describing gender characteristics of women in the region, there are undoubtedly elements of it that do resonate with women’s lives in isolated rural areas. This may be particularly the case in Honduras given findings demonstrating the predominance of the traditional masculine profile.

Certainly, the lives of most poor, rural Honduran women continue to be focused on the private sphere, their homes and their families, often with limited opportunity to access activities outside. Roquas (2002) and Rowlands (1997) both describe communities in the department of Santa Barbara in northwestern Honduras where women, constrained by the four walls of their homes and often isolated from other women outside their immediate families, are forced to confront laws and customs that are stacked in favor of men. Nevertheless, as Roquas points out, women generally express an aversion to taking on work in the fields, which they regard as men’s

work and about which they know little to nothing (p. 74–75). Thus their desire to have individual title to land to protect them against abandonment by husbands and sons is complicated by the absence of a direct relationship to the land, in a country where the concept of land-to-the-tiller is firmly entrenched in the culture and reflected in inheritance patterns (Roquas, 2002, Chapter 5). In this case, conformity (*conformismo*) to particular femininities shaped by dominant representations of exaggerated masculinities, serve to undermine women’s bargaining power within the household and to jeopardize their long term sense of social security.

## 5. RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

The study conducted in the area of Yorito, Yoro, in northern Honduras, sought to evaluate changes in women’s perception of their gender roles and identities as part of a series of broad assessments conducted during 2002 and 2011 of an on-going participatory agricultural research program involving women and men organized in CIALs (see Classen *et al.*, 2008). The evaluation of gender relations sought to understand how women articulated positive change in their lives and their perceptions of how and why gender change occurred, and subsequently, how these women’s husbands viewed the changes. This was explored using a mixed-method approach to evaluation including a survey, individual structured and unstructured interviews, ethnographic field notes over the past 15 years, focus groups, and life histories of participants. The survey questions asked specifically about women’s perception of *libertad* (in essence, liberty granted to them by their husbands) to engage in a range of activities and how changes in *libertad* had affected their *decision-making power* in a variety of arenas, both related to the agricultural research program as well as beyond it, impacting on gender relations and perceptions of femininities and masculinities more generally. The decision to use the variables of *libertad* and decision-making was made by local people and aimed to measure impact within and beyond the space of the project. Women and men both employ the term *libertad* as an idiom of women’s relative freedom and of men’s authority, much like the above-cited study by Ortega Hegg *et al.* (2005) utilized the concept of *paternidad*. *Libertad* expresses the constraints on women’s freedom imposed by local masculinities; it cannot be translated as liberty without understanding these contextual constraints. We have elected to keep in its Spanish original as a reminder of this. The concept of *libertad* is frequently contrasted with *libertinaje* (libertine) by local women, and while the former commands dignity and respect, the latter categorically does not. Thus notwithstanding the constraints on women’s freedom implicit in *libertad*, it is also paradoxically an expression of dignity and trust since men, who do not respect and trust their wives, restrict their *libertad* in multiple ways. At the same time, women, who have internalized such restrictions, commonly reject opportunities to challenge them and instead regard women who choose to do so, as morally deficient, and occasionally as outright libertines.

## 6. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

### (a) *Qualitative methods*

In 2002 a Master’s student conducted 36 informal interviews with CIAL members to identify local project impact categories. The respondents were purposively selected to represent

a diverse range of participants on various social and economic factors. Staff of the facilitating nongovernmental organization, FIPAH, and the researcher facilitated organized groups in seven CIAL communities to prioritize impact indicators, and to identify unexpected project effects. Active learning tools (Simons, 1997; Stalheim-Smith, 1998) assisted in eliciting dialog during these activities. Descriptions of the two most significant changes affecting each participant were written down on cards (assisted if needed) by each participant at the end of each focus group. Follow-up structured interviews with 36 people (purposely selected from the focus groups to represent the greatest variation among participants, and, in particular, to target shy or more reserved participants) served to cross-check the information gathered, capture negative aspects arising from collective action, and other issues associated with group activities (Classen, 2003).

#### (b) Quantitative methods

Indicators of gender-related impact identified during the interviews and focus groups were incorporated into a survey. Key gender questions asked men and women about gendered roles in their households and communities, about their supportiveness of women working in agriculture, about participation and leadership positions of men and women, and about their confidence in their agricultural knowledge. Women alone were asked about their *libertad* to engage in certain activities and their involvement in decision-making at various levels in their household and community. The survey was delivered in 2004 by a group of 10 local, high school students,<sup>5</sup> trained in interview techniques, to over 300 randomly selected project participants and nonparticipants in 10 project communities with over 5 years of experience with the CIAL, as well as in two counterfactual communities. The latter were subsequently discarded from the analysis because of differences from CIAL communities, best illustrated by their failure to ever request a CIAL. While selection bias is inevitably a concern when pro-

ject members self-select, as CIAL members do, a previous study (Classen *et al.*, 2008) showed that once the "usual project joiners" dropped out after initial project implementation, statistical differences were not significant between CIAL participants and nonparticipants across a wide range of socio-economic variables.<sup>6</sup>

Statistical analyses were performed on survey data using SPSS version 12.0 using student's *t*-test to compare responses from participants and nonparticipants and Mann-Whitney *U* to look at differences in different household level patterns of participation to understand whether a husband-only, or a wife-only, or both husband and wife from the same household participating in a mixed-gender group, had an impact on gendered patterns of behavior at the household level. Qualitative data collected in the survey and other ethnographic data were linked with this data to help us better understand why and how change had, or in some cases had not, occurred.

#### (c) Project histories

Life/Project histories of 16 male and 15 female project participants, recorded for a separate research initiative in 2006 (ASOCIAL & Classen, 2008) were coded with Nvivo qualitative analysis software to identify how and why gender-related changes occurred.

#### (d) Follow-up interviews with men

In 2011, as a follow-up to previous research, a local graduate of the Honduran national university was contracted to conduct structured interviews with husbands of female CIAL members. 19 interviews were conducted with men whose wives had seven or more years (average 10 years) in a CIAL. These enabled further understanding of men's attitudes toward their wives' involvement in the CIAL program and how women's membership had affected gender roles over time within their households.

Table 1. Perceptions of the change in role of women in family and society

Changes in the role of women in family and society...		Women changed role to make informed choices (%)	Neutral or no change (%)	P-value (Pearson's Chi square)*	HH participation characteristics	Women changed role to make informed choices (%)	Neutral or no change (%)	P-value (Pearson's Chi square)*
Female respondents	CIAL participant (n = 30)	90.0	10.0	0.000	Husband and wife (n = 14)	100.0	0.0	0.000
					Wife only (n = 16)	81.3	18.8	
	Nonparticipant (n = 72)	27.8	72.2		Husband only (n = 9)	44.4	55.6	
					Nonpart HH (n = 63)	8.2	91.8	
Male respondents	CIAL Participant (n = 26)	69.2	30.8	0.009	Husband and wife (n = 11)	81.8	18.2	0.001
					Husband only (n = 15)	60.0	40.0	
	Nonparticipant (n = 62)	38.7	61.3		Wife only (n = 10)	80.0	20.0	
					Nonpart HH (n = 52)	30.8	69.2	

\* Significant at 95%.

7. GENDER RESULTS

A series of open-ended questions in the survey asked respondents to discuss gendered role change. An overwhelming theme emerging from the responses was that women are increasingly making more informed decisions to leave the house, participate with local organizations, take on leadership roles in the community, manage household finances and make agricultural decisions, and they want to do even more of these things (Table 1). The table below shows that women's ability to make such informed choices is strongly correlated with participation in the CIAL and that both female and male respondents from households in which both men and women participate were the most likely to perceive an increase in women's engagement in informed decision-making.<sup>7</sup>

Analysis of the qualitative and survey data revealed that women recognize four broad barriers to their ability to make informed choices in their lives. These were: (a) a lack of opportunity to join in economic development initiatives conventionally targeted at men, (b) constraints on women's freedom imposed by local masculinities, referred to as *libertad*, (c) conformity (*conformismo*) to traditional domestic roles among women, limiting social interactions and curbing friendships, (d) limited access to knowledge and thus low self-confidence in women's ability to make good choices. In the results sections below we therefore integrate the qualitative and survey results with respect to "organizational opportunities to challenge gender roles", "women's perceptions of *libertad*", "women's resistance to challenging gender inequalities" and

"women's role in decision-making", comparing participating and nonparticipating women and household participation characteristics (namely, husband and wife participating in the CIAL together, husband-only and wife-only participants, and nonCIAL participants). Drawing on the extensive qualitative data gathered ethnographically, in interviews, open-ended survey questions, and through long term observations, we begin to understand the overlap of some of these barriers and how and why barriers were alleviated for many participating women. Pathways for opening cracks for men and women to challenge gender inequalities will be elaborated on in the discussion.

(a) *Opportunities for women to challenge traditional gender roles*

In rural areas of Honduras, there have been few opportunities for women to get involved with organizations that provided the training to allow them to contribute to livelihood improvement. This reflected both a lack of projects designed to involve women but was also because men, and women themselves, saw women's roles as being confined to the domestic sphere with limited engagement outside it. As various CIAL members explained:

Before the CIAL, women would not go out anywhere because the men were very traditional. The women here were not organized. They were stuck (*metido*) in the kitchen making tortillas and cooking beans. If we went to a meeting, only men spoke, only the men would take part, and we would sit there quietly. An untrained woman does not matter to anyone (ASOCIAL & Classen, 2008).

Table 2. Relationship between CIAL participation and association with various local institutions, 2004

	CIAL participation	N	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std. Dev.
Men**	Participant	32	3.06	0	7	1.759
	Nonparticipant	73	1.43	0	6	1.433
Women**	Participant	33	4.0	1	12	2.64
	Nonparticipant	77	.94	0	8	1.331

\*\* Indicates significance at 99% (t-test) (Classen et al., 2008).

Table 3. Perceptions of the change in role of men in family and society

Changes in the role of men in family and society...		Men changed role in support of women (%)	Neutral or no change (%)	P-value (Pearson's Chi square)*	HH participation characteristics	Men changed role in support of women (%)	Neutral or no change (%)	P-value (Pearson's Chi square)*
Female respondents	CIAL participant (n = 32)	78.1	21.9	0.000	Husband and wife (n = 16)	87.5	12.5	0.001
					Wife only (n = 16)	68.6	31.3	
	Nonparticipant (n = 74)	36.5	63.5		Husband only (n = 9)	33.3	66.7	
					Nonpart HH (n = 65)	8.2	91.8	
Male respondents	CIAL Participant (n = 30)	83.3	16.7	0.000	Husband and wife (n = 13)	92.3	7.7	0.000
					Husband only (n = 17)	76.5	23.5	
	Nonparticipant (n = 68)	36.8	63.2		Wife only (n = 12)	50.0	50.0	
					Nonpart HH (n = 56)	33.9	66.1	

\* Significant at 95%.

Before, if you visited a house, the woman would hide or close the door and only if the husband was at home could you obtain any information.

However, as a leading male farmer and project promoter explained this situation has changed:

Now it is astonishing! Look at how many CIAL groups are managed by women, including coordinator and treasurer positions. ... Have you noticed how they speak, how they defend themselves when someone attacks them? If the men humiliate the women, the women of the CIAL can defend themselves because they feel important, they feel like persons.

The CIAL helped to open a door to the participation of women in organizations. As one woman's husband described it:

One change that is noticeable is that the women who form part of a CIAL are preferred by other groups, like the community committees (*patronatos*), water committees, school parent groups, etc. because they are trained to carry out responsibilities—whatever the position.

Results of survey questions posed to *both men and women* show that CIAL participants have become organizational joiners since entering the CIAL at a rate that significantly outstrips nonparticipants. CIAL members, especially women, have joined multiple organizations with various objectives, moving from extremely marginalized positions in their communities to positions of connectedness. While only half (.52) of CIAL women members had even a single organizational linkage prior to joining the CIAL, by 2004 they had an average of 4; male CIAL members increased their linkages from less than one (.94) prior to CIAL membership to 3 in 2004. This was significantly different to nonmembers who had just 1.4 and .94 linkages for men and women respectively in 2004 (Classen *et al.*, 2008).

Women's motivation for joining organizations reflects what they perceive to be the most important benefit from the CIAL project: the friends and networks they have gained. When asked about the most significant/important change resulting from the project, we saw a strong gendered difference in the ranking of change by CIAL participants. While 61% of the two most significant changes mentioned by men were agricultural in nature and 35% were social, for women 57% were social in nature and 40% were agricultural. Agricultural changes mentioned by women included learning new farming techniques, participation in making agricultural decisions with their husbands, learning how to take better care of chickens, and more generally their active involvement in agricultural labor with their husbands, often for the first time. Social changes included: making friends, learning to leave the house unattended, leaving the house to do something outside, learning to be able to present/talk in front of a group, learning/knowing our rights, learning to be timely, learning to be organized and to have confidence to join other organizations, collaborating with women in other efforts including bread baking, sewing, and learning new recipes. Many of these activities were embedded in statements that involved doing them with other women, even when the CIAL was mixed gender. Notwithstanding the importance of agricultural activities in the CIAL, women considered the social activities associated with the CIAL as being the most important. And even the changes noted in their agricultural involvement, were generally qualified by the social context (e.g., working in the field together with their husbands, etc.), making it hard to distinguish between what was social and what was agricultural. By contrast, when men talked about agricultural changes they focused on specific activities, such as learning use of better yielding crop varieties, use of live barriers to prevent erosion, farming using contours, learning to recognize different plant diseases and

insects, knowledge about fertilizer applications, etc. And although men mentioned social outcomes from their involvement in the CIAL, (e.g., feeling proud now that they can speak openly with others, not being embarrassed to speak in front of others, learning to be united and work as a group, learning to think about the future, having an objective, new friendships, and more caring among neighbors) overall, their comments on the benefits of improved social relations were linked to the improvement of farming, while for women, these priorities were reversed and their new farming skills served to improve their social relationships. This suggests that gendered role change must be understood within the framework of different priorities put forward by men and women.

#### (b) *Women's perceptions of changes in libertad*

In Honduras, rural women experience limited *libertad* to engage in activities outside the home. In a project-history interview, one female project leader recalled,

I remember [in 1996] that I had to invite women in order to organize the group but since I knew how people were, [I knew that] one had to convince not the women, but instead the men first! Men were *jefes* (heads) of the home.

When asked generally to discuss role change of men in the family and society an important theme was an increase in men's supportiveness of women's engagement in nontraditional activities. This perception of role change is directly correlated with CIAL membership.

When we asked women about *libertad* granted to them by their husbands to engage in various activities,<sup>8</sup> a significant difference was found between participants and nonparticipants with the former perceiving themselves to have much more *libertad* than nonparticipants to "occupy positions in the community", "work outside the home", and "attend workshops outside the community" (Table 4). The majority of women, from both member and nonmember households, feel that they have *mucha libertad* to work in agriculture with their husbands and also to visit friends and neighbors and over 50% of both participants and nonparticipants felt they had *libertad* to administer household budgets. There are no significant differences between the two groups for these three variables. Despite women's perceptions of having *mucha libertad* to engage in these activities, most women do not engage actively in agriculture and many feel unable to leave the house at will to make local visits, notwithstanding their supposed *libertad* to do so. This is corroborated by the finding that nonparticipating women do not play a role in agricultural decision-making (Table 7).

When those who felt they had *libertad* were asked to explain in open-ended questions "why" and "how" they felt they had *libertad*, significantly more participants than nonparticipants for each of the seven *libertad* variables (even those in which we did not see a significant difference between participants and nonparticipants in the actual number perceiving themselves to have *libertad*) explained that their husbands have granted them greater *libertad* to engage in a given activity over the previous 5 years and attributed it to various aspects of their participation with the CIAL project and sometimes other organized groups in the community (Table 5). This would suggest that lower levels of *libertad* may be an incentive for some women to join the CIAL.

Semi-structured survey questions with women participants who have become active in agriculture reveal that the reason for the change relates to their sense of competence to carry out the work:



Table 4. Women's perception of level of *libertad* afforded them by their husbands: comparing participants and nonparticipants

How much <i>libertad</i> do you have to...		Much (%)	Little (%)	None (%)	P-value (Pearson's Chi-square)*
Occupy positions in community	CIAL participant (n = 30)	63.3	30.0	6.7	0.029
	Nonparticipant (n = 71)	43.6	25.4	31.0	
Take on paid employment	CIAL participant (n = 30)	56.7	33.3	10.0	0.003
	Nonparticipant (n = 70)	38.6	17.1	44.3	
Attend workshops outside community	CIAL participant (n = 30)	63.3	33.3	3.3	0.001
	Nonparticipant (n = 70)	37.1	21.4	41.4	
Participate in local organizations	CIAL participant (n = 30)	63.3	36.7	0.0	ns (0.056)
	Nonparticipant (n = 72)	50.0	33.3	16.7	
Administer household finances	CIAL participant (n = 30)	63.3	30.0	6.7	ns
	Nonparticipant (n = 72)	50.0	26.4	23.6	
Visit neighbors and friends	CIAL participant (n = 30)	70.0	30.0	0.0	ns
	Nonparticipant (n = 71)	71.8	26.8	1.4	
Work on farm with husband	CIAL participant (n = 30)	86.7	13.3	0.0	ns
	Nonparticipant (n = 72)	84.7	8.3	6.9	

Female-headed HH have been removed since *libertad* is defined by women primarily in relationship to male household heads.

\*Significant at 95%.

Before I only worked in the house and now I know how to work in the fields. Because I am organized in the CIAL we are taught how to work in crops and have better relationships.

I have always had *libertad* but before I didn't like agriculture and now I do and I have a lot of *libertad* to work in my parcel. I belong to a CIAL and the things we are taught about agriculture motivate me a lot.

Husbands of CIAL members reiterate this sense of their wives' new competence in agriculture:

Before she didn't know anything about crops; today she is an expert in this area. Instead of paying for labour, my children and my wife help me in the fields and the money stays at home.

Now she works beside me, like a man. She isn't afraid of the sun. This is something that she didn't do before.

When disaggregated by household participation with the CIAL, we learned that despite gender equity training and discussions in the CIAL, change in *libertad* occurred when wives were themselves directly involved in the mixed groups. Husband's participation alone did not influence *libertad* from the perspective of their nonparticipating wives for any of the seven *libertad* variables (Table 5). Additionally the participation of husbands and wives together seems to be important for explaining women's *libertad* to "occupy positions in the community", "take on paid employment", and "visit neighbors and friends".

Those women, who previously said they could not leave the house to visit friends, to participate in local organizations, or take on paid employment and now do so, often attributed this to a change in their own self-confidence or view of themselves and explained the importance of their own participation in helping foster that confidence. Women said:

Before I was afraid to even say my name when someone asked but now no, because [the CIAL] advised us that we should value ourselves as women and we should lose the fear that we can't contribute to making positive change in our lives.

One man explained:

Before she [my wife] was much quieter, I didn't pay much attention to her work. She didn't know anyone. I am conscious that she needs capacity training because as a woman, she should know how to do things in the event that there is no man

in the house. Now she has no problem in carrying out the work in the fields when it is time to sow.

And sometimes women attributed the change to an increase in their husbands' confidence in the legitimacy and value of community participation which they attributed to both their husbands' increased familiarity with programs, as they themselves became participants, and the benefits of women's *own* participation over time.

Before I didn't have *libertad* because my husband didn't like [my leaving]. Now he does because my husband is more *consciente* (conscious) since belonging [himself] to a group.

Yes, it has changed because before I didn't have *libertad* to really leave but now he [my husband] works in a group and realizes that it is very good to work together united.

Before I couldn't [attend workshops outside the community] because my husband didn't like it and on top of that there was no opportunity to work with an organization and now yes, because my husband has become aware that I have a lot of capacity. Now I'm a member of the CIAL and we leave to attend workshops outside the community.

Men remarked:

Before, one thought negatively [about women being organized], because men didn't have much consciousness (*conciencia*), but organization brings many benefits and it's important to stop thinking this way. At the beginning, the women were more involved in the organization and the work that goes on and I noticed the change in her [my wife], and...so one is animated to become part of the CIAL as well.

These changes in women's confidence were impossible in the absence of opportunities to challenge preconceived ideas about women's limited capacity.

When I was not organized [with the CIAL] I didn't have anywhere to go. Now, when I do not leave [the house], I miss leaving. I finish the work of the house and then do not know what to do. I become bored. The women were sleeping before and now they are not; someone asks for us and we do something. When I am in the house I look for things to do. Now I am not thought to be useless.

And the opportunities available for women have helped to change men's perception of women's capabilities:

Before [my wife] was very timid but now she has woken up. I think this has influenced my behaviour towards her and also towards other [women] with whom she interacts in the CIALs.



Table 5. *Women's perception of changes in the level of libertad afforded them by their husbands in the past 5 years*

How has <i>libertad</i> changed in past 5 years...		<i>Libertad</i> increased (%) <sup>*</sup>	<i>Libertad</i> did not increase (%)	<i>P</i> -value (Fisher's 1-sided exact test)	HH participation characteristics	<i>Libertad</i> increased (%) <sup>**</sup>	<i>Libertad</i> did not increase (%)
Participate in local organizations	CIAL participant ( <i>n</i> = 30)	53.3	46.7	0.000	Husband and wife ( <i>n</i> = 14)	50.0	50.0
					Wife only ( <i>n</i> = 16)	56.3	43.8
	Nonparticipant ( <i>n</i> = 70)	7.1	92.9		Husband only ( <i>n</i> = 9)	0.0	100.0
					Nonpart HH ( <i>n</i> = 61)	8.2	91.8
Occupy positions in community	CIAL participant ( <i>n</i> = 29)	31.0	69.0	0.000	Husband and wife ( <i>n</i> = 14)	42.9	57.1
					Wife only ( <i>n</i> = 15)	20.0	80.0
	Nonparticipant ( <i>n</i> = 70)	2.9	97.1		Husband only ( <i>n</i> = 9)	0.0	100.0
					Nonpart HH ( <i>n</i> = 61)	3.3	96.7
Take on paid employment	CIAL participant ( <i>n</i> = 30)	30.0	70.0	0.000	Husband and wife ( <i>n</i> = 14)	35.7	64.3
					Wife only ( <i>n</i> = 16)	25.0	75.0
	Nonparticipant ( <i>n</i> = 72)	0.0	100.0		Husband only ( <i>n</i> = 9)	0.0	100.0
					Nonpart HH ( <i>n</i> = 63)	0.0	100.0
Attend workshops outside community	CIAL participant ( <i>n</i> = 30)	43.3	56.7	0.000	Husband and wife ( <i>n</i> = 14)	35.7	64.3
					Wife only ( <i>n</i> = 16)	50.0	50.0
	Nonparticipant ( <i>n</i> = 70)	2.9	97.1		Husband only ( <i>n</i> = 8)	0.0	100.0
					Nonpart ( <i>n</i> = 62)	3.2	96.8
Administer household finances	CIAL participant ( <i>n</i> = 30)	26.7	73.3	0.001	Husband and wife ( <i>n</i> = 14)	21.4	78.6
					Wife only ( <i>n</i> = 16)	31.3	68.8
	Nonparticipant ( <i>n</i> = 71)	2.8	97.2		Husband only ( <i>n</i> = 9)	0.0	100.0
					Nonpart HH ( <i>n</i> = 62)	3.2	96.8
Visit neighbors and friends	CIAL participant ( <i>n</i> = 30)	30.0	70.0	0.000	Husband and wife ( <i>n</i> = 14)	42.9	57.1
					Wife only ( <i>n</i> = 16)	18.8	81.3
	Nonparticipant ( <i>n</i> = 70)	2.9	97.1		Husband only ( <i>n</i> = 9)	0.0	100.0
					Nonpart HH ( <i>n</i> = 61)	3.3	96.7
Work on farm with husband	CIAL participant ( <i>n</i> = 29)	24.1	75.9	0.000	Husband and wife ( <i>n</i> = 13)	23.1	76.9
					Wife only ( <i>n</i> = 16)	25.0	75.0
	Nonparticipant ( <i>n</i> = 72)	0.0	100.0		Husband only ( <i>n</i> = 9)	0.0	100.0
					Nonpart HH ( <i>n</i> = 63)	0.0	100.0

Female-headed HH removed.

<sup>\*</sup> Significant at 95%<sup>\*\*</sup> Unable to calculate significance due to small numbers but the percentage differences in increased *libertad* by HH are still interesting when combined with the qualitative results.

Table 6. *CIAL member perception of nonparticipants' supportiveness of the participation of women in the CIAL, segregated by gender*

CIAL member perception of nonparticipants' supportiveness	Supportive (%)	Mixed (%)	Unsupportive (%)
Women in community	23.4	36.2	40.4
Men in community	38.3	34.0	27.7

*N* = 47.

### (c) *Role change and gendered resistance*

Even given opportunities to challenge gender stereotypes and freedom from husband's authority to do so, women often face significant stigma from other women who from birth were trained to submit to men's authority. As one female participant explained:

This is how [our parents taught us]. We [girls] would never go out anywhere, we would sit down in one area, do our housework and none of this leaving and wandering about, we would only be able to pick up a broom and clean. Once we grew up and met our husbands, we brought this custom [and it suited our husbands fine], as husbands also don't like it when women go around alone (ASOCIAL & Classen, 2008).

Nonparticipating women would sometimes call out to participating women that they neglect their children and husbands, or they insult the project participants and their husbands by saying the men are "under the thumb of their wives".

The survey also showed that women are perceived by CIAL members, both men and women, to be less supportive of women's participation in the CIAL than are local men (Table 6).

Reflecting this, in interviews with people who had stopped participating with the CIAL, women often said participating had caused too many challenges with other women in the community.

### (d) *Women's perceptions of changes in decision-making*

Participating women are significantly more likely than nonparticipants to play a joint role in decision-making with men about "household food purchases", "sale of farm products", "spending of household finances" and "what and where to plant". "Women's association with local organizations" was significant at a 90% confidence level. The biggest difference is in the area of agricultural decision-making (Table 7). CIAL women attributed their increased involvement in making these decisions to their own, and their husband's participation with the CIAL, and sometimes with other organizations as well.

In the cases of household food purchases and the education of children, arenas of women's traditional decision-making, their decision-making has remained unchanged over the past 5 years (Table 8). In the case of household food purchases, women have always made purchases of food items close to the home (i.e., sugar, salt, coffee, sweets, soda pop). A possible explanation for perceived differences among participants and nonparticipants in their involvement in decision-making (Table 7) may have to do with a difference in perceptions of what constitutes "food purchasing" by CIAL members. When disaggregated by household participation with the CIAL, again husband's participation alone did not influence change in women's decision-making. Most important for change in women's decision-making seems to be women's own involvement in mixed groups, which, qualitative data show, led to increased confidence and knowledge for decision-making.

## 8. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

A strong theme emerging from the research is a local value placed on a perceived new space which provides an opportunity for respect for women as informed decision-makers. Several factors were critical in opening small cracks of opportunity for women. The data showed clearly that different aspects of the project were able to align themselves with the social context in a way that opened these opportunities to challenge traditional gender inequalities, but that this process was not as straightforward as simply engaging women as participants.

Often women's lack of power is seen as the obverse of men's assertion of power. In this view, empowering women implies taking power away from men. And sometimes, this seems to be necessary. However, our initial assumption that *libertad* is the critical factor influencing women's capacity to make free and informed decisions, we learned, was only part of a bigger picture. Upon seeing the preliminary survey results we were a bit perplexed by the high number of women who saw themselves to have *mucho libertad* to engage in agriculture with their husbands and to visit neighbors and friends because it contradicted women's stories of almost never leaving the house and the years of ethnographic evidence that found few women working in agriculture with their husbands. The life/project histories and focus group discussions of the preliminary survey results helped us to understand more clearly how *libertad* interacted with other factors to enable women to make free and informed choices.

Barriers which prevented women from taking advantage of *libertad* included resistance by women themselves to challenging gender stereotypes. This is related to a lack of knowledge and self-confidence to take on new tasks but also to a rejection of many of those tasks defined as lying in the domain of men, even if this meant virtual seclusion within the domestic sphere. Thus, only when the various enabling factors are aligned are women in a position to make free and informed choices. Here we untangle when, how, and why that happened with the objective of providing lessons for other participatory initiatives aimed at helping women achieve their own gender agendas and measuring processes of gender change. Certainly the project's effect on women's *libertad* and decision-making was not uniform, but is of significant interest precisely because we were able to tease out the various ways that opportunities or spaces for challenging gender inequalities were opened up.

### (a) *Ethic of inclusiveness*

We have shown elsewhere (Classen *et al.*, 2008) that an "ethic of inclusiveness" guides the CIAL project and this has enabled the program to target the most marginalized in the target regions. Among those most marginalized are women. Female participants are representative of the women in their communities in all measures of individual and household level socio-economic status (Classen *et al.*, 2008). Many factors contribute to project inclusiveness but what were particularly important for attracting women and ensuring their equal participation were the superior facilitation skills of project staff (Classen *et al.*, 2008). This was expressed by facilitators themselves:

My function as a facilitator, if someone doesn't know how to read and they say 'but I can't be in the group because I can't read', I say: 'come here with us, we will teach you to read, you will learn with us at each meeting. I will accompany you in the work and I will teach you how to do it. Alternatively, I say, I will write down points in my notebook and after the meeting or after work, we can sit down for an hour and we

Table 7. *Women's perceptions of their level of involvement in making key household and livelihood decisions*

Who makes decisions about...		Woman is part of process (%)	Men in family (%)	P-value (Fisher's 1-sided exact test)*	HH membership characteristics	Woman is part of process (%)*	Men in family (%)	P-value (Pearson's Chi square)*
Sale of farm products	CIAL participant (n = 29)	79.3	20.7	0.000	Husband and wife (n = 14)	85.7	14.3	0.000
	Nonparticipant (n = 67)	28.4	71.6		Wife only (n = 15)	73.3	26.7	
What and where to plant	CIAL participant (n = 29)	65.5	34.5	0.000	Husband only (n = 8)	25.0	75.0	0.001
	Nonparticipant (n = 72)	23.6	76.4		Nonpart HH (n = 59)	28.8	71.2	
HH food purchases	CIAL participant (n = 30)	90.0	10.0	0.001	Husband and wife (n = 14)	85.7	14.3	0.019
	Nonparticipant (n = 72)	58.3	41.7		Wife only (n = 16)	93.8	6.3	
Spending of HH finances	CIAL participant (n = 29)	72.4	27.6	0.015	Husband only (n = 9)	55.6	44.4	ns
	Nonparticipant (n = 71)	46.5	53.5		Nonpart HH (n = 63)	58.7	41.3	
Wife's association with local organizations	CIAL participant (n = 30)	83.3	16.7	ns (0.055)	Husband and wife (n = 14)	92.9	7.1	ns
	Nonparticipant (n = 66)	65.2	34.8		Wife only (n = 16)	75.0	25.0	
Education of children	CIAL participant (n = 29)	93.1	6.9	ns	Husband only (n = 8)	75.0	25.0	ns
	Nonparticipant (n = 62)	90.3	9.7		Nonpart HH (n = 58)	63.8	36.2	
					Nonpart HH (n = 62)	45.2	54.8	
					Husband and wife (n = 13)	84.6	15.4	
					Wife only (16)	100.0	0.0	
					Husband only (n = 9)	100.0	0.0	
					Nonpart HH (n = 53)	88.7	11.3	

For consistency with Tables 4 and 5, female headed HH have been removed.

\* Significant at 95% confidence level.

will write together. This for me is how to motivate a person because you can see that groups tend to minimize those who cannot read. But we try to include everyone.

For me, it is important that everyone in a participatory project has the right to speak; no one should stop anyone else from speaking. In meetings we try to express what we feel and what we have done. In some other organizations things are not participatory and sometimes only the men participate. With the CIAL, we all participate: men, women,

children, the elderly. We all have the right to express our sentiments about work or about whatever. For me, this is participation. We are all equal in work: in the field, in meetings, in whatever social context we meet in. We can all participate.

Facilitation continues to be important in engaging women as equal partners in the project and in ensuring space for expression of their ideas in group meetings.

Table 8. *Women's perceptions of change in the level of involvement in making key household and livelihood decisions in the past 5 years*

Who makes decisions about...		Women's involvement increased in past 5 years (%)	Women's involvement did not increase (%)	P-value (Fisher's 1-sided exact test)*	HH membership characteristics	Women's involvement increased in past 5 years (%)**	Women's involvement did not increase (%)					
Sale of farm products	CIAL participant (n = 30)	33.3	66.7	0.000	Husband and wife (n = 14)	35.7	64.3					
					Wife only (n = 16)	31.3	68.8					
	Nonparticipant (n = 71)	2.8	97.2		Husband only (n = 8)	0.0	100.0					
					Nonpart HH (n = 63)	3.2	96.8					
					What and where to plant	CIAL participant (n = 29)	41.4	58.6	0.000	Husband and wife (n = 14)	28.6	71.4
										Wife only (n = 15)	53.3	46.7
	Nonparticipant (n = 69)	2.9	97.1		Husband only (n = 9)	0.0	100.0					
					Nonpart HH (n = 60)	3.3	96.7					
					Wife's association with local organizations	CIAL participant (n = 28)	32.1	67.9	0.000	Husband and wife (n = 12)	33.3	66.7
										Wife only (n = 16)	31.3	68.8
	Nonparticipant (n = 72)	4.2	95.8		Husband only (n = 9)	0.0	100.0					
					Nonpart HH (n = 63)	4.8	95.2					
					Spending of HH finances	CIAL participant (n = 28)	21.4	78.6	0.006	Husband and wife (n = 13)	23.1	76.9
										Wife only (n = 15)	20.0	80.0
	Nonparticipant (n = 72)	2.8	97.2		Husband only (n = 9)	0.0	100.0					
					Nonpart HH (n = 63)	3.2	96.8					
					HH food purchases	CIAL participant (n = 29)	10.3	89.7	ns	Husband and wife (n = 14)	14.3	85.7
										Wife only (n = 15)	6.7	93.3
	Nonparticipant (n = 71)	4.2	95.8		Husband only (n = 9)	0.0	100.0					
					Nonpart HH (n = 62)	4.8	95.2					
					Education of children	CIAL participant (n = 28)	7.1	92.9	ns	Husband and wife (n = 12)	8.3	91.7
										Wife only (n = 16)	6.3	93.8
	Nonparticipant (n = 69)	0.0	100.0		Husband only (n = 9)	0.0	100.0					
					Nonpart HH (n = 60)	0.0	100.0					

Female-headed HH removed.

\*Significant at 95% confidence level.

\*\* Unable to calculate significance due to small numbers but the percentage differences in increased decision-making by HH are still interesting when combined with the qualitative results.

That the ethic of inclusiveness has paid off, is borne out by the fact that while the early CIALs tended to be single gender, mostly all-men, over time participants themselves have elected to form mixed gender CIALs (Classen *et al.*, 2008; Humphries, Gonzales, Jiménez, & Sierra, 2000). Today, nearly 20 years

after the program was first initiated, 96 of the CIALs supported by FIPAH are mixed, four are all women, and five are all men. Women make up 44% of adult CIAL membership and 41% of adult executive committee membership, although they occupy only 28% of coordinator positions (communication, FIPAH,



March, 2012).<sup>9</sup> Thus, while women are still under-represented as CIAL coordinators (group leaders), their overall numbers and executive influence mean that they play an important role in what are overwhelmingly mixed, gender groups.

(b) *Heterotopic spaces of learning*

While initially becoming a CIAL member was difficult for women, the nature of the CIAL work made it easier: women were not seeking integration into a *recognized* male activity, such as agriculture, but rather into research, an area yet to be identified clearly with either men or women. As such, research carried out by the CIAL has provided an open access, “heterotopic” space (Foucault, 1986), where women and men have learned to collaborate in new ways. Heterotopias are described as unusual spaces where old patterns of behavior can be disrupted and new ways of being may be performed (Cornwall, 2002).<sup>10</sup> In particular, the experimental sites, *las pequeñas parcelas*, have become spaces for social learning (Woodhill & Roling, 1998) in which traditional gender scripts have more easily been transgressed.

Formalizing activities traditionally undertaken by women also helped to legitimize women’s activities as valuable in public forums. Women brought their skills, for example, of seed selection out of the private sphere and applied them in new ways and to new activities, such as in participatory plant breeding (Humphries *et al.*, 2005, 2008), at the experimental sites. Seed selection, a private activity which had been going on for millennia in women’s kitchens, suddenly had a public face and one that over time has provided participants with a good deal of local, and indeed, international adulation. And even though men were more skilled than women in the work of agriculture, at the experimental plots they too learned new ideas and new skills and these challenged old ways of thinking.

The traditional representations of masculinity associated with physically-demanding slash and burn *milpa* agriculture are very different to the small scale, carefully-tended experimental plot. This is evident in the descriptions of women participants who recalled learning about the CIAL process through the experimental plots.

When we began to make *las pequeñas parcelas*, we measured the parcel with string, we put in markers and . . . then we began to sow. And when we saw how beautiful the little parcels were we liked the work. After a while [the facilitator] said I am going to teach you the steps of the [CIAL methodological] ladder. This really motivated us because we were shown the content of each step in the ladder . . . We did this all together; at that time we were all women. Afterwards some of the husbands of the women came to work with us. . .

Notwithstanding the integration of men into a number of the women’s CIALs (as in this example), women continued to exercise their particular observational skills, learned from careful seed selection at home:

I liked to walk around [the plot] spying to see [which plants] have more flowers, which have less. . . which are weakened with disease. . .

As well as adding new skills. Men remarked:

[My wife can] now pollinate maize plants, classify seeds. . .

[My wife] helps to identify the problems that harm the yields, as in the case of crop disease, and soil fertility

In the project, women often focus on knowledge-building and may send children or hired labor in place of themselves, for example, during the harvest of CIAL crops. Thus the project does not necessarily require that women fully participate in *all* CIAL tasks on top of their household labor. Rather

women often selectively participate in agricultural tasks—both in the CIAL and with their husbands in the field—in a way that ensures their input into decision-making.

Before only he decided [what and where to plant] and now we decide together because of the communication and support I give him in his work.

Before only he sowed and now we sow together because now we both have knowledge about sowing.

Before he didn’t take me into account because he was a *machista* and now we make [agricultural] decisions together.

Before my husband decided alone [about selling farm products] and now he takes me into account because of integration into the CIAL.

And, as men report, women have learned to share and delegate work:

[My wife] helps through planning the work to be carried out, by involving the family in different areas.

The CIAL has taught us to work in a more orderly way. Now there is a better distribution of work in the family, this is the initiative of my wife. . .

The social learning that occurs inside the CIAL has ramifications beyond it in everyday life and this affects both men and women: men have learned to share decision-making with their CIAL member wives and women feel confident that they are capable of making important decisions outside the domestic sphere (Table 6). This sharing of decision-making has impacts on role change. As reported, CIAL members and their spouses, both men and women, perceive positive role change to have occurred in their households, compared to nonmember households (Tables 1 and 3), even though women’s perception of decision-making changes occurring in men-only member households does not support this (Table 8). Certainly, husbands of women CIAL members consider role changes to have been considerable:

I think that [the CIAL] is a way that women achieve their liberty. . . We have changed the way we work as a family. We all know a bit of everything—the woman joins in the farm work and the man does work which, as they say, is purely women’s work.

Before we worked divided: she was alone in the house and I [worked] outside in the fields. Now we help each other mutually and we chat about what is necessary for our family.

Before I didn’t know anything about her work but now I am conscious of all that she does. [When she goes to a meeting outside the community] it’s my turn to carry out the duties of the house, look after the animals, clean. . . Of course, I don’t do it as well as her but I try to do it.

In some moments I miss that before she was dedicated to the house completely but I also recognize the responsibility that she has inside the CIAL and I feel very proud of her. Yes, there are many changes in the distribution of tasks in the family. . . We all participate in activities—whether they are in the fields or in the house.

Gender role change must also be understood within the broader context of organizational membership. Since CIAL members have increased their memberships in other organizations after joining the CIAL (Table 2), not all of the positive role change can be attributed to CIAL membership alone. Comments from CIAL women participants sometimes indicate that other organizations<sup>11</sup> have contributed to opening a space for increased decision-making by women and increased dialog between spouses:

Before only he decided [what food to buy for the family] but now he takes me into account because the organizations have opened doors.

Before only the head [of the household] made the decisions [about what food to buy for the family] and now we come to an agreement because of the training [*formación*] that we have received from groups, such as the CIAL.

Before, I was marginalized through fear. My husband didn’t let me join organizations but now we are more responsible. Because when one has

never been out, one doesn't feel secure. By contrast now, because we have groups in the community, we have learned through them.

One man's comments reflected the change that the presence of organizations has helped to bring out:

Before perhaps there wasn't much consciousness in men but now organizations bring many benefits and it is very important to stop thinking as we did. When it is necessary that I tend the house, I do it. As a man, I have learnt that the woman is not a worker or a slave but rather a companion with whom to share life and work.

Positive gender role change in CIAL member households is thus more broadly associated with organizational membership, both for CIAL members and their spouses. However, given the marginalized position of CIAL members prior to joining the CIAL, the data suggest that the self-confidence, which members acquired through the CIAL, particularly in the case of women, was a catalyst for joining other organizations. Over time, CIAL members have become respected in their communities because of their role in agricultural research and the beneficial technologies that have resulted from this (Classen *et al.*, 2008). And many of the men, whose wives are members, are supportive of their participation precisely because of this. However, at times joining a group may mean the breakdown of a relationship.

The husbands don't like [you to go out]. ... Mine punished me because I was involved in groups. As we say, men are like that. They don't like you to go out. ... They are *machistas*. They only like you to be in the house, for sure, so that you are kept unaware of things. But I don't take any notice: when I need to go out, I go.

Such strife between partners was unlikely to occur when both spouses were members. On the contrary, the most notable changes in *libertad* and decision-making occurred when both spouses were CIAL members, pointing to the importance of husbands' support in making change in women's gender roles and how these changes may impact on men's roles. As men CIAL members commented about their wives' participation:

I think the participation of women in the CIAL is good because it liberates women from slavery; the woman is marginalized in the house but in the CIAL she is liberated. Some see women who are in the CIAL as libertines but not me. Rather it is an opportunity, not only for the woman, but for the whole family.

It seems to me that the people who pass negative comments do so because they don't believe in organized work, they are individualists, or they are *machistas*, and don't want women to have the liberty to train themselves in other areas.

### (c) *New skills for improved livelihoods*

When women have elected to become active in agriculture, this has generally helped improve household resources:

Women's capacity to farm is important because it takes the burden and the responsibility away from one single person. If research or cultivation has to be done and my husband cannot go, I am perfectly capable of doing it myself. This year that just passed, when [my husband] got very sick, I had to oversee how we would handle the work, so that it wouldn't fall apart.

And for some men, women's contribution to the household assets has been important in winning support for their wives' involvement in the CIAL:

She always thinks saving is important to solve needs in the home, and due to good money management, little by little, she has managed to reconstruct the house. This is something that I admire in her. Now, instead of paying *jornales* (day labour), my children and my wife, they help me in the fields and now the money doesn't flow outside the house. Also we both have rights to money earned through the group

[from produce sales]; additionally, [group] savings help us overcome some of our needs.

I didn't understand anything about the CIAL but seeing [my wife] working so well, it encouraged me to participate in the group. ... I want to tell you that we have rebuilt the house with bricks thanks to the work of the group that she has been involved in over so much time. Being organized [in groups] always brings changes in the lives of people.

In order to involve women in crop production, however, agriculture needed to be transported into new geographical spaces that were accessible to women. Research by the CIALs into new crop varieties, along with improved mechanisms for controlling pests and diseases have enabled farmers, particularly women farmers, to work nearer to the community rather than on distant mountainsides as in the past. As one farmer facilitator recalled:

We decided to organize ourselves as a [mixed] CIAL and we began to diagnose the problems of the community—agricultural problems. We decided that the most serious problem for us all was in the cultivation of beans. We had to walk two hours up the mountainside to plant beans because we couldn't plant here. We used to sow the beans up on the mountainside [clearing forest to do so] and we didn't return until the harvest. In the past, the beans [up there] didn't suffer from disease problems. People would sow here [in the community] and not produce anything. So we researched beans [that could be grown close to home] and I remember that we mounted an experiment [near the community] with 103 bean varieties which we laid out in 3 repetitions. And afterwards we researched diseases. ... Now through the CIAL we know lots of varieties and we have learnt how to get a good harvest.

Thus technology change, specifically different varieties adapted to varied micro-climates, has gone hand in hand with gender role change and together these changes have helped to improve local livelihoods, raising farmers' yields and virtually eliminating the hungry season for CIAL members (Classen *et al.*, 2008).

For change to occur, however, women first had to be trained in the necessary agricultural skills since most women had little knowledge of agricultural practices:

At the beginning I didn't know how to sow even a bean or maize plant, nothing at all. In fact, I was embarrassed to work.

We have now learned to sow, fertilize and weed. Before we didn't know how; we helped our husbands out but it wasn't the same.

As a result of this training and the capabilities they developed, women have gained confidence in themselves as the following comments demonstrate:

Certainly one of our accomplishments is that we have attracted the attention of other people. This does not happen to a woman when she is not trained as we are with the CIAL.

Perhaps we helped our husbands to weed and pull up beans before but that was all. Today we are capable of carrying out agricultural work.

And women who are skilled in farming are less dependent on their husbands. This gives them more power to assert their opinions at home for they can provide for themselves should the husband disagree and/or leave. As one woman, who was recently abandoned by her husband for another, said, "If a woman learns how to sow, she also learns how to survive". Some of the husbands, who are not in the CIAL themselves, take their wives' new knowledge very seriously, learning how to put this knowledge into practice on their properties:

My husband has sown a lot of fruit but no one taught him how to do it properly. So when he came to plant coffee I taught him how to make contours and afterwards he took my [contour] rope and began to work that way too.

It is beautiful to be working in a group because what you learn is of great help. The men help you. Now we almost have no difficulty going

with our husbands to work in the field. Although my husband is not in the group, I am teaching him how to work the soil in a new way.

Men also recognize the importance of generational knowledge transfer and the benefit of youth CIAs:

[My wife] has transmitted her knowledge to our children and they now belong to youth CIAs. She has learned to delegate work.

They teach you that only by being organized can you get ahead. Not only does she [my wife] belong to a CIA but our children do too. And although I don't belong, I fill in for her when she can't go to work [in the CIA]. [Membership] has led to changes because now I know more about her capacity.

Such men, who have developed confidence in, and respect for, their wives' skills, also demonstrate, by their willingness to learn from their wives, a willingness to step back from the defensive masculinities often associated with conceptions of *paternidad*. And while *machista* attitudes are still very much in evidence, women, who are confident in their own abilities, are beginning to open cracks in this hegemonic male façade. As one male farmer facilitator put it:

The men have become a little less *machista* and they give their wives more *libertad* because of the training they have received through the CIAs. And this helped to change the situation a bit. You still see people from the mountain villages come down to the valley and return home drunk. However, there are few CIA men who get drunk now. Before it was the custom that everyone [men] when they came to town they would get drunk.

Some of the men reiterated this change in attitude:

I think it is worth letting go of control over certain things. For example, as regards the money from the coffee harvest, she controls it because she is better at saving and is not going to spend money on vices but only on the things that are most necessary for the family.

As a man, it is often difficult to recognize that you are wrong but my wife looks for ways to make me understand. Before I spent money on things that weren't good, like vices, and now that she is trained, well, little by little she has convinced me that we need to save and not spend money in things that are less important.

[My wife] got the idea to mount a small business which has helped us to get by; she now has another mentality which is a product of being organized. She thinks now about the future... she aspires for the future.

CIA members—both women and men—recognizing the changes they are making in their lives, regard themselves as *futuristas*, in contrast to local *conformistas* who cling to traditional ways (ASOCIAL & Classen, 2008). And it has become clear that futuristic outlooks include recognition of the mutability of gender identities and relations.

#### (d) *Social capital*

Supporting the findings of Kabeer and Huq (2010) in Bangladesh, CIA members have withstood social stigma and *conformismo* largely through the strong social bonds which developed among them, particularly among women but also between men and women in the program. Consider the following story explained during life history interviews:

I was planting beans in my own field and this man saw me and he told me, 'You are doing bad seeding'. He was laughing at me. I asked him why. He said, 'Because the moon is not in the right position. You will lose all the beans'. I said, 'I'm fine. This is my experiment. Leave me; I know what I'm doing. I am an organized woman.' He had eight farm laborers with him and they too all laughed and joked and said that I would lose everything. 'Don't worry yourself. I will not lose anything. Do what you want, plant in whatever moon you want', I said. I continued planting for 3 days and they continued laughing at me... Now, you should see how my field looks. I saw him recently and he said, 'It is true, you've learned'. 'Why do you say that?', I asked. He

responded, 'I have been watching your crop and you have an excellent yield'. Today, his yield is lower than mine. I told him I learned this in the CIA. Together we take out loans and run our experiments and we learn a lot. Before I only made tortillas and now, with the group, I am confident in all I do. Working in the group there is love and support and alone there is nothing (ASOCIAL & Classen, 2008: 66).

This woman was able to demonstrate her capacity in agriculture, traditionally a male domain of work, with the support of other women in her group. Stories of men and women confronting skeptics and *conformistas* are similar. And as noted earlier (Table 6), it is women, threatened by changes in gendered activities, who have most objected to women's role outside the home: more than 40% of surveyed participants felt that women in the communities were opposed to women having *libertad* to work in the CIA and openly mocked the masculinity of those men who had provided *libertad* to their spouses. By contrast, less than 28% of men in the communities were perceived to feel the same way. The "heterotopic" space (Foucault, 1986), which gave rise to mixed gender CIAs, has acted as a bulwark against sexist jibes and has helped to fortify members' resolve to resist *conformismo*.

The strong social connections made especially among women in the project were essential to freeing up women's time to engage in activities outside of the sphere of the home. A key obstacle, which prevents women from participating in the CIA, is the presence of young children and the absence of older children available to take care of them. Katz (1995) has similarly observed in Guatemala that the availability of older daughters to perform household labor normally performed by their mothers was the most important factor in determining women's engagement in a new income-generating activity. Some women CIA members succeed in overcoming this problem by exchanging child care services with a fellow participant or paying a neighbor to perform these services. Whereas, in the past, women explained, "I did not even know anyone [in the community] by name..." Today,

...one has more friendships, a sisterhood, ... Now, one can be more open and trust people, whereas before, one could not even talk. Now we all have this big love and trust for one another... like telling each other our problems. We say, "look, I have this problem... I don't have this"... I say, Hilda look, I need this, [and] it could be economic in nature ... [and it's no problem]. We do not look at one as being better than another; we all look at each other equally, the same.

If women are paying for child care services, this, of course, also requires *libertad* as women without *libertad* rarely have access to income. The CIAs have given women access to income from group savings as well as small amounts of cash from group crop sales.

This "sisterhood" among women in particular, and the bond among participants in general, also spiraled into more opportunities for collective action either because their collective capacity appealed to organizations looking to work with pre-organized groups or because participants, used their collective power to advocate for various things.

This group, which initially looked small, has made everyone recognize that [our community] is organized... As more people arrived [in the community], we saw that there were enough children for a school, and this began motivating those of us who wanted a school. So we began holding meetings, we formed a board. This is how we got to be where we are now: we have a school that has a sixth grade.

In another case, a group of CIA women was successful in attracting the help of a Spanish-funded house-building project after they collectively traveled to another community, in which the project was working, to ask for their assistance. Another, female participant explained how, to her surprise, she and other



women from the CIAL were invited to join a health committee, previously dominated by men in her community, because of their familiarity with working in a group. Although she felt shy at first, she said her ability to work in a group allowed her to “shine” because she and the other CIAL women came on time and were prepared for group discussions. Table 2 confirms the importance that *all* CIAL members place upon social capital accessed through organizations, but particularly women CIAL members, for whom the social connectedness and increased confidence that membership brings, is the *raison d'être* for joining an organization. In fact, the data suggest that the CIAL may serve to attract women who were previously even more marginalized and less connected to networks outside the house than other local women. On variables where participating women had the same level of *libertad* as nonparticipants, the participants often recognized themselves to have gained that *libertad* since they began participating (in local organizations, administering household finances, visiting neighbors and friends, and working on the farm with their husbands) (Table 5).

And, as participants clearly explained, it is organizational membership that provides both the knowledge, and the support necessary to break with the traditional acceptance of the unchangeability of life:

It is through the knowledge that one acquires through the institutions, through the organizations, that one forms the consciousness that one doesn't have to be a *conformista* (male farmer facilitator).

Thus organizational membership has generated a level of *concientización* (Freire, 1972) regarding agency and the ability to break with traditional practices and beliefs, including gender scripts. And for most organizational members, it was entry into the CIAL, and the self-confidence it generated for marginalized individuals, particularly for women, that catalyzed entry into additional organizations, helping to open cracks for gender change.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS

This paper provides detailed empirical evidence of how participatory agricultural platforms, such as farmer research teams, have the potential to open spaces for challenging gender inequalities and providing support for empowerment. The data show that mixed gender research teams, which focus primarily on resolving problems of food insecurity, have secondarily functioned as “communities of practice” for gender change that permit the transgression of social boundaries.

The “heterotopic” space (Foucault, 1986) provided by such teams is particularly notable when both husbands and wives are members, offering evidence in support of a generative conception of gender empowerment that is not zero-sum. The study is particularly illustrative of these platforms' empowerment capacity since it has taken place in the rural sector of Honduras where exaggerated masculinities, typified by the concept of *paternidad*, were judged to be more deep-seated than in neighboring Central American countries (Ortega Hegg *et al.*, 2005), and therefore, women's subjugation is all the more severe. In particular, we argued that the CIALs, provided: (i) an ethic of inclusiveness that permeated group facilitation and all project activities, making women feel valued (Classen *et al.*, 2008), (ii) a “heterotopic” space (Foucault, 1986) of learning, challenging both men and women with new knowledge, placing them on more equal footing in the project and facilitating increased confidence in each another's capabilities, (iii) opportunities for women's engagement in their communities, which again contributed to increased confidence of men in their wives, and simultaneously produced tangible improvements in food and economic security, and (iv) social capital in the form of solidarity and love among women and between men and women in the project, fortifying them to challenge *conformismo* in their communities. It was the combination of these things that translated into changes in women's decision-making in the context of their social lives beyond the space of the project.

The study also points to the importance of understanding “empowerment as a journey rather than a product” (Cornwall & Edwards, 2010). To understand this process, extensive qualitative research and careful fieldnote documentation was critical for identifying locally appropriate indicators for empowerment. Assumptions about the synonymy between *libertad* and women's empowerment were short-sighted. To understand how and why *libertad* and decision-making changed as the survey data indicated, participatory discussions of the survey results and individual, key-informant project histories and interviews over a number of years were absolutely critical. Evaluating “empowerment as a process”, which is highly dependent on local contexts, requires commitment to mixed method assessments and budgets that allow for collaborative data analyses. Only through such efforts on the part of projects, participants and donors can we engage with the contextual nuances of social change and challenge the barriers that hinder sustainable improvements in the quality of life of women and men.

## NOTES

1. Westermann *et al.* (2005) describe the positive role that women play in sustaining natural resource management groups and note that this knowledge should not justify exploiting women's capacity for providing the social glue for such groups. In this case, however, their focus is not on challenging gender inequalities *per se* but rather on how women contribute to collective action and strengthen natural resource management efforts.

2. *Libertad* in Spanish, or liberty, is the local term commonly used in rural Honduras to describe women's constrained freedom. See section on Research Description for a discussion of this term and why we have chosen to keep it in its Spanish form.

3. Some of the CIALs are known as base units (*unidades de base*), as they were conceived in a previous project. Since working with FIPAH they function as CIALs, conducting experiments into improvements in food security.

4. A study by Sturzinger and Bustamente (1997) in 63 communities in Honduras found that women and men generally had very distinct gender roles associated with housekeeping and agriculture, respectively. Using the same survey instruments, the same authors found that distinctions in gender roles of women and men in Bolivia were much less marked (p. 39). This is not to say that women never engage in crop agriculture in Honduras. They certainly help their husbands from time to time, such as weeding or harvesting; and when agriculture can be conducted close to home, as in market gardening, women may play a key role. But commercial vegetable production requires access to markets and given the lack of roads in the rural sector, this excludes the vast majority of poor farmers.

5. Surveys with women were done by female students and surveys with men by male students.



6. Data presented in Classen *et al.* (2008) showed no significant statistical differences between CIAL and non-CIAL members in measurement of land area, percentage of land in coffee, weeks of farm wage labor, characteristics of household structure, house quality. The only statistical difference was in the area of years of study. Men CIAL members had an average of 1.5 more years of elementary education than did non-members. There were no significant differences between member and non-member CIAL women in education level. The higher educational level of CIAL men may affect their attitudes toward women and would be consistent with the findings of Ortega Hegg *et al.* (2005) on masculinity in 4 countries in Central America discussed earlier in the article. However, it is also the case that women CIAL members had even few associations than non-CIAL women prior to joining the CIAL (.52 compared to .94), suggesting that their husbands were not particularly open to their participation in organizations in the past. In any event, these differences are quite small.

7. There were three single gender CIALs in the study, two were women's only CIALs and one was a men's CIAL. In one of the women's CIALs, husbands played an important role helping women with the agricultural work, and thus it was only nominally a women's group. The other women's CIAL comprised a number of women from female-headed households. These women were excluded from analyses of 'libertad' (Tables 4–8), since 'libertad' is a measure dependent on men and was an important factor influencing decision-making. Since we did not remove women-headed households from the analysis of gendered role change in general, out of interest we compared role change with women in mixed groups *vs.* the women only group. Notwithstanding the very small numbers (six women in the wife-only category were from the women's only CIAL), only 66.7% of women from the women's CIAL indicated

positive role change, compared to 90% of women who participated in the mixed groups without their husbands. While the very small numbers exclude meaningful analysis, they do suggest that further comparison between women-only groups and women in mixed groups is worth pursuing.

8. The activities included here were determined in focus groups prior to the survey development to be common indicators of women's freedom from their husband's authority.

9. While women only comprise 28% of total coordinators ( $N = 64$ ), they make up 47% of treasurers, 59% of secretaries, and 27% of extensionists on the adult CIAL executives. In Yoro, where CIALs have the longest history and where the study was conducted, women have a greater presence making up 46% of members, 33% of coordinators, 57% of treasurers, 67% of secretaries and 30% of extensionists. Among youth CIALs ( $N = 41$ ), 29% are coordinated by girls, and girls comprise 41% of treasurers, 58% of secretaries and 27% of extensionists.

10. Foucault (1986) argued that "the heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (p. 25). It is at these "counter sites" that different components of culture can be "contested and inverted" (p. 24).

11. These include religious organizations, credit groups, short-term agricultural extension initiatives, health and housing initiatives, municipal programs etc.

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