

# Influence of Gender on Rural Honduran Women's Leadership Roles

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## Need for Research

- Women play an important role in agriculture and food security:
  - Crop and livestock activities
  - Collecting, processing, and cooking food
  - Childcare and education
  - Selling products in urban markets (FAO, 2016; Guillen Soto, 2013)
- Partner organizations reported that few women have participated in groups and leadership roles in groups in this region
- Rural assessments have found projects continue to target men and ignore women's reproductive roles (Guillen Soto, 2013)

## Purpose and Objectives

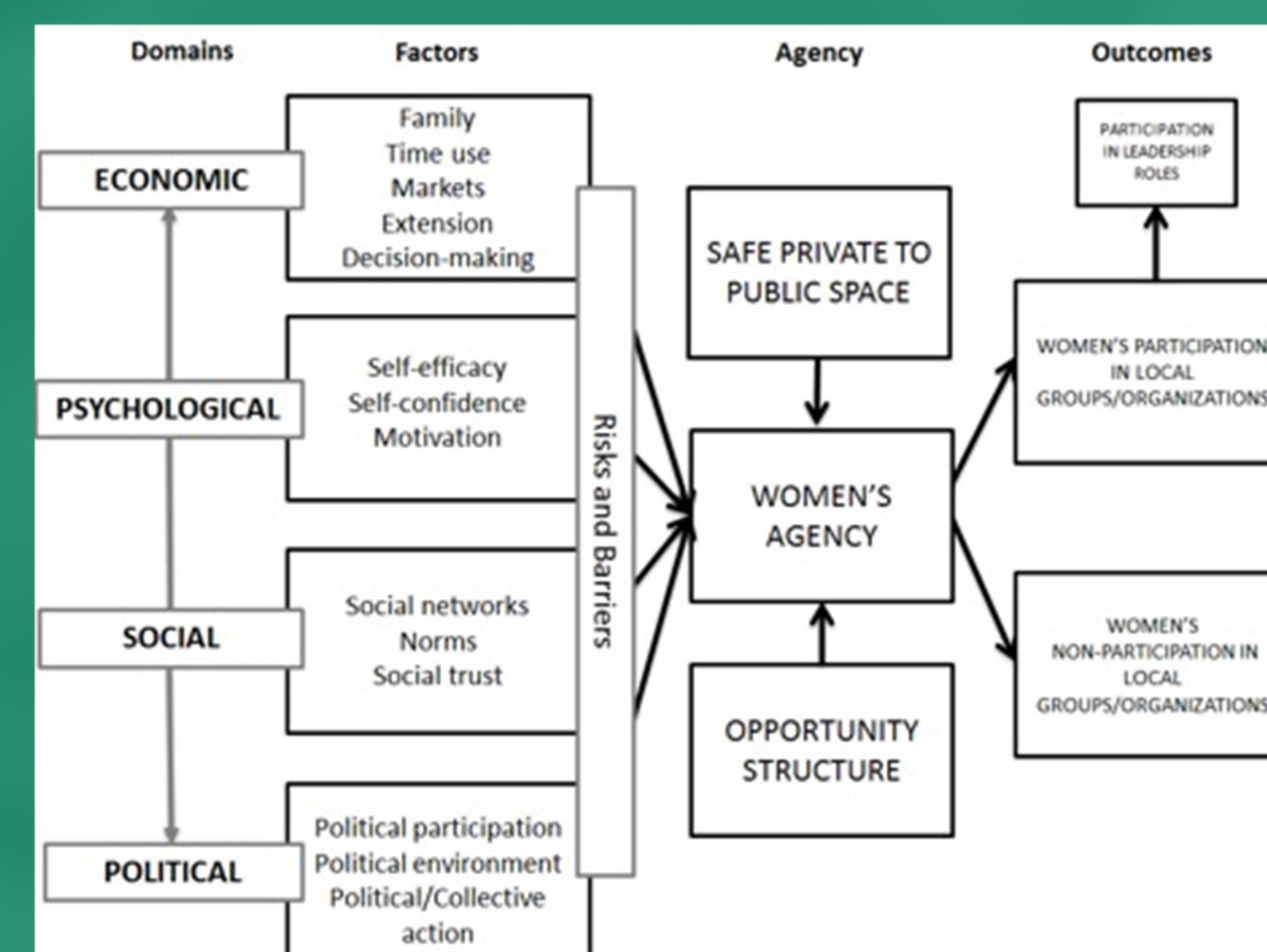
- Purpose: To explore factors that influence participation in groups and leadership roles of rural Honduran women in the Western department of Lempira.
- Objectives:
  - a) to describe the economic, psychological, social, and political factors that influence women's participation and
  - (b) to describe the risks, barriers, and opportunities for women to participate in leadership roles.

## Methods

- Transformative, mixed-methods
- Quantitative
  - Constraints and opportunities related to women's participation in groups and leadership roles
  - Questions adapted from the **WEIA** (Alkire, Meinzen-Dick, Peterman, Quisumbing, Seymour & Vaz, 2013; **The Sociopolitical Control Scale** (Peterson, Lowe, Hughey, Reid, Zimmerman, and Speer's (2006) and **The Social Capital Assessment Tool** (Grootaert and Van Bastelaer's, 2002)
- Qualitative
  - Focus groups that explored women and men's conceptualizations of leader and leadership
- Population
  - Women and men identifying as Lenca in Western Honduras
- Sample
  - 49 households in two communities in Lempira, Honduras
    - Posa Verde
    - San Antonio

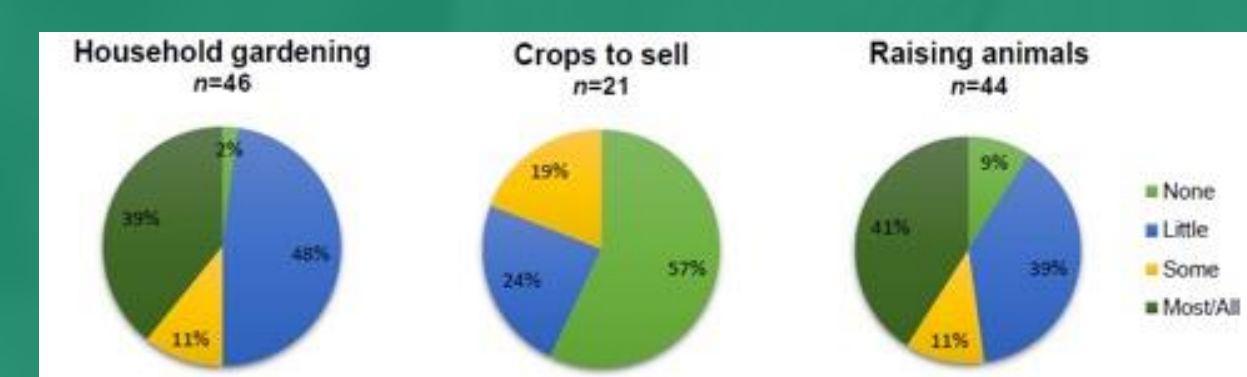
## Conceptual Framework

- Gender as an organizing principle
- Factors that influence the participation of women were viewed through domains of their empowerment
- Women's ability to participate in public spaces as well as opportunities were included to understand risks and barriers to taking on leadership roles



## Economic Findings

- Limited access to markets-average travel time 4.2 hours
- Sole decision-making power over agriculture varied according to activity



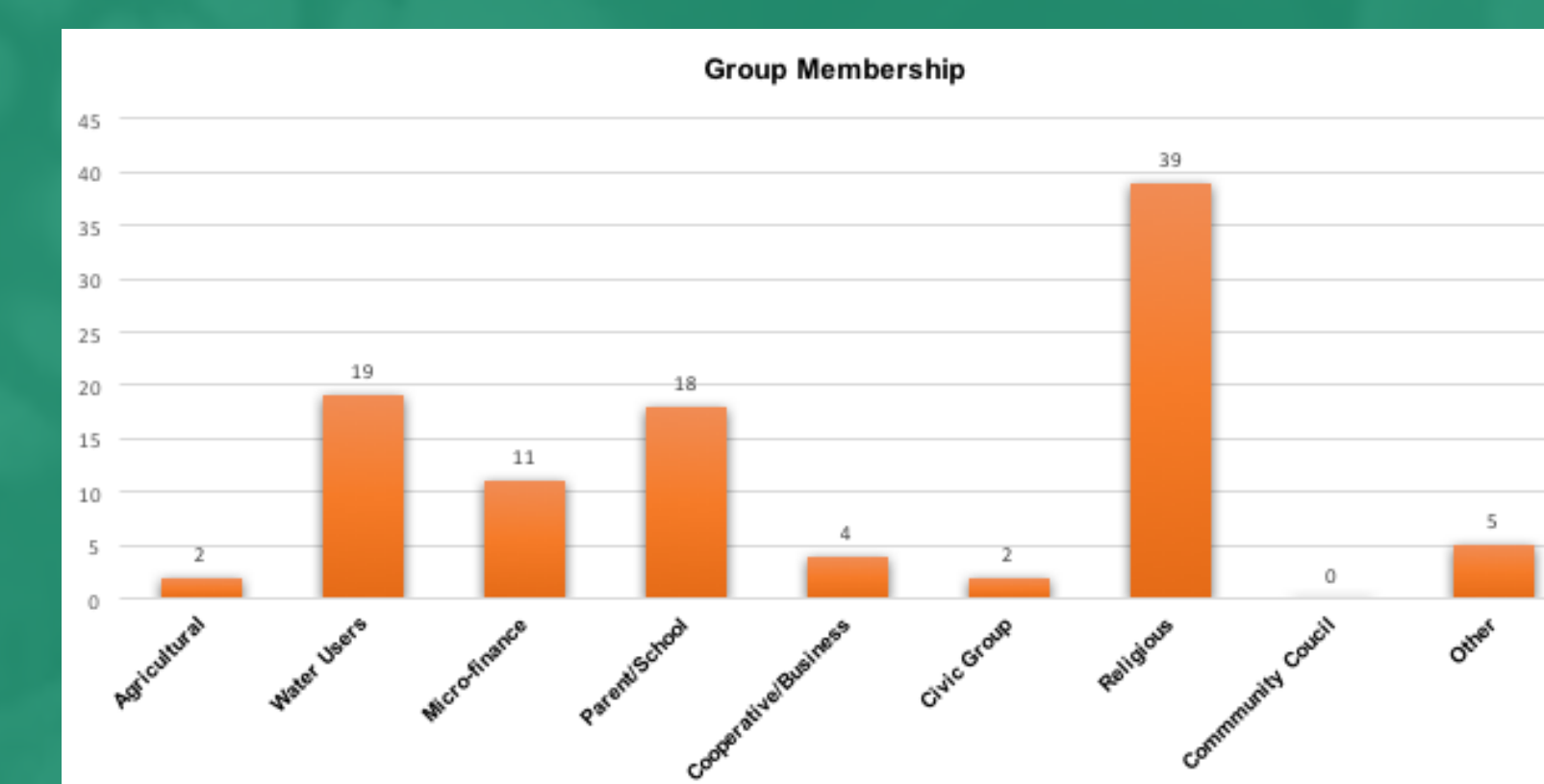
- Limited engagement with extension training (n=14)
- Women and men reported women's responsibility for childcare and domestic tasks as a barrier to participation
- The ability to grow food and train others viewed as important to leadership
- Men's work in agriculture viewed as more important and part of leadership

## Political Findings

- No community council at village level
- Stratification of responses in how often people in the village petition local leaders
  - Many times -10%
  - Few times -34%
  - Once -22%
  - Never-32%

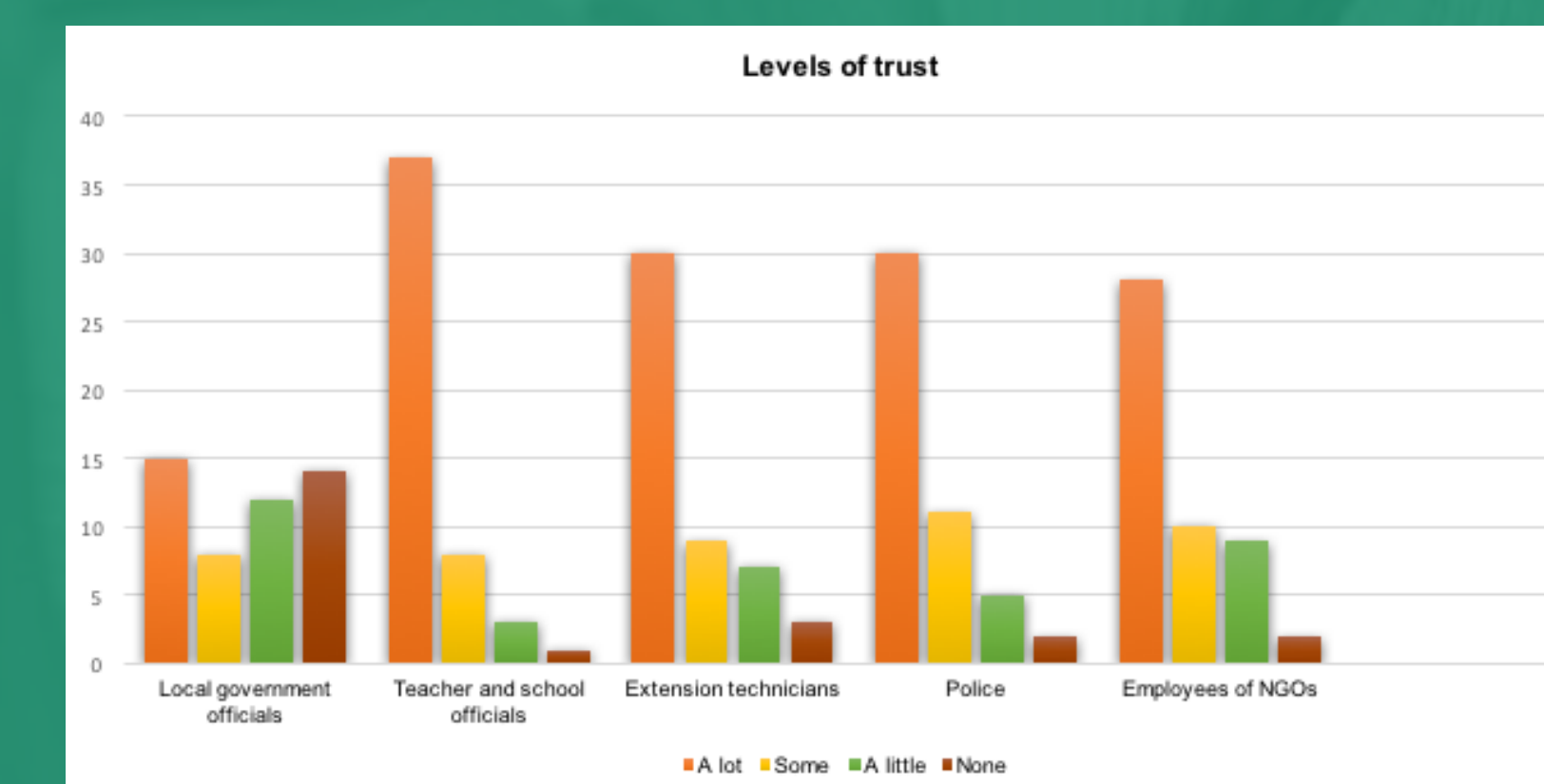
## Psychological Findings

- Leadership Competency (N=49)
- 70% of women had not participated in a leadership role
- However, women had higher levels of leadership self-efficacy
  - Leading others with their ideas-77%
  - Trying new and challenging tasks- 71%
  - Problem solving- 79%
- Women's participation was higher in groups with more gender parity (church, parent/school)
- Women reported feeling too timid to participate in meetings
- Gender roles were perceived as barriers to participation



## Social Findings

- Religious activities (70%) and visiting friends and family (61%) were reported as activities that let to new contacts more than attending meetings/trainings (37%)
- Low levels of trust in community
  - 79% - You can't be too careful when dealing with people
  - 21% - Most people can be trusted
- Higher levels of trust with Extension, NGOs, teachers, and police compared to government officials.



## Acknowledgements

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## Conclusions

- Gender roles were particularly influential in the economic, psychological, and social domains
  - Gendered division of labor
  - Value of work
  - Lack of mobility
- Gender and opportunity structure
  - Church and parent groups have more gender parity
  - Low social trust
  - Weak existence of spaces for collective action and learning

## Recommendations

- Considerations for agricultural extension
  - Developing women as experts in locally appropriate technologies, specifically in areas where they have more decision making power
  - Engage in community visits including door-to-door recruitment for programs – affirm women of the importance of their participation
  - Learn the community context and who receives benefits of training and projects
  - Establish opportunity structures for women to participate (e.g. agricultural cooperatives, training groups).
- Incorporating leadership development
  - Facilitate activities in groups that enable participation of everyone related to public speaking, organizing others, and self-esteem building
  - Acknowledge women's private roles in leadership and affirm importance (e.g. spiritual, maternal, social)

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