

Gender and Agriculture

Preliminary concepts

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Gender

- Gender: Gender refers to cultural attitudes and behaviors that shape "feminine" and "masculine" behaviors, technologies, environments, and knowledges
- "Gender" is used to distinguish socio-cultural factors shaping behaviors and attitudes from biological factors related to sex
- Gendered behaviors and attitudes are *learned*; they are neither fixed nor universal

Gender

- Intersectionality: the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage

Sorghum in Mali and household dynamics

- Problem: Poor adoption of improved sorghum varieties

In-depth trait discovery

- Grain quality
- Panicle structure
- Threshing ability

Method

- Diversity panicle sorting
- Focus groups & interviews
- thematic analysis of interviews



Examples of gender-related factors influencing household decision making

- Hybrid sorghum varieties introduced >5 years previously
 - Demonstration trials
 - Sorghum cooperative producing seed in communities
 - No tradition of purchasing sorghum seed
 - Access to cooperatives for purchase – close proximity
- Free seed available one year
 - Younger generation and family structure norms



Culinary test

Method development

- 2007 and 2008 data collection on the same varieties
- 2 zones, 25 villages
- Methodology developed to allow women to prepare as normal, but for consistency across sites
- Many traits measured

Assessment of processing traits

- grain quality
- flour/grit ratio
- soaking time
- cooking time
- taste, consistency, color of To
- global score









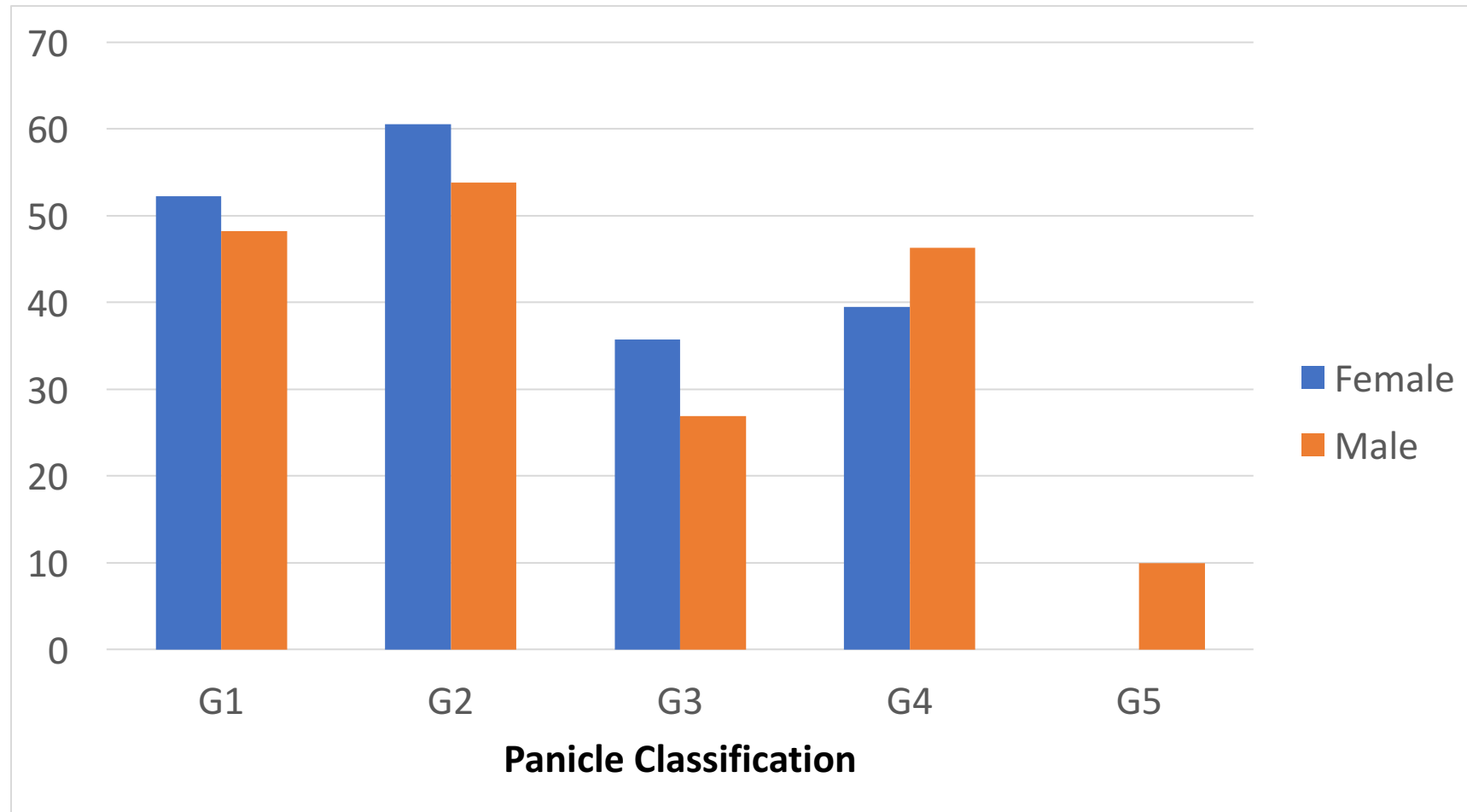








Farmers' panicle type preferences



Theme: grain hardness

Grain Hardness	Women	Men
Grain storage	Hard grain prevents insect damage; soft grain is floury & sweet	
Hardness & Milling	Hard grain improves milling and provides both flour & grits	
	Soft grain breaks into pieces and bran amount is high, no grits, high flour	
	Soft grain shorter time to process	
Hardness & Profit	Preserves long	Hard grain is heavier for selling
	Satisfies appetite	
	More volume for cooking	
	Stores longer cooked	

Sorghum traits and gendered knowledge

- Grain yield is not just yield, but how much is useful as food via the whole post-harvest process
- Varieties must combine necessary adaptation and processing traits
- Farmers associate specific panicle types and plant types with a suite of traits – knowledge systems vary
- Men and women contribute unique and complementary knowledge – composite varieties

Sorghum in Mali and household dynamics

- Problem: Poor adoption of improved sorghum varieties
- Solution? Understanding of household and community member responsibilities in sorghum production, processing, and marketing
 - E.g. Task-based groups

Gender inclusivity in agriculture research and development

- Basing research on sex-disaggregated data, roles and responsibilities is a first step
- At each step, men and women should act as informants, collaborators, and evaluators about current practices and experimental technologies
- Embed gender dimensions throughout the study, providing support to both men and women