



Thematic Note
Cross-Cutting Theme: Gender

Caren Levy (UCL)

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1. Short overview description of the GENDER theme

This theme focuses on gender relations in urban risk and knowledge. **Gender relations** are defined as the 'socially constructed relationship between women and men, in which women have been systematically subordinated.' (Moser, 1993:3)

Gender relations are reinforced and reproduced in the interaction between social structure and individual and collective agency of diverse women and men, girls and boys. In the urban context, this agency makes up a range of urban practices which comprise the activities of individual household members; collective action by civil society groups; the activities of the private sector, and the policies, planning and management activities of the state. Very often actions that discriminate against girls and women (or against boys and men) go unrecognised, they have been normalised into culture and are perceived as something 'natural' that partly defines being a woman or girl. This means that gender work has to focus not only on discrimination that is politically identified and recognised by society, for example, in equality legislation, but also that which is invisible or seen as 'natural' by society but nonetheless results in unequal life chances and wellbeing.

Within gender relations, three further framing concepts and definitions are important:

- a) Gender relations reflect power relations and are **intersectional** with other social relations. In other words, not all women and men, girls and boys are the same. Gender relations intersects with relations of class, age, ethnicity, race, religion and sexuality, which then have implications for the particular form that gender relations take in a particular place at a particular time.
- b) Gender relations in most societies reflect a **gender division of labour** and a different **access to and control over resources** between women and men, girls and boys. The gender division of labour is a dynamic relation, which can be defined as the dynamic interaction of social roles, as follows.¹:
 - (i) **Reproductive role:** Child bearing and daily tasks associated with child rearing and domestic tasks, primarily done by women. Men usually have occasional customary domestic tasks (e.g. house building and maintenance). It includes not only biological reproduction but also elements of the reproduction of the labour force and social reproduction. It varies according to gender, class, ethnicity and stage in the life cycle.
 - (ii) **Productive role:** Work done by both women and men for pay in cash or kind. It includes both market production with an exchange value, and subsistence/home production with actual use value, but also potential exchange value.
 - (iii) **Community managing role:** Voluntary unpaid activities undertaken mostly by women, but also by men, at the community level to ensure the provision and maintenance of scarce resources of collective consumption, such as water, health care and education. It is as an extension of women and men's reproductive role, undertaken where goods and services needed in reproductive role are not, or are badly provided for. This role tends to increase in situation of scarcity and often in post disaster contexts.
 - (iv) **Constituency-based politics role:** Political activities undertaken at community, local, national and/or sometimes international levels on behalf of interest-based constituencies, within the framework of traditional/customary structures, party politics and/or lobbying and campaign groups

Each of these roles and relations can be used to help explain observed exposure, susceptibility and adaptive capacity to hazard impact. On balance reproductive and productive roles have been incorporated into vulnerability assessments and community managing and constituency-based politics roles are more often part of analysis of adaptive capacity. Urban ARK should try to draw out these distinctions where possible.

¹ Adapted from DPU Gender Policy and Planning Programme, Short Course Training Handouts – in turn adapted from Moser, C., 1989, 'Gender Planning in the Third World: Meeting Practical and Strategic Gender Needs', *World Development*, 17(11)

- c) Gender needs: Women and men have different gender needs, by virtue of their socially constructed roles. It is useful to distinguish between two types of gender needs²:
- (i) **Practical gender needs (PGN)** are the needs identified by women and men which arise out of the customary gender division of labour. PGN are a response to immediate perceived necessity, identified within a specific context. They are often concerned with inadequacies in living conditions such as water provision, health care, employment – and in the context of disasters, for example, may be lack of sanitary conditions and privacy in emergency shelters, and lack of gender sensitivity during emergency response. PGN are context-specific
 - (ii) **Strategic gender needs (SGN)** reflect a challenge to the customary gender relations and imply change in relationships of power and control between women and men. SGN which women identify arise from women's recognition and challenge to their subordinate position in relation to men in their society, for example, equal access to employment, finance and land, equal legal rights. SGN which men identify arise from men's recognition and challenge to their exclusion from domains which customary male roles impose and which contribute to the perpetuation of women's subordination, for example, sharing child care. SGNs are context-specific, for example the exclusion of women from leadership positions in urban community based organisations.

2. Questions to ask yourself in designing research so that GENDER is integrated into your work

Based on the definitions above, the questions are:

- a) how are gender relations reflected in the social roles in the particular urban context you are examining? Are these affected by different household structure and composition? Are there constraints and opportunities that affect how these social roles are balanced? How are different household structures and these social roles reflected in the policy and planning interventions going on in the urban context you are examining?
- b) how are gender relations reflected in diverse women and men, girls and boys access to and control of resources in the particular urban context you are examining? Are there constraints and opportunities that affect this? Is access and control over resources affected by household structure and composition? How is this access to and control over resources of diverse women and men, girls and boys reflected in the policy and planning interventions going on in the urban context you are examining?
- c) are women and men, girls and boys expressed needs rooted in existing gender relations (practical gender needs) or do they come out of a desired change for more equal gender relations (strategic gender needs)? How are PGN and SGN reflected in policy and planning?

3. How to monitor successful integration

- a) During the research design and implementation process:
 - (i) In considering what data to collect:
 - a. Have you identified the different groups of women and men, by virtue of their social position related to the intersection of gender, class, age, ethnicity, race, religion and sexuality (as appropriate to the context) involved in or affected by risk in the urban context you are researching?
 - b. Have you looked at the different gender roles, and access to and control over resources of these different groups of women and men in the research? Have you considered the impact of different household structure and composition on social roles and access to and control over resources?

² Adapted from DPU Gender Policy and Planning Programme, Short Course Training Handouts – in turn adapted from Moser, C., 1989, 'Gender Planning in the Third World: Meeting Practical and Strategic Gender Needs', *World Development*, 17 (11) and Molyneux, M., 1985, 'Mobilization without Emancipation? women's interests, state and revolution in Nicaragua', *Feminist Studies*, 11(2)

- c. Do you understand whether the expressed needs of women and men in these different groups are practical or strategic gender needs? Is there a recognition of relative positions of inequality by those women and men expressing these needs?
 - d. Have you drawn out the implicit or explicit assumptions about gender roles and relations in the policy and planning interventions you are considering?
- (ii) in considering data sources:
- a. Whose data source and what is its purpose? Are there gendered assumptions about social roles, access to and control over resources, and household structures embedded in this data and the way it is constructed?
 - b. For example, how is 'the household' defined? Are the activities of different household members identified? Is the different access to and control over resources by diverse women and men recognised? How are terms like 'production' identified?
- b) At the stage of reviewing results
- (i) What are the most important socially defined groups of women and men in relation to the focus of your research?
 - (ii) How do women and men in these different groups balance their different social roles? Does this have implications for risk? Does this have implications for participating in political struggles and/or planning initiatives to address risk?
 - (iii) How does the differential access to and control over resources of different women and men affect urban risk? Does this have implications for participating in political struggles and/or planning initiatives to address risk?
 - (iv) Does the situation and the relevant policy and planning interventions offer opportunities for fulfilling both practical and strategic gender needs? In other words, for making existing social relations easier to perform, as well as making gender relations more equal?
- c) In delivering dissemination and impact (including measuring impact):
- (i) To whom are you aiming the dissemination? For what purpose? Is gender mainstreamed or even considered an issue in these organisations?
 - (ii) Develop indicators that will enable the tracking of changes in social roles, access to and control over resources, and the meeting of practical and/or strategic gender needs in the context of urban risk and interventions to reduce it.

4. Illustrative case studies showing the importance of GENDER for research and policy outcomes

Jabeen, H. (2014) Adapting the built environment: the role of gender in shaping vulnerability and resilience to climate extremes in Dhaka, *Environment and Urbanization*, 26 (1), 147-165

5. A short list of five accessible further readings

Alber, Gotelind (2011) Gender, Cities and Climate Change: Thematic report prepared for Cities and Climate Change Global Report on Human Settlements. Available from <http://www.unhabitat.org/grhs/2011>

Blomstrom, E., Cunningham, S., Johnson, N. & Owren, C. (2009) Climate Change Connections: Gender, Population and Climate Change. A Resource Kit. UNFPA and WEDO. Available at <http://www.wedo.org/wp-content/uploads/ClimateConnectionsBookletEnglish1.pdf>

Farrington, J., Ramasut, T. and Walker, J. (2002) Sustainable Livelihoods Approaches in Urban Areas: General Lessons, with Illustrations from Indian Cases, SIDA. Available at http://www.sida.se/contentassets/c85be1c3fc0e4a139c59cf86090429e0/sustainable-livelihoods-approaches-in-urban-areas_1153.pdf

Jabeen, H. (2014) Adapting the built environment: the role of gender in shaping vulnerability and resilience to climate extremes in Dhaka, *Environment and Urbanization*, 26 (1), 147-165

UNISDR (2011) 20-Point Checklist on Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender Sensitive
Available at http://www.unisdr.org/files/42360_20pointchecklistforgendersensitized.pdf

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