

# Center for Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM)

Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba

## CBRM Database

<b>Date:</b>	<b>December 16, 2011</b>	<b>Entry Number:</b>	<b>1173</b>
<b>Case Study Name:</b>	Are women reservoirs of traditional plant knowledge? Gender, ethnobotany and globalization in northeast Brazil.		
<b>Author:</b>	Voeks, R.A.		
<b>Document Type:</b>	Paper in scientific journal		
<b>Year:</b>	2007		
<b>Language:</b>	English		
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<b>Region:</b>	Latin America and the Caribbean		
<b>Country:</b>	Brazil		
<b>Ecosystem Type:</b>	Semiarid savannas at lower elevations, semi deciduous forest and broadleaf evergreen rainforest on higher slopes.		
<b>Social Characteristics:</b>	Community inside protected area		
<b>Scale of Study:</b>	Community		
<b>Resource Type:</b>	Medicinal species		
<b>Type of Initiative:</b>	Research driven project		

<b>Community Based Work:</b>	Indigenous knowledge/traditional knowledge
<b>Keywords:</b>	Ethnobotany; medicinal plants; gendered knowledge; healers; tropical rainforest; cultural erosion; African diaspora.
<b>Summary:</b>	<p>This study examines the degree to which knowledge of traditional plant medicine is gendered among communities settled near Chapada Diamantina National Park in eastern Bahia state, northeast Brazil. Employing a quantitative analysis of a sample plant pharmacopoeia, I focus on the relationship between gender, age and the socioeconomic impacts of globalization in this tropical region. Results indicate that women are more familiar with both the field identities and the medicinal values of the local flora than are men. This division is pronounced among older participants (30–80 years) who represent a reservoir of medicinal plant knowledge that is in danger of disappearing. I suggest that this heightened understanding among women is due to historical gender divisions of space and labour; the inherently high potential for medicinal plant identification and collection in anthropogenic habitats; and the role of women as primary healthcare givers for the family.</p>