



GENDER RESEARCH FROM CONCEPTUALIZATION TO POLICY ACTION: *Lessons from Social Protection & Agriculture*

Amber Peterman

Energy access through a gender lens Workshop: May 12-13th, 2020

SOCIAL PROTECTION

Set of policies & programs aimed at preventing or protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability & social exclusion throughout their lifecycle, with a particular emphasis towards vulnerable groups.

- **Labor market programs** (e.g. skills development, micro-finance)
- **Social services** (e.g. social welfare, housing)
- **Social insurance** (e.g. unemployment insurance)
- **Social assistance** (cash or in-kind benefits)

AGRICULTURE

Activities for production & consumption related to growing crops, raising livestock, fishing & related value chains.

- **Land** (e.g. ownership)
- **Assets** (e.g. bundles of rights, livestock)
- **Access to services** (e.g. extension, processing, cooperatives, value chains)
- **Productivity** (e.g. inputs, labor)

SOCIAL PROTECTION & GENDER: HOW FAR HAVE WE COME?

Recent move from *instrumental* to *intrinsic* value of improving women's wellbeing & gender equality has gained traction:

- Goal 5 of SDGs call for social protection as a target as avenue for reducing unpaid care (2016)
- First gender SPIAC-B working group (2018)
- 63rd Commission on the Status of Women with priority theme of social protection systems (2019)

“Comprehensive social protection systems need to be gender-responsive to a) ensure they do not further exacerbate gender inequality and that they b) promote gender equality.”

~Africa Ministerial Pre-Commission
on the Status of Women (CSW) 2019

GENDER ON THE SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICY AGENDA: LESSONS?

MACRO LEVERS

1. **Big push by donors** DFID, Sida & others – funding research ('making the case') & requiring programming to account for gender;
2. **Coordinating body** at international & regional levels setting the agenda, aspirational goals;
3. **Champions** (international & national levels);
4. **Data** at macro-level, tracking progress, 'scoring' of systems;

MICRO LEVERS

1. Ensure research linked to **national policy priorities**
2. Build relationships & trust (implementers, national researchers) increased credibility of research
3. **Diversify research products** over the evaluation timeline
4. Importance of **packaging evidence**
5. Create regional **learning communities**
6. **Build capacity**

Blog (book): [Making research count: Lessons on turning evidence into action from the Transfer Project](#)

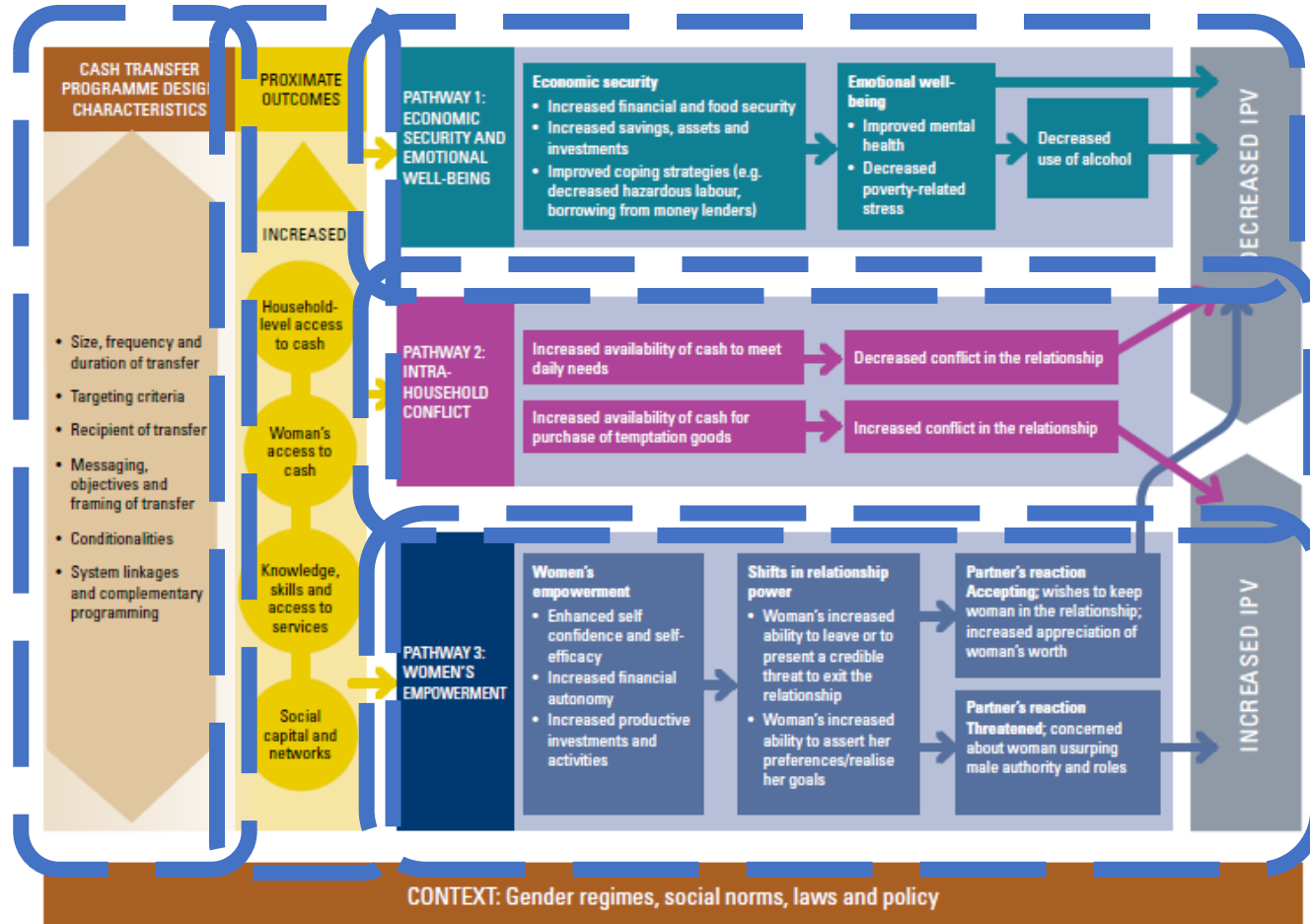
GENDER-SENSITIVITY IN PRACTICE: STILL A LONG WAY TO GO



Gentilini et al. ([living paper](#)): Planned, introduced or adapted social protection measures in response to COVID-19 (801 total), only 11% had some gender sensitivity*

* Hidrobo, Kumar, Palermo, Peterman & Roy (2020). [Gender-sensitive social protection: A critical component of the COVID-19 response in LMICs](#). IFPRI.

CONCEPTUALIZATION: CASH TRANSFERS & INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE



- 3 pathways at household, couple & individual level
- Impacts depend on program characteristics & context (gender norms)

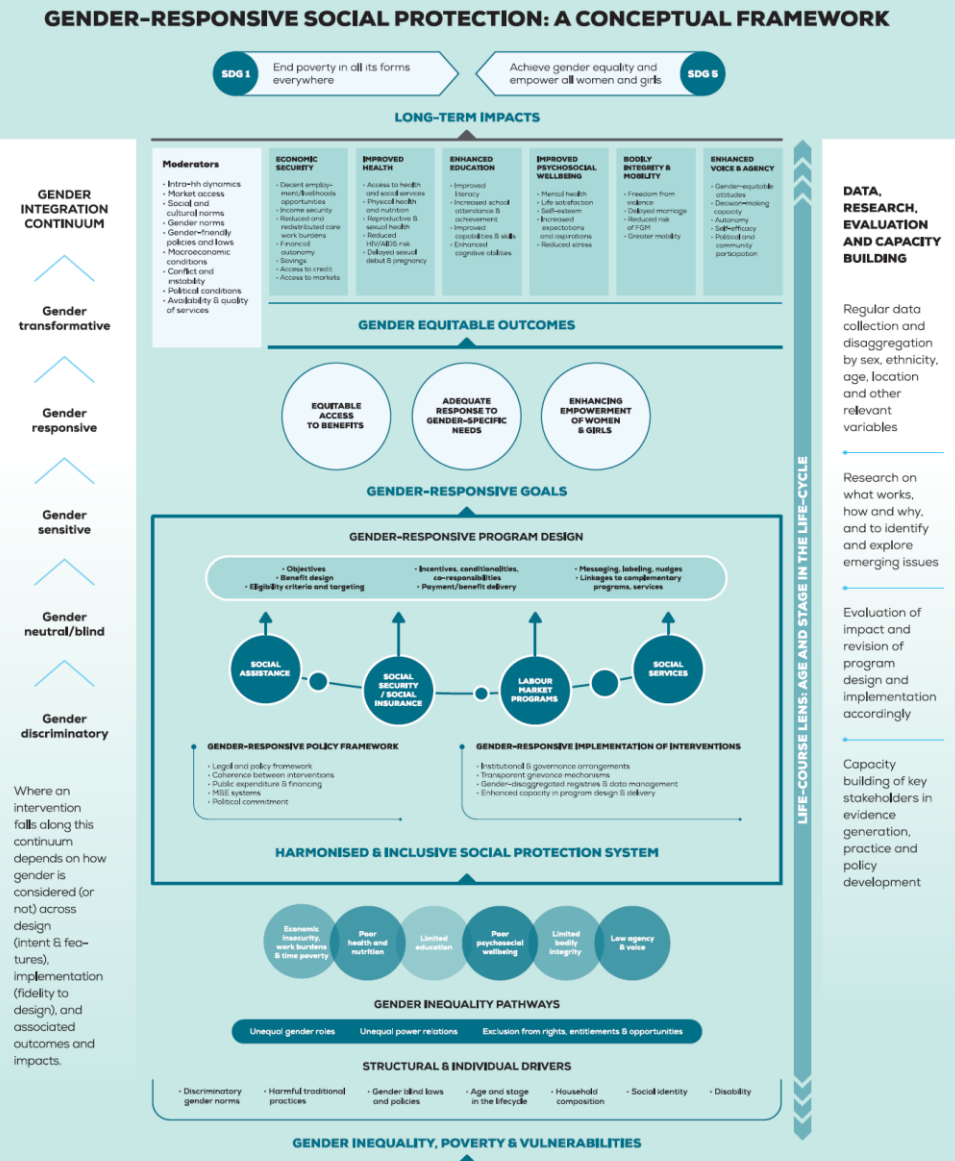
Buller, A. M., Peterman, A., Ranganathan, M., Bleile, A., Hidrobo, M., & Heise, L. (2018). A mixed-method review of cash transfers and intimate partner violence in low and middle-income countries. *World Bank Research Observer* 33(2): 218-258.

GENDER-SENSITIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION

- Bottom: Gendered inequalities
- Middle: Social protection system
- Top: Gender equitable outcomes
- LH side: Gender-integration
- RH side: Role of research & capacity building

‘Macro-view’ helps unpack role of political economy, institutions & program features

Gender Responsive Social Protection Conceptual Framework (Gavrilovic et al. 2019). UNICEF – Innocenti.



CONCEPTUALIZING THE ISSUE: LESSONS LEARNED

- Visual communication of 'conceptual framework' to non-specialists very valuable – especially when linkages are not 'obvious'
- Articulates the overall objective (end goal, e.g. empowerment, gender-integration, SDG 5 etc.)
- Makes levels of impact clearer – e.g. woman vs household vs. communal?
- Framework for organizing hypotheses & literature
- Guides researchers on what to measure in impact evaluations

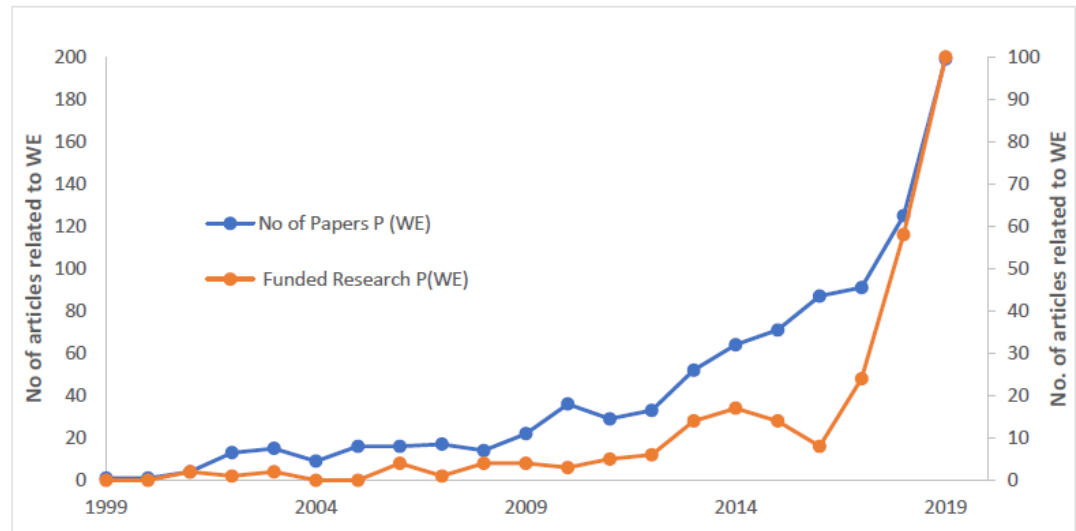
GENDER ANALYSIS & MEASUREMENT OF EMPOWERMENT

- *“Expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this was previously denied”* (Kabeer 1999)
- Agency as key component -- should be distinct from gender equality, equity & status
- Should operate at different levels: 1) power within (intrinsic agency), 2) power to (instrumental agency), 3) power with (collective agency)

916 articles: 80% belonging to = social science (49.3%), arts & humanities (10.0%), economics (9.5%), medicine (8.3%), business management & accounting (5.0%), and environment science (5%).

Citation: Priya et al. (2020). Cataloging citations of Kabeer (1999). “Resources, agency, achievements: Reflections on the measurement of women’s empowerment”

Figure 1: Trend in research funding and publication related to women’s empowerment



HOW DO WE OPERATIONALIZE AGENCY? (Donald et al. 2017)

- Intra-household decision-making (e.g. DHS)
- Autonomy; Relative autonomy index (RAI)
- Self-efficacy
- Confidence
- Capacity to set & achieve goals
- Locus of control
- Self-assessed life freedom & control (e.g. WVS)
- Voice (individual & collective) & participation

“To date, neither the World Bank nor any other major development agency has developed a rigorous method for measuring and tracking changes in levels of empowerment” . . .

Malhortra, Schuler, Boender (2002)

MEASUREMENT REFLECTIONS

- 01. Still have large gaps in understanding what is being captured & how to interpret measures
- 02. Women's & men's goals/preferences (values) should be reflected (captured) alongside agency to achieve these goals.
- 03. We should be capturing multiple measures of agency – where appropriate & over different domains to triangulate outcomes

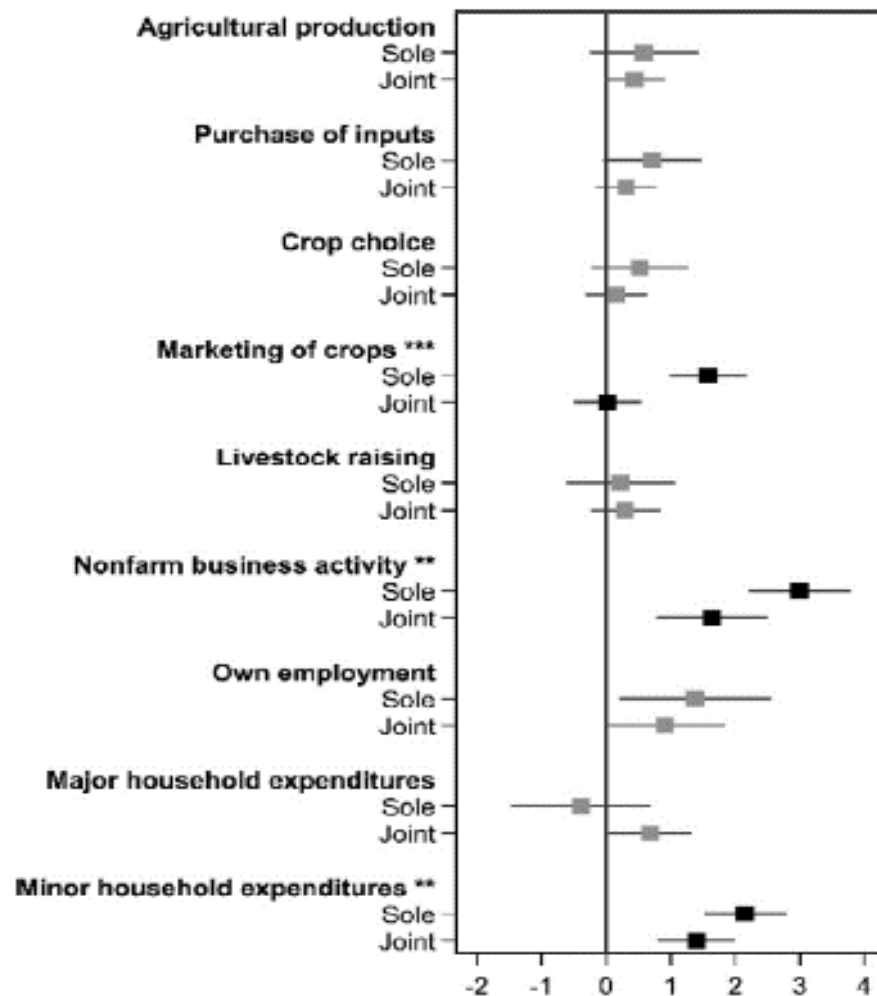
** Many questions still remain: A few examples from research using decision-making (DM) indicators **

“Who usually makes the decision about visits to your family or relatives?”

Response options: 1 = Respondent alone, 2 = Respondent and partner, 3 = partner alone, 4 = other

HOW DO WE INTERPRET JOINTNESS?

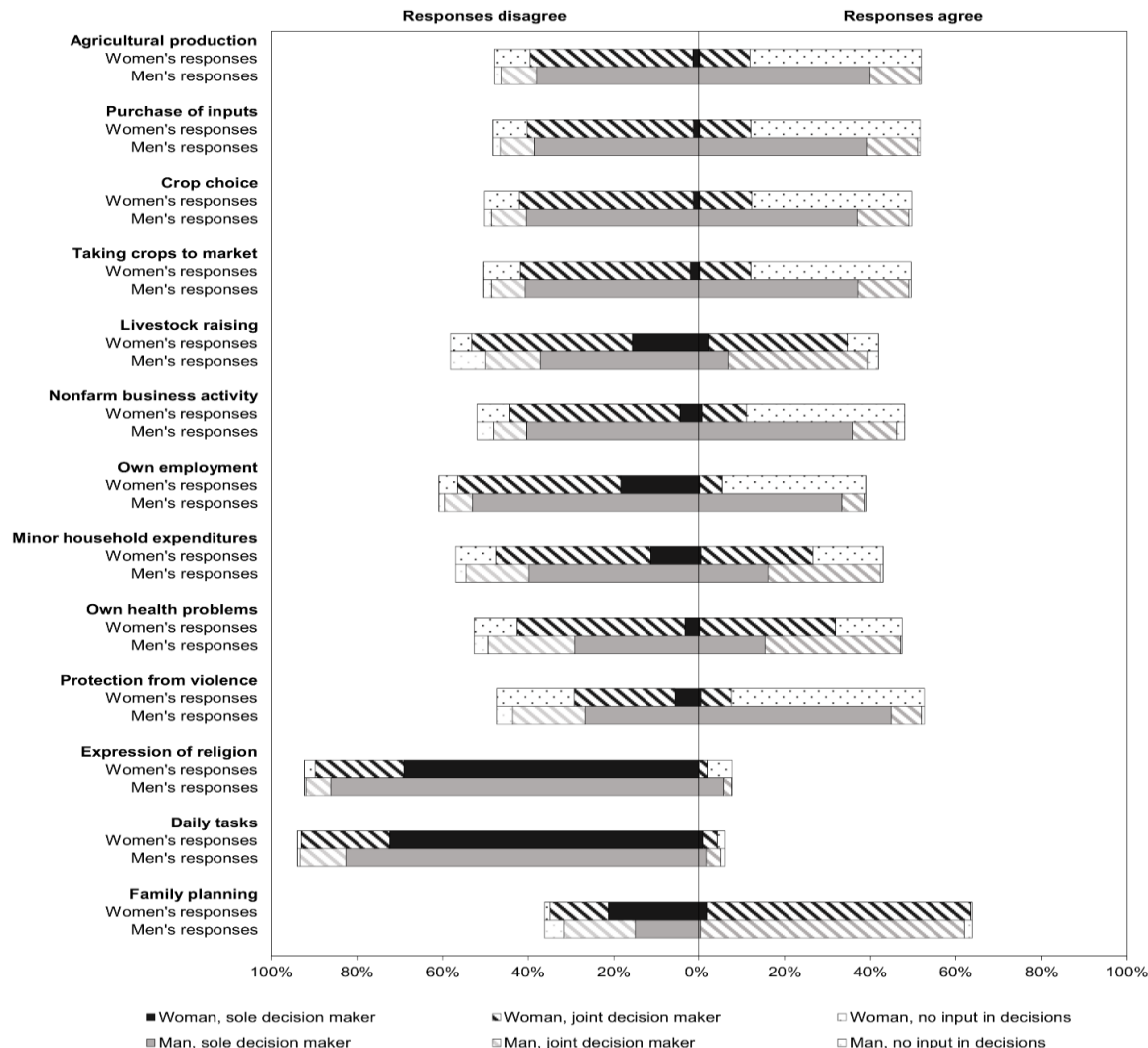
- Is joint decision-making “better” or “worse” than sole decision-making?
How do we minimize implicit judgement about what is preferred?
- Analysis shows that women and men (in Ghana & Bangladesh) associate different domains more and less strongly with autonomous motivation
- Sole DM matters for women in Ghana select domains; Women in Bangladesh prefer joint DM



Women in Ghana (N=1785)

DECISION-MAKING: FROM WHO'S PERSPECTIVE?

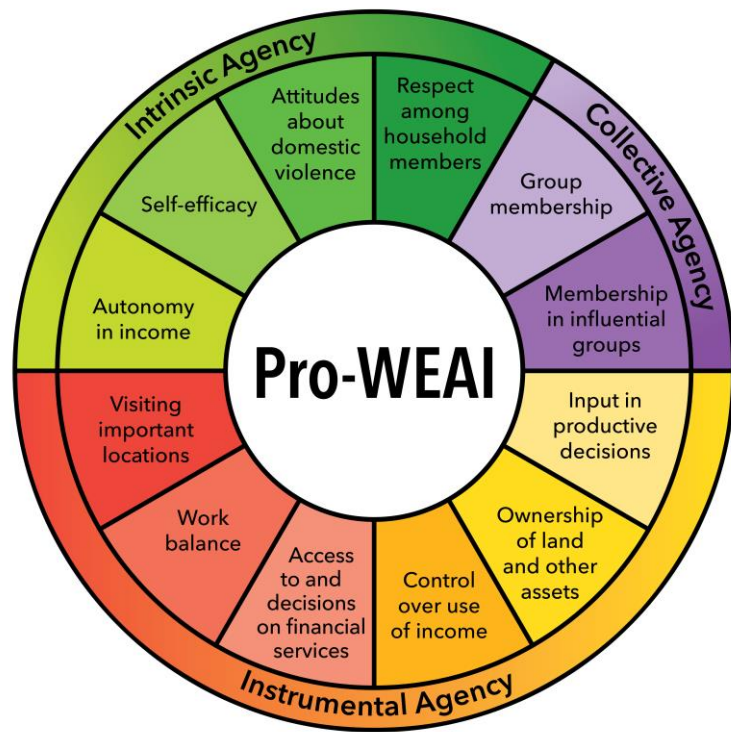
- Couples agree 6-64% of the time (Bangladesh) & 67-82% of the time (Ghana)
- Women tend to report decisions as joint, men tend to report as sole



Couples in Bangladesh (2011-2012)

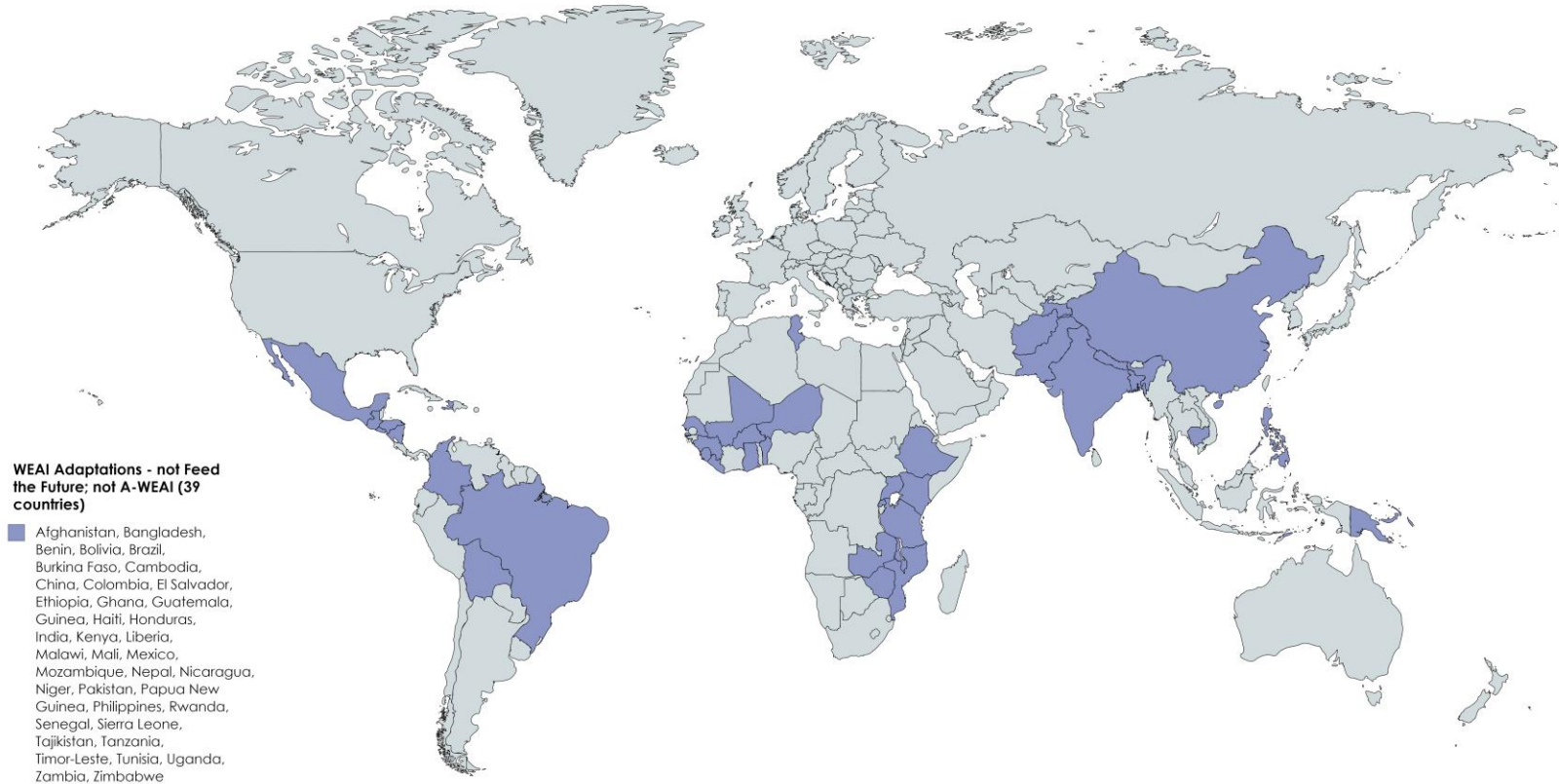
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN AGRICULTURE INDEX (WEAI) (Malapit et al. 2019)

- **Objectives:** Developed by USAID, IFPRI, OPHI in 2012 to measure inclusion of women in agriculture sector
- **Survey based:** Constructed using interviews of primary male and female in the same household
- **Versions & iterations:**
 1. Abbreviated WEAI (a-WEAI)
 2. Project-level WEAI (pro-WEAI) → Health & Nutrition
 3. WEAI for Value Chains (WEAI4VC)
 4. WE in Livestock Index (WELI)
 5. WE in Fish Index (WEFI)



12 indicators of empowerment
(equal weighting)

WEAI ADAPTIONS: 53 countries, 86 organizations



IMPLICATIONS & IDEAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- **Measuring empowerment is complex**—let's resist simplification & strive to measure it fully (rather than related concepts, e.g. women's status or wellbeing)
- Much to be gained from **inter-disciplinary & mixed method** work
- While seeking to distill commonalities, we cannot ignore **context** & individual specificity of empowerment across different types of agency—for women & men / girls & boys.
- **Strive for true gender analysis** [not just women's outcomes!]
- **Cost-effectiveness** estimates can help understand how to make trade offs between program design & implementation features → including components recommended for **gender sensitive designs**
- **Need to engage with & connect to macro-level processes:** Migration, urbanization, environmental & planetary health (ex. COVID-19)

Thank you!

amberpeterman@gmail.com

This presentation draws on research of colleagues at UNICEF Innocenti and the Transfer Project (including Maja Gavrilovic, Tia Palermo and Elsa Valli), as well as at IFPRI (including Greg Seymour, Hazel Malapit, Agnes Quisumbing, Ruth Meinzen-Dick and the WEAI team).



CITATIONS

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