

Developing a genuinely gender-sensitive
measure of multidimensional poverty

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2017 Panel ' Why Gender Data Matters:
Australia's role in global efforts to Close the
Gender Gap.'

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INTRODUCTION

Feminist and participatory perspectives that informed the IDM

The research design towards the IDM

Significance of the participatory work

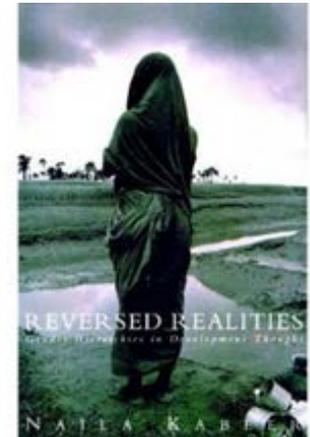
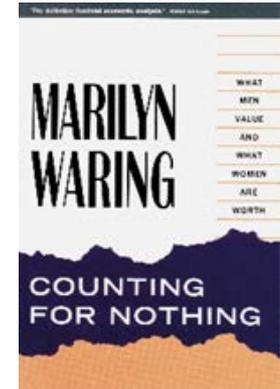
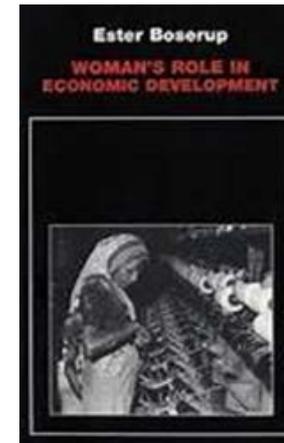
Gender differences identified

FEMINIST INFLUENCE ON DEVELOPMENT

Feminist scholarship – spanning various disciplines – has influenced the language of development

Gender is at least on the development ‘agenda’ of many development organisations

But the conceptualisation and measurement of poverty, has been impervious to feminist scholarship



EXISTING POVERTY MEASURES

The most serious problem with current ways of measuring poverty is that the household is the unit of analysis

This assumes that resources are distributed equally within the household – all members are equally poor

And assumes that poverty affects everyone in the same ways – regardless of gender (or any other characteristic)



MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY MEASURES

- Even multidimensional measures cannot reveal when **multiple deprivations are experienced by a single individual** vs spread among individuals.
- Do not factor in **dimensions of great significance to women** such as time use, violence, family planning etc.
- Or enable societal level assessment of **group differences**, eg by age, gender, ethnicity, disability & more
- Also draw on existing data which poor people have no say in determining

MOVING BEYOND CRITIQUE

What is a just and justifiable measure of poverty that is genuinely gender sensitive and capable of revealing gender disparities?

AN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH COLLABORATION

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Housed and led by the Australian National University, with additional funding & in-kind support from:

- International Women's Development Agency (linkage partner)
- Oxfam Great Britain (Southern Africa), Oxfam America
- Philippines Health & Social Science Association
- University of Colorado at Boulder
 - And significant additional support from Oslo University

FEMINIST RESEARCH

Feminist research is characterised by a focus on gender relationships, which is a relationship not just of difference but inequality and power.

Feminist research is often, though not necessarily, multi-disciplinary.

Feminist research is guided by feminist ethical principles, which inform the selection and design of questions, methodology, method and modes of analysis

Feminist research is open and transparent about its values.

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH METHODS

Involve shared knowledge-production which offers new insights

Give members of marginalized groups a voice, and enables them to make their voices heard – how do they assess different levels of poverty ?

Value their knowledge and brings their everyday experiences into the research process – shaping the nature of the dimensions to be measured

Through participatory ranking, enable their priorities to be identified and valued.

THREE-PHASE RESEARCH DESIGN

6 COUNTRIES, THREE SITES IN EACH

- Pacific (Fiji)
- South East Asia (Indonesia, Philippines)
- Southern Africa (Angola, Malawi, Mozambique)

PHASE 1: QUALITATIVE

Participatory research, to gain insight & understanding (~ 1,115 people)

PHASE 2: PARTICIPATORY RANKING

Dimension preference, to gauge priorities & gaps (~ 1,800 people)

PHASE 3: DEVELOPING AND TRIALLING THE IDM

Nationally representative survey in the Philippines (~ 1,800 people)



PARTICIPATORY INSIGHTS HELPED TO IDENTIFY MEASUREMENT REQUIREMENTS

- For many participants '**poverty**' = material poverty
- **But**, while the same deprivations were broadly agreed by men and women, and all age groups, they were often identified for different reasons
 - differences often linked to gender roles and responsibilities
- Revealing these differences requires a focus not just on what you measure but **how** you measure
 - i.e. the participatory work helped to identify the differences that needed to be captured in a measurement tool if its results are to be accurate and gender-sensitive across the life-course
 - And thus the key approaches to measurement: individual, intersectional and intra-household

GENDER DIFFERENCES

- Men and women tended to identify **different kinds and levels of control over decisions that affect their lives**
- And **different opportunities for responding to deprivation**
 - In Malawi a female participant noted that when times are difficult men can find short term casual labour, but women have limited options (mobility, education or social constraints) and often must turn to prostitution
- For many women, household and caring work constrained choices for income outside the home with options changing over the life-course
 - When the children were younger life was more difficult for me. I had a lot more tasks in terms of raising the children and less time to do the things I wanted to do. Now I can engage in farming and small business & take part in community activities. (Older woman, Nausori, Fiji)
- And income earning was additional to unpaid work
 - ‘I work harder [than my husband] because aside from scavenging I also attend to household chores.’ (Middle aged woman, Tondo, Philippines)

GENDER DIFFERENCES

- **Males** more likely to identify formal **employment**, and access to **electricity** as dimensions of deprivation.
- **Females** more likely to discuss **education**, **health care**, and an **inability to care for their families**.
- In terms of assets, **males** were more likely to identify productive **capital** (farm implements, ability to borrow), whilst **females** were more likely to identify lack of **small assets** (eg gold jewellery)
- **Females** more likely to mention **sexual exploitation**, & the **lack of children or productive partners** as constitutive of poverty.
- **Females** more commonly identified **sanitation**, and access to **sanitary pads/products**, as important, and access to adequate **contraception**.

GENDERED NORMS & ATTITUDES SHAPE CIRCUMSTANCES, OPPORTUNITIES & STRATEGIES

- ‘Poverty is different [for women] because when a woman is abandoned by her husband she ends up poorer because she needs to take care of the children alone. Poverty is more severe for women [who are] alone because they cannot build a house or support their children,’ (Adult woman, Zawala, Mozambique)
- ‘These days, getting firewood is not easy because if caught, we are asked to dance for the guards or worse still we are raped. Because of this, we are left helpless as we can no longer depend on ourselves in terms of money.’ (Woman, unknown age, Somo, Malawi)
- ‘It also sometimes becomes very hard for him (my son) as he has his own family to look after. When I was fit I used to do some kind of work to support him but since the time I lost my one eye I am unable to do any work (Older man, Naleba, Fiji)

RANKING GENDER & DIMENSION PREFERENCES

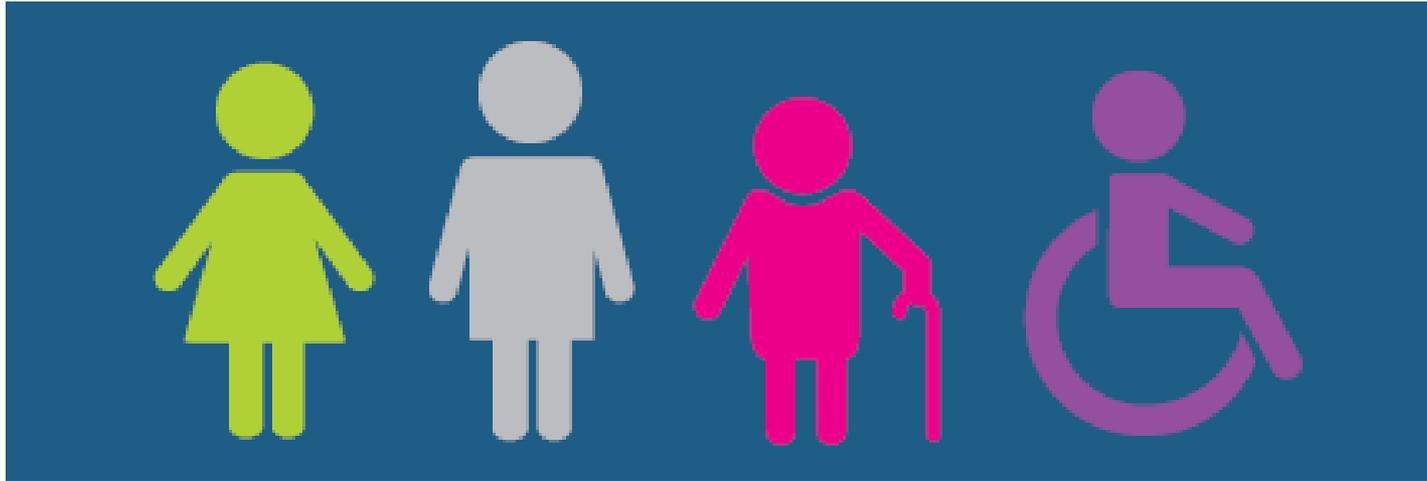
- Minor variations in ranking by gender
- Men ranked property rights, participation in the community, the location of services, the environment, and clothing higher than women.
- Women ranked shelter, toilet, cooking fuel, and personal care higher than men.
- Some middle-ranked dimensions particularly important for revealing gender disparity
 - Freedom from violence
 - Family planning
 - Time-use

KEY FEATURES OF THE IDM

- Individual
- Gender-sensitive
- Multidimensional
- Intersectional
- Scalar



SAMPLING APPROACH



- Randomly select households, then aim to interview every household member over 18 years of age
 - Enables assessment of intra-household distribution
 - With some challenges for assessing violence dimension

THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL IDM

