

**MISSING VOICES:
WHOSE PERSPECTIVES ARE MISSING IN
HOUSEHOLD SURVEY DATA?**

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TWO BROAD CATEGORIES OF MISSING VOICES

- People who live in households that are often missed or are not in households – the very rich and the very poor; and marginalized groups such as indigenous people, unhoused people, or those living in institutional settings.
- People who live in households that are surveyed, but whose voices are missed when only one member of the household is interviewed.

HOUSEHOLDS AS THE UNIT OF ANALYSIS

- Many household surveys assume that the household will be the unit of analysis and collect data at the level of the household.
- They may ask about household income, household asset ownership, and household businesses, household agricultural production...
- There has been some changes towards disaggregating some of these dimensions, particularly income, and more recently assets.

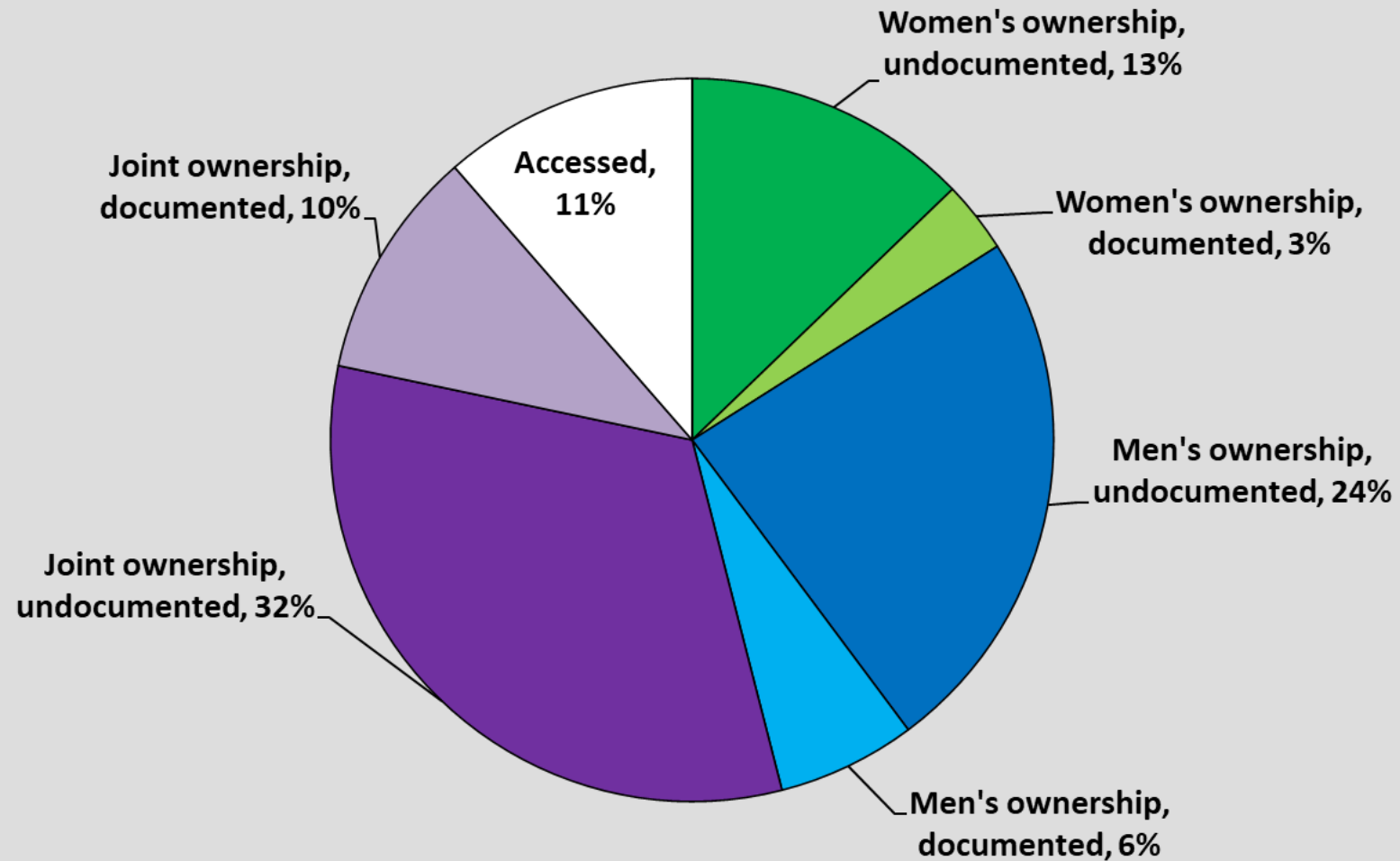
REPRESENTATION IN SURVEYS

- Many surveys rely on a “proxy respondent” to provide answers about everyone in the household.
- Typically the respondent is the household head or the person most knowledgeable about the topic.
- They may provide information on everyone – such as age, education levels, employment status.
- They cannot provide information on opinions or knowledge of other household members.

ASKING THE “WHO” QUESTIONS

- Who earns the income?
- Who attends school?
- Who owns the house? The land? The business?
- Who provides the labor to the farm? The business?
- Who makes decisions?

LSMS-ISA UGANDA: DISTRIBUTION OF LAND



BUT REPRESENTATION IS NOT THE SAME AS HEARING THEIR OWN VOICES

We get different answers when surveys ask a proxy respondent, as compared to asking the individual household members themselves.

- Labor statistics
- Asset ownership
- Household decision-making (including farm decision-making)
- Values of property

The voices of respondents are different from those of the proxies.

Most of the analyses have compared the responses of husbands and wives.

GENDER ASSET GAP PROJECT



The project set out in 2009 to demonstrate both the feasibility and importance of collecting individual level asset ownership data and to calculate the gender wealth gap.

Three countries: Ecuador, Ghana, and Karnataka, India

Extensive qualitative research initially, followed by surveys interviewing two principal members of the household on a range of topics including questions about who owned each asset within the household.

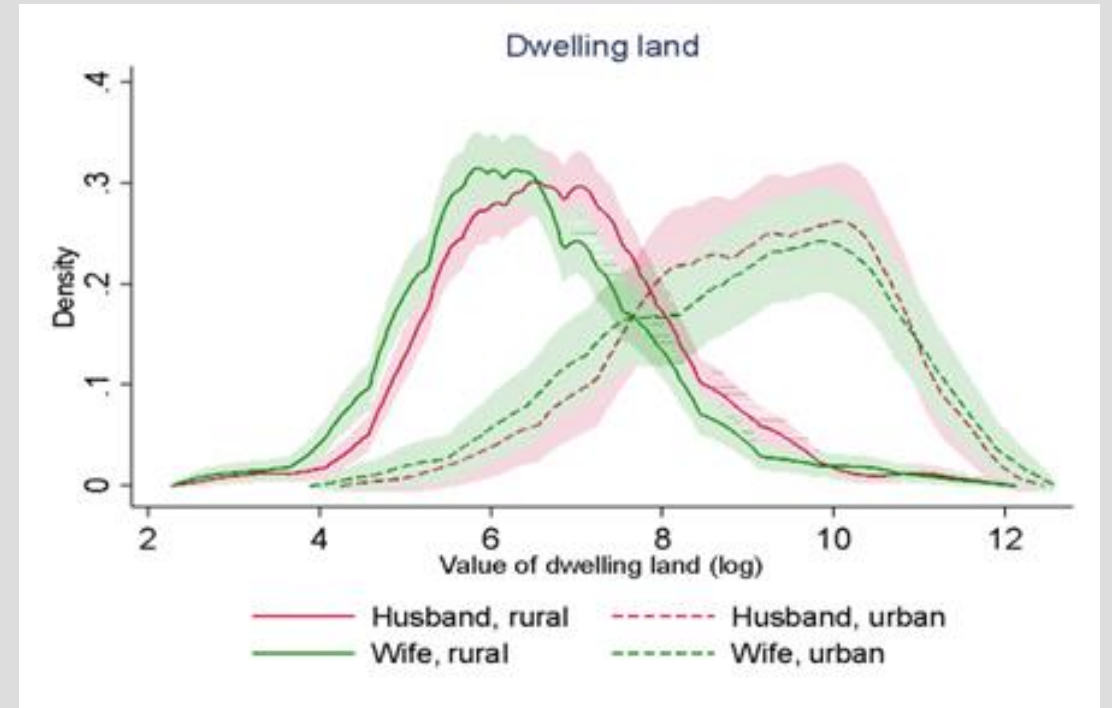
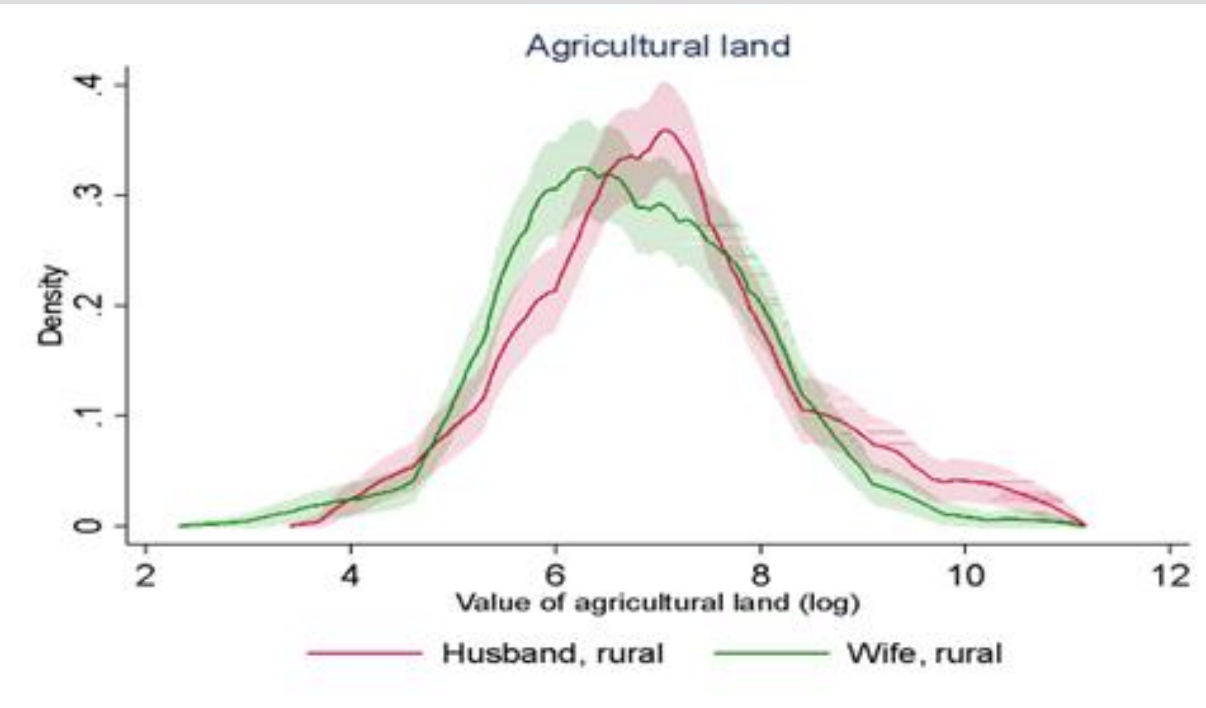
COUPLES DISAGREE ON WHO OWNS ASSETS

	Country	N (assets)	% of couples that disagree
Dwelling	Ecuador	450	35
	Ghana	510	8
Ag Land	Ecuador	94	31
	Ghana	873	3
Other real estate	Ecuador	164	20
	Ghana	413	8
Non-farm business	Ecuador	534	22
	Ghana	641	2

DIFFERENCES IN VALUES OF OWNED PROPERTY

- Analysis of LSMS+ data from Malawi where multiple people in each household were interviewed. 2,478 households.
- Everyone who reported that they owned agricultural land or a dwelling was asked what would be received if the property were to be sold. For every property, we have a reported market value from everyone who claims to be an owner.
- Analysis uses the couple sample. Includes all properties for which both the husband and wife reported a value.

COUPLES' RESPONSES ON VALUE OF PROPERTY, MALAWI



WHY DO WE CARE?

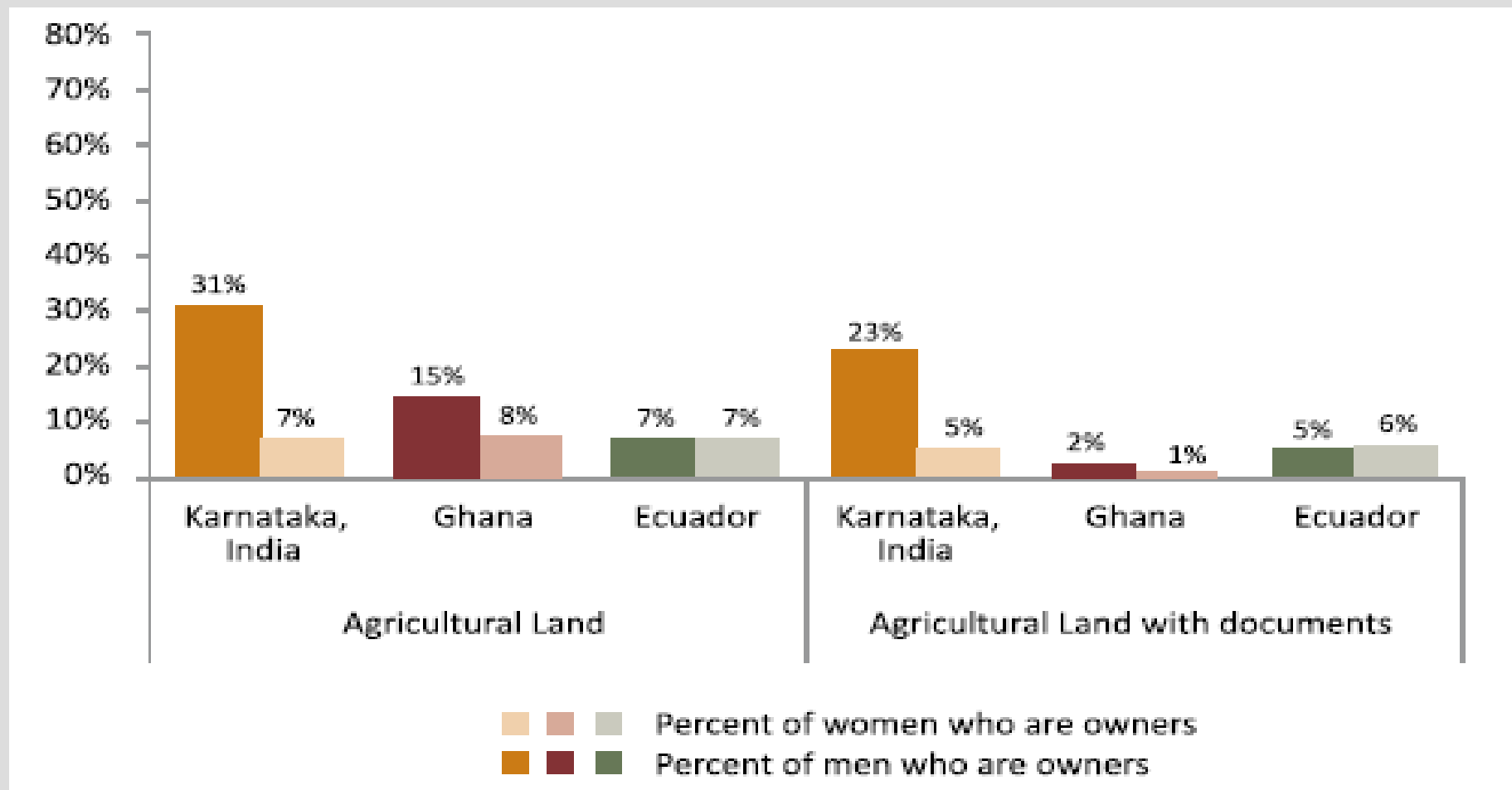
If we are using asset ownership or valuation measures in any types of analyses, our results may differ depending on whose responses we use.

The perceived value of the property may affect willingness to take risks, investment decisions, willingness or ability to assert oneself in the community or bargaining power within the household.

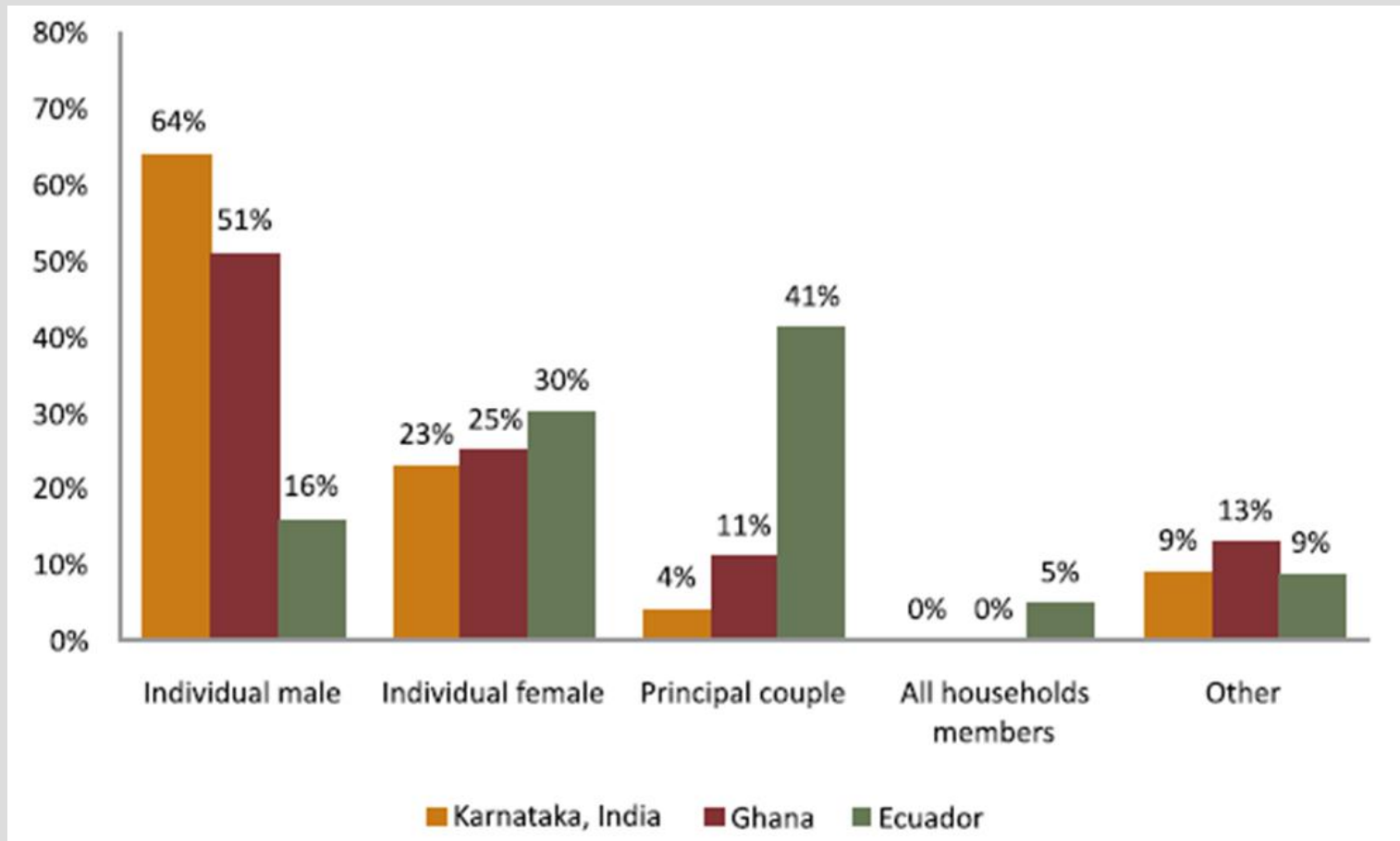
WHAT DO WE DO
WITH THE DIFFERENT
RESPONSES WITHIN A
HOUSEHOLD?

1. Use one response
2. Reconcile responses
3. Include both responses in the analysis, added in separately
4. Use the patterns of concordance and discordance as additional information.

Reconciled Response: Incidence of Ownership of Agricultural Land



Reconciled Response: Distribution by Form of Ownership, Residence



USING INFORMATION FROM MULTIPLE RESPONDENTS

- In Bangladesh, we were interested in whether concordance between spouses' responses was associated with a range of outcomes related to women's empowerment. Qualitative research suggested that "household harmony" was important in obtaining good welfare outcomes within the household.
- We have data on who makes decisions about agricultural production, taking crops to market, livestock raising, nonfarm business activity, minor household expenditures, and use of family planning.
- We create four categories of responses:
 - Agree wife decides
 - Disagree, wife says wife decides, husband does not
 - Agree wife does not decides
 - Disagree, husband says wife decides, wife does not
- In 35-48% of the households, couples disagree on whether the wife is involved.

ASSOCIATION WITH OUTCOMES

- Four outcome variables: Number of groups wife is a member of, wife has a loan, wife uses birth control, measure of wife's life satisfaction.
- Compared to when spouses agree that the wife does not decide:
 - When only she says that she decides, she is more likely to have a loan and her life satisfaction is higher.
 - When they agree that she decides, coefficients on all outcomes are positive and significant.
 - When only he says that she decides, she is less likely to use family planning.

ASSOCIATION OF IPV WITH CONCORDANCE IN RESPONSES

Study on Joint Decision-making and intimate partner violence.

Using the DHS data from 12 sub-Saharan countries, we looked at the responses regarding who makes decisions about major household purchases. Response options included respondent, spouse, respondent and spouse, someone else, or other.

We coded these into 9 response categories:

- Agree husband decides
- Agree wife decides
- Agree made jointly
- Husband says wife, wife says joint
- Husband says wife, wife says husband
- Husband says joint, wife says wife
- Husband says joint, wife says husband
- Husband says husband, wife says joint
- Husband says husband, wife says wife

RELATIONSHIP WITH IPV

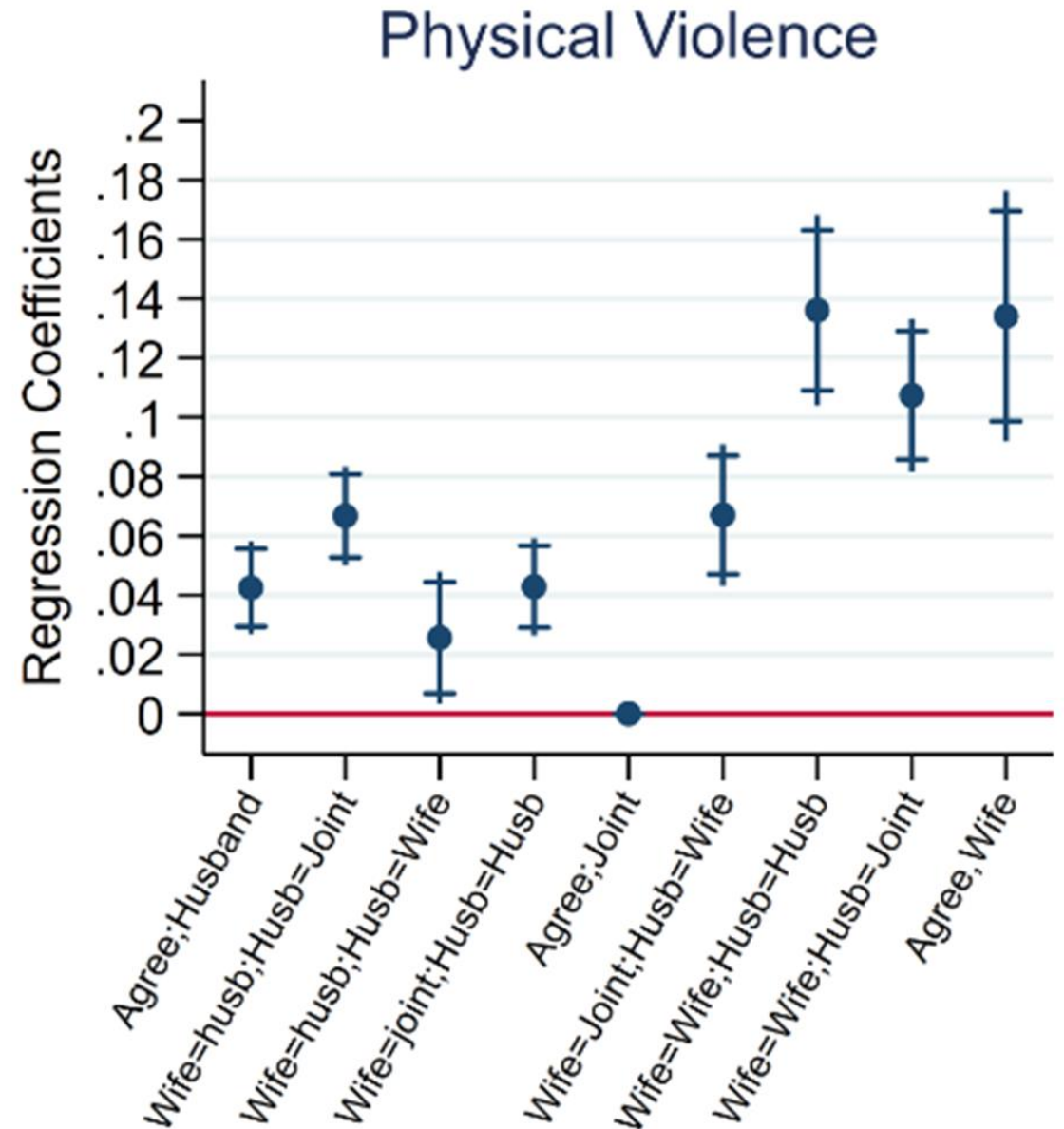
- We then looked at the association between the responses on who decides with the wife's response on her experience of physical, emotional, and sexual violence perpetrated by her husband/partner.
- In the paper, we explore common explanations for IPV: attitudes towards violence, similarity of preferences, bargaining, and marital capital. These only partially explain the relationships we see in the data. Our results are consistent with the explanation that agreement on joint decision-making as a means of shared responsibility is associated with less IPV.

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Lowest incidence of physical violence is associated with spouses agreeing that they make a joint decision. All other responses have higher incidences of violence.

Similar patterns for emotional and sexual violence.

There is added information from having both responses.



OTHER VOICES WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD

- In a study in Nepal using data similar to that from Bangladesh, young married couples were interviewed. We considered the concordance of responses in households where the couple lived with his parents and those where they lived alone.
- We found higher more concordance regarding who owns assets and who makes decisions among young married couples in households with in-laws, because husbands and wives agree that she does not own assets or make decisions.
- But spousal concordance that wives own assets or make decisions, and discordance in which only wives report that wives own assets or make decisions, are both correlated with higher measures of wives' well-being than concordance that she doesn't own assets or make decisions.
- We also considered concordance on whether they reported that others are involved in the decisions. In households with in-laws, concordance that others are involved is correlated with worse outcomes for wives.
- Spousal concordance is not necessarily indicative of wives' well-being, especially in joint households.

CAN WE EXPLAIN WHY THERE IS DISCORDANCE?

Random measurement error: Equally likely that you get men say wife owns and she says not as that wife says she owns and husband says she does not.

Systematic measurement error: Patterns of disagreement are the same across types of assets and decisions.

Asymmetric information: Spouses do not know about the decisions that the other is making or the assets that they own. This may be intentional or not. Some types of assets or decisions may be less visible or easier to hide.

EVIDENCE FROM BANGLADESH

- Results from Bangladesh suggest that disagreement is not exclusively driven by measurement error, either random or systematic. In addition, disagreement is higher for decisions assets that are less visible, including raising livestock and minor household expenditures, this is indicative of asymmetric information in the household, potentially hidden assets and decisions.
- The answers differ because husbands and wives have different information.

DEPENDING ON WHO YOU INTERVIEW...

You will get different responses on questions regarding:

Who owns assets

Who makes decisions

Property values

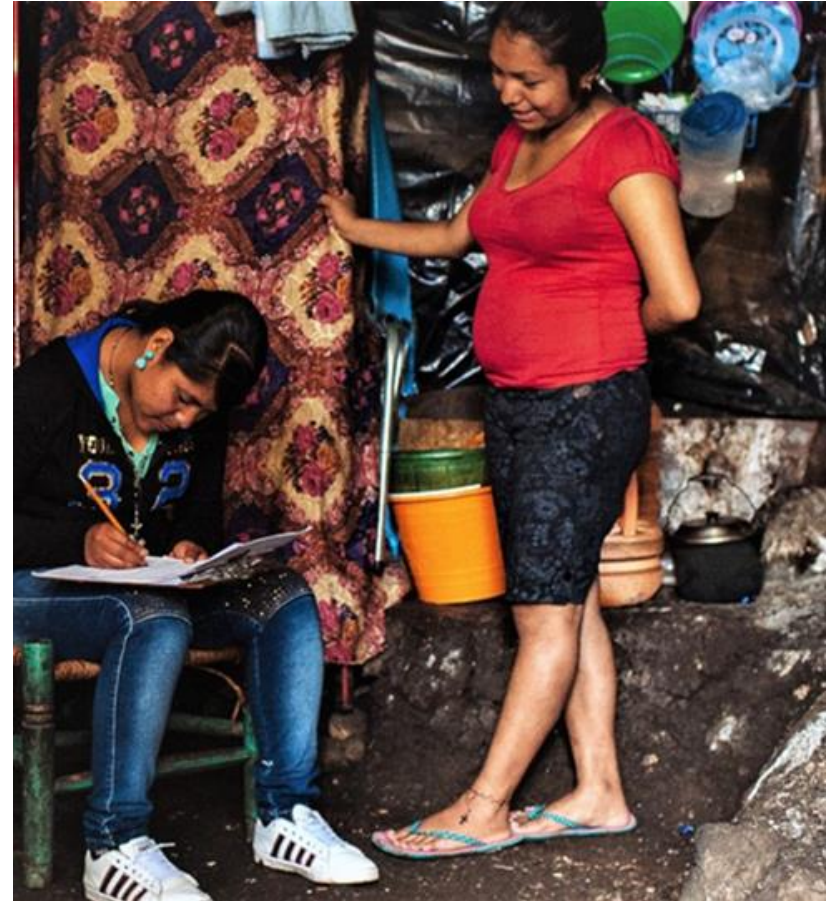
And more....

And these different responses may lead you to different policies –


Who to target with asset transfers

Who to target with agricultural extension and information programs

What types of agricultural investments people are likely to make



- One way to include more voices in the data is interview multiple people in the household.
- This has often meant, collecting and analyzing data from the husband and wife. This allows for intrahousehold analyses.
- But another approach is to randomly choose whether to interview a man or a woman in a particular household.



ADDING
MORE
VOICES



WHAT
OTHER
VOICES
MAY BE
MISSING?

- Often, young couples living with in-laws
- Widows living in extended households
- Collecting data on individuals as well as on their households lets us analyze the data in other ways – by age, marital status, etc.

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