CHAPTER ONE PROJECT INTRODUCTION

SOCIAL EVALUATION IS NECESSARY FOR ASSESSING THE JUSTICE OF EXISTING INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND DECIDING HOW TO CHANGE THEM. DETERMINING WHETHER A GIVEN SOCIETY OR SOCIAL SYSTEM IS BECOMING MORE OR LESS JUST DEPENDS IN LARGE PART ON THE MEASUREMENT OF SOCIAL PROGRESS.

A minimally adequate system of social evaluation should make morally justified and empirically reliable assessments of poverty and gender equity.[1] How many people are poor, or fall below a minimally acceptable level of deprivation, and how severe is their poverty? Is deprivation shared equally among different social groups, including men and women, or are some individuals disproportionately burdened as a result of their social location? These questions are central to the projects of social and global justice and the progress of society.

Consider two evaluations of global progress. First, is there less poverty in the world today than there was 20 years ago? According to the World Bank's International Poverty Line of 1.25 USD 2005 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), the period 1990-2005 saw the most rapid poverty reduction in world history. But if one looks at the absolute number of poor people on the World Bank's higher $2.00 US 2005 PPP, there was no decline in poverty over this period. Has rapid poverty reduction occurred, or has the world failed to deliver on its promise to halve global poverty?

Second, are women disproportionately represented among the poor? Is poverty, as many people claim, feminised? UN Women proclaims that, 'according to some estimates, women represent 70% of the world's poor' (UN Women 2010, p.10). Claims about the feminisation of global poverty have been persistently made since the 1980s. If true, it would represent a manifest injustice that severe deprivation is so disproportionately experienced by women. However, the International Poverty Line and almost all existing national poverty lines measure poverty at the household level, using either consumption-expenditure or income. It is therefore simply not possible to determine whether women are disproportionately or increasingly represented among the poor.[2]

In both cases, resolving the question of whether the world has less poverty, or whether women number disproportionately and increasingly among the poor, requires answering a prior question: how should poverty be conceived and measured? This is the central question our project initially sought to address.

Our focus on this question, and with improving the measurement of deprivation, is animated by four major concerns:

1. Existing measures of poverty and gender disparity fail to reveal properly the extent and depth of individual deprivation.
2. The measurement of poverty and gender disparity should not be the exclusive purview of sequestered academic investigation—poor men and women must help determine how their lives are evaluated through a process of public reason.[3]
3. Gender (among other personal characteristics)[4] may be a determinant of whether a person is deprived, what their deprivation consists in, and how that deprivation is experienced.
4. Feminist methodology and research methods are necessary for the construction of a morally justifiable, gender-sensitive measure of deprivation.

In the pages that follow, we will show why new measurement is needed, explicate the work we have done in partnership with women and men in poor communities across 18 sites in Africa, Asia and the Pacific to develop better measures, and propose the Individual Deprivation Measure (IDM), a new tool which can measure poverty and gender disparity simultaneously.

The remainder of **Chapter one** examines shortcomings in the World Bank's International Poverty Line, the

1. These are certainly not the only important components of an adequate system of social evaluation. For a recent comprehensive discussion on the measurement of progress, see Stiglitz, J.E., Sen, A., Fitoussi, J.P, et al. (2009). *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress.* Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress. Although our project will make evaluations of the gendered distribution of deprivation, it is focused on assessing deprivation and will not develop more comprehensive measures of social progress.

2. The claim that 70% of the poor are women has been widely shown to be unsubstantiated, and nearly all investigations of the topic show that official poverty statistics currently do not permit evaluations of the relative poverty of men versus women. See, among others, Chant, S. (2007) *Gender, Generation and Poverty: Exploring the 'Feminisation of Poverty' In Africa, Asia and Latin America.* Northampton: Edward Elgar.

3. 'Public reason requires that the moral or political rules that regulate our common life be, in some sense, justifiable or acceptable to all those persons over whom the rules purport to have authority.' http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/public-reason/ first published 20 May 2013. Amartya Sen is the most vocal proponent of using public reason to develop systems of social valuation. Among other statements, see Sen, A. (2004). Capabilities, lists, and public reason: continuing the conversation. *Feminist Economics*, 10(3), 77-80.

4. Although our project focuses on gender as an axis of oppression, we were also highly cognizant that race, ethnicity, religion, age, geographic location, and disability are likely to be interlocking features of personal identity that that also influence people's experiences and views of deprivation.

United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP's) Multidimensional Poverty Index, and several composite indices of gender equity. It then lays out how, learning from these critiques, we have used a feminist methodology for developing a new measure.

Chapter two explores the first phase of qualitative, participatory fieldwork. It reviews the key methods involved in the first phase of research, and the cross-country results that emerged from this participatory work, including the general implications for poverty measurement, and the specific candidate dimensions that might be included a multidimensional measure of poverty.

Chapter three explores the second phase of quantitative, participatory fieldwork. It reviews the ranking exercise used to evaluate 25 candidate dimensions for inclusion in a multidimensional measure, and the findings related to these dimensions.

Chapter four describes the process of selecting dimensions and measures for populating a new multidimensional measure of deprivation. It describes the process of selecting dimensions and scoring them.

Chapter five describes the new Individual Deprivation Measure, the survey used to gather information about individuals to populate the IDM, and the scoring system used for each individual respondent. It outlines how this new measure is based on the input of poor men and women, and improves upon existing multidimensional indices in several ways. Improvements include: making the individual the unit of analysis; the IDM's ability to allow for interval assessment within a given dimension of deprivation (thus recognising different degrees of deprivation); aggregating indicators intra-personally before aggregating interpersonally (thus recognising the relationship between, for example, health and education); and the fact that it takes account of previously ignored dimensions of deprivation, including those that are especially important for poor women.

Chapter six reports on a pilot test of the IDM, in a nationally representative survey in the Philippines. We compare our results to the International Poverty Line, the Multidimensional Poverty Index, and the Philippines national poverty line. We explore the findings of the IDM as it relates to differences between men and women, urban and rural areas, and various sites within the Philippines where data was collected.

In **Chapter seven**, we conclude with recommendations for further development of the IDM. We identify possible strategies for generating participatory weights[5] for dimensions within the IDM. We suggest how measurements of child poverty can be integrated with the IDM. We consider possible refinements to the list of dimensions and indicators included in the IDM. Finally, we make recommendations on how the IDM can be used across diverse contexts.

The importance of gender-sensitive poverty measurement

Measures of poverty and gender equity are used for a variety of important purposes.They are used to advocate for scarce resources, to allocate those resources, to evaluate the impact of policies, projects, programs, and institutional designs, and to analyse the determinants of poverty and gender equity. Measurement plays a central role in our most important political and academic debates.

For example, in India, families that have a BPL (below the poverty line) card qualify for food entitlements and the right to rural employment (Ram, Mohanty & Ram, 2009). Federal budget allocations to Indian states depend on the poverty levels in those states. In the Unites States, people's access to health insurance subsidies is dependent on their incomes in relation to the poverty line. In Mexico, the success of the rapid expansion of PROGRESA, the much-touted conditional cash transfer program, has been in part dependent on the ability to identify poor people and measure progress in poverty reduction (Pritchett 2012). Globally, proponents and opponents of the current global economic order appeal to alleged successes or failures in poverty reduction as measured by international metrics (Wade 2004).

The degree to which gender differences can be measured will directly affect the programs' abilities to guide policy and resource allocation in ways that best address both men's and women's poverty. For example, if poverty measures are able only to capture gender differences in the poverty levels of male- versus female-headed households, this may lead to focusing anti-poverty work on female-headed households, to the relative neglect of the plight of deprived women in male-headed households (Chant 2007). Government-led stimulus programs designed to respond to financial crises that threaten to worsen poverty have often privileged public works programs that will employ men rather than women—which may be due in part to the fact that national information collection is insensitive to how such crises affect men and women differently (King & Sweetman 2010, p.12).

5. 'Participatory weights' refers to determining the emphasis to be given to a particular dimension through a participatory process. In the context of multidimensional poverty measurement, the aim is to reflect the relative importance attached to a particular dimension by those whose circumstances are being assessed.

What's wrong with existing measures of poverty and gender equity?

Existing systems of measurement fail to provide empirically reliable and morally justified assessments of poverty and gender equity. In this section we review the World Bank's International Poverty Line, the UNDP's Multidimensional Poverty Index, and three leading composite indices of gender equity: the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD's) Social Institutions and Gender Index, the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index, and the UNDP's Gender Inequality Index.

The World Bank's International Poverty Line

The World Bank's International Poverty Line (IPL) is the most influential measure of global poverty. Colloquially known as the 'dollar a day' line, it currently stands at USD 1.25 2005 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP).[6] The IPL is meant to represent the purchasing power USD 1.25 had in the United States in 2005. Calculating the IPL in the currency of a developing country involves two conversions. First, it involves a purchasing power conversion between United States Dollars of 2005 and local currency units of that same year. Second, it requires a conversion between local currency units of the current year of expenditure to local currency units of the 2005 base year.

The IPL is subject to two sets of critiques: one internal and the other external. Internal critiques focus on the method of setting and updating the poverty line, converting it to the local currency, and gathering the data needed to populate the IPL.[7]

Because international comparison of monetary poverty requires conversions between currencies, calculations of the extent, depth, distribution and trend of global poverty are highly dependent upon methods of calculating purchasing power conversions. Purchasing power comparisons are based on price surveys of the goods and services in a given economy. The World Bank's reliance on PPPs and consumer price indices (CPIs) to calculate the extent and trend of global poverty is highly problematic.

The calculation of both PPPs and CPIs is:

1. Based on highly uncertain data collection, which, when revised, changes greatly the estimates of poverty and GDP in developing countries.
2. Insensitive to price variations within countries (or within urban and rural regions, when separate poverty lines are maintained for urban and rural areas).
3. Sensitive to the prices of all goods and services in an economy, although only a subset of these prices are relevant to poor people.
4. Sensitive to the composition of consumption expenditure by non-poor people, which is not relevant to the purchasing power of poor people.
5. Highly sensitive to the base year chosen for comparing the value of the various currencies, a choice that clearly should not have an impact on poverty estimates.

These problems manifest in the reported results of the World Bank. First, revisions in the PPP base year used by the Bank have produced wildly divergent assessments of the extent, trend, and geographical composition of poverty prevalence in the world.[8] Second, even holding the PPP base year fixed, the evolution of poverty reported by the Bank is highly dependent on the specific level of the monetary poverty line which is used For example, the current IPL of USD 1.25 2005 PPP shows a rapid 32.5% reduction since 1990 in the number of poor people (from 1908.6 million in 1990 to 1289.0 million in 2008), while the higher line of USD 2.00 2005 PPP shows a much smaller 13.7% reduction (from 2864.1 million in 1990 to 2471.4 million in 2008) (Chen & Ravallion 2007).

External critiques of the IPL focus on the underlying conception of poverty on which the IPL is based and the procedure by which the IPL is set. The World Bank does not specify a conception of poverty that underlies the IPL. Rather, it argues that the IPL represents, 'what poverty means in poor countries' (Chen & Ravallion 2012). The poverty line is therefore set by averaging the poverty lines of the world's poorest countries. The countries whose (PPP converted) poverty lines are averaged to create the IPL has varied over time: currently, Malawi, Mali, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Niger, Uganda, Gambia, Rwanda, Guinea-Bissau, Tanzania, Tajikistan, Mozambique, Chad, Nepal and

6. For a recent assessment of the World Bank's methodology, see Chen, S. & Ravallion, M. (2010) The developing world is poorer than we thought, but no less successful in the fight against poverty. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 125*(4): 1577-1625.

7. For a review of debates over the IPL, see Anand, S., Segal, P. & Stiglitz, J.E. (2010) Debates on the measurement of global poverty. Oxford University Press. See also: Chapters 3-5 of Pogge, T.W. (2010a) *Politics as usual: What lies behind the pro-poor rhetoric.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

8. The impact of these revisions is discussed in detail in Pogge 2010a.

Ghana are used (Ravallion, Chen & Sangraula, 2009). This commits the IPL to no particular conception of poverty, no standard against which to judge whether the IPL has correctly tracked the phenomenon in question. More importantly, it leaves the World Bank committed to the adequacy of the national poverty lines which are averaged to set the IPL. But it is far from clear why this group of largely undemocratic countries which have provided little justification for their poverty lines should set the global standard for poverty.

Regardless of the procedure by which the IPL is set, several substantive flaws are inherent to the measure. First, the IPL is insensitive to differential needs and differential abilities to convert income into achievements.

The resources needed to reach a certain level of achievement vary from individual to individual. In the simple case of income to purchase food, two individuals may, by birth, have different metabolic rates and thus require different purchasing power to reach the same level of nourishment. Different caloric needs may also be generated by virtue of one's social and economic position. A person employed in manual subsistence farming, or who is breastfeeding, may need many more calories than her peers, again requiring greater resources to reach the same level of nourishment. And variations in the natural and social environment make it such that individual needs for clothing and heating must be met by greater consumption in some areas than others.

Second, and similarly problematic for assessing the gender-specific distribution of deprivation, the IPL uses the household as the unit of analysis. Income or consumption-expenditure is assessed at the household level, and sometimes (but not always) conversions are made to take account of economies of scale depending on the composition of the household. This makes it impossible to determine differences in deprivation within a household and allows the higher income or consumption of one family member to compensate for the low consumption or income of another.

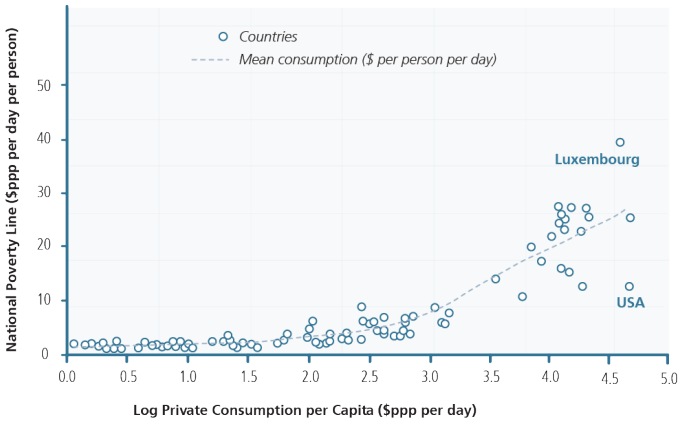

FIGURE 1A: POVERTY LINES ACROSS COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD. ALL COUNTRIES (N=95)

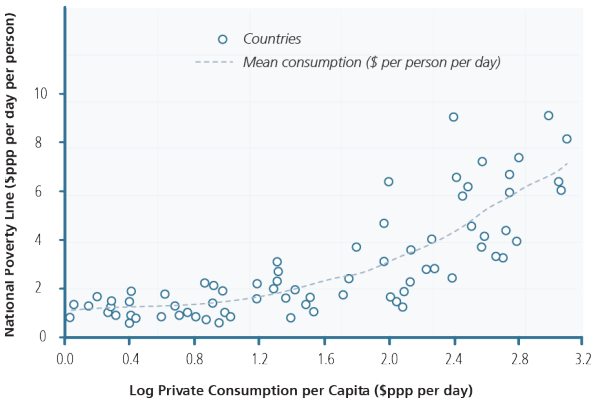

FIGURE 1B: POVERTY LINES ACROSS COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD. DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ONLY (N=75)

Third, the IPL line appears to be set too low (Pogge 2010a, p.67). If we take the IPL to be valued as it claims to be valued—as the value that $1.25 had in the United States in 2005—we can determine whether this income is adequate to have an even minimally acceptable standard of living. The United States Department of Agriculture estimated in 2005 that a minimally sufficient food plan costs between $3.59 and $4.47 per day, clearly far in excess of the IPL, which is also meant to cover non-food necessary expenditures.[9]

Fourth, the IPL excludes important dimensions of deprivation. Although income can be used to purchase many goods and services, or prices can be imputed for the consumption of these goods and services, simply measuring income or consumption-expenditure tells us very little about whether a person is free from violence, has access to adequate leisure time, is able to control the important decisions that affect her life (including how income is spent), is able to secure contraception, has access to water and sanitation, or basic infrastructure such as roads, and so on.

The United Nations Development Programme's Multidimensional Poverty Index

In 2010 the UNDP added the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to its suite of metrics used for measuring human development. Developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), led by Sabina Alkire, the MPI represents the first official effort to calculate the number of poor individuals globally through a multidimensional index. It also represents the only competitor to the World Bank's IPL for providing a headcount index of global poverty.[10]

9. For a proposal for a $10 per day international poverty line, see: Pritchett, L. (2006) Who is not poor? Dreaming of a world truly free of poverty. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 21(1), 1-23. Also see: Woodward, D. & Abdallah, S. (2008) *How poor is 'poor'? Towards a rights based poverty line (technical version).* London: New Economics Foundation.

10. A headcount index of global poverty assesses the percentage of people globally who are defined as poor.

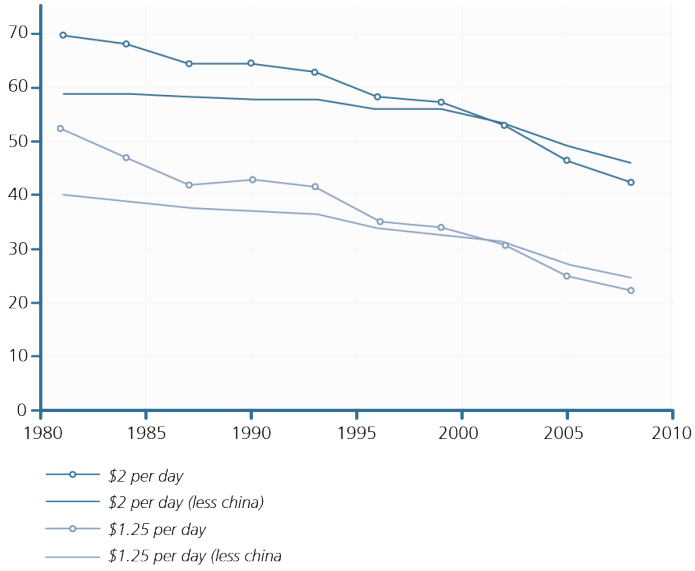

FIGURE 2: HEADCOUNT INDEX OF POVERTY (% BELOW POVERTY LINE)

The MPI is one instance of the broader class of Alkire-Foster multidimensional poverty measures (Foster, Greer & Thorbecke, 2010). It captures information in three areas of human life—education, health, and standard of living—at the household level. The MPI uses a binary approach for each indicator (there are two each for health and education and six for standard of living) in which the household is determined to either fall above or below a given threshold. For example, in the school attendance indicator for education, a household is deprived if any school aged child is not currently attending school up to year 8. A second cut-off is then used to determine whether a household should be identified as poor. If a household is deprived in more than 33.3% of the weighted dimensions, it is poor, and if not, it does not count as poor.[11]

Nevertheless, the MPI has several problems, which are largely a reflection of the need to work with existing datasets to calculate multidimensional poverty on a global scale. Because multi-topic surveys are not administered consistently across the world, the designers of the MPI were forced to find indicators and dimensions that would be comparable across the three household surveys it uses. This means that there is much room to improve upon the MPI, but doing so would require new data collection.

First, by taking the household as the unit of analysis, the MPI is incapable of measuring poverty at the individual level and hence of revealing intra-household differences in deprivation. All members of a household are assumed to suffer the same profile of deprivations. In reality, things may be quite different, of course: some members of a household may be undernourished even while others are not and some children may go to school while their siblings do not. In such cases, the MPI will often misclassify individuals on account of their household membership. Because of such misclassifications, whose extent is unknown, the MPI cannot be used to provide societal level assessments of the differences in the poverty of men and women.

DIMENSION	INDICATOR	DEPRIVED IF	WEIGHT (%)	DIMENSION TOTAL (%)
Health	Child mortality	*Any child has died in the family*	16.7	
	Nutrition	*Any adult or child in the family is malnourished*	16.7	33.3
Education	Years of schooling	*No household has no electricity*	16.7	
	Child attendance	*Any school aged child is out of school in 1 to 8*	16.7	33.3
Standard of living	Electricity	*The household has no electricity*	5.6	
	Drinking water	*The household does not have access to clean drinking water within 30 minutes*	5.6	
	Sanitation	*The household sanitation is not improved, or is shared*	5.6	
	Flooring	*The floor is dirt/ sand/ dung*	5.6	
	Cooking fuel	*Wood, charcoal, dung are used*	5.6	
	Assets	*The household does not own more than one of: radio, TV, telephone, bike, motorbike, car or tractor*	5.6	33.3

TABLE 1: MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX–DIMENSIONS AND WEIGHTING

Second, the MPI is insensitive to deprivations both above and below the first cut-off, that is the cut-off between counting as deprived or not, within each indicator. For example, a household counts as deprived if no adult household member has completed five years of schooling. This means that if a single member has had five years of schooling, the household is not deprived in this indicator. But of course there is a significant difference between an individual who has completed five years of schooling and an individual who has completed 12 years of schooling—and a significant difference also between one person who has had 4.5 years of schooling and another who has had no schooling at all.[11a] It also matters whether many members of the household have been educated or only a few. The MPI is thus insensitive to these two kinds of achievements—both the extent of achievement for

11. For the latest on the MPI see United Nations Development Programme (2014) Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). Retrieved from http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/mpi. See also http://www.ophi.org.uk/multidimensional-poverty-index/mpi-data

11a. To see the impact of selecting alternative cut-offs, see Alkire, S., Conconi, A. & Seth, S. (2014) 'Measuring destitution in developing countries. An ordinal approach for identifying linked subset of multidimensionally poor'. *OPHI Research in Progress 42a.* Oxford Poverty and Human Development Inmitiative, University of Oxford.

individuals above the threshold level and to the number of individuals within the household who have exceeded the deprivation level.

Third, like the IPL, the MPI excludes important dimensions of deprivation. While there is no doubt that education, health, and standard of living are important dimensions of deprivation, there are other important dimensions that should be included in multidimensional poverty measurement. This is recognised by the creators of the MPI, who are constrained by existing data collection. For example, freedom from violence or labour burden/access to leisure time are arguably as important as some other areas included in the MPI. Furthermore, within a given dimension, selected indicators ignore important components of deprivation. For example, both educational indicators are about enrolment, but these do not provide any information on the quality of that schooling, or a person's actual education achievements.[12]

Fourth, the MPI is not grounded in the stated views and preferences of poor men and women. Although the creators claim that the MPI finds support in various participatory assessments, the three categories—health, education, and standards of living—were not selected over other potential dimensions on the basis of such participatory assessments but rather, selected based on the contingencies of data availability. We believe our participatory research offers an alternative method of selecting dimensions that is grounded in participation.

Composite gender equity indices: the GII, GGGI, and SIGI

One might think that, although both multidimensional and uni-dimensional poverty measures suffer from a variety of flaws, including those that make difficult the tracking of gender-specific deprivations, these flaws are compensated in the broader system of measuring global progress by composite indices of gender equity. The IPL and MPI may not tell us much about how women are doing, but surely this can be remedied by the existence of multiple indices of gender equity.

The UNDP maintains several composite indices of human development. In 2010, the UNDP debuted the new Gender Inequality Index (GII), replacing the Gender Related Development Index and the Gender Empowerment Measure. The GII purports to measure the loss in human development (as measured through the Human Development Index (HDI)) that results from gender inequity. The GII tracks three dimensions with five indicators: reproductive health (maternal mortality and adolescent fertility), empowerment (educational attainment and parliamentary representation), and the labour market (labour force participation).[13]

The World Economic Forum produces the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI), which measures gaps in performance between men and women, but is insensitive to overall achievement in well-being. That is, a country that has equitable outcomes between men and women but low levels of human development will be ranked highly on the GGGI. The GGGI measures achievement gaps in economic participation, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment.

The OECD recently developed the Social Institutions Gender Index (SIGI). The SIGI measures national level institutions that influence gender equality/inequality, rather than individual outcomes. It scores a country from 0 to 1 according to the country's performance on a range of indicators in five categories: family code, civil liberties, physical integrity, son preference, and ownership rights. The SIGI usefully complements other composite gender equity indices by focusing on dimensions not covered elsewhere (such as family codes and son preference) and by assessing directly some social institutions. This allows policy makers and advocates to focus directly on institutional changes that could be made to improve their rankings in the SIGI.[14] However, it does not provide information about how institutional developments translate into outcomes for particular individuals or groups.

While we agree that these composite indices of gender equity can reveal important components of gender disparity, there are several reasons why they must be accompanied by gender sensitive poverty measures to explore gender disparities among the worse off.

First, the composite gender indices are often insensitive to the distribution of achievements across a population. When using literacy rates or rates of access to reproductive rights, these indices are insensitive to when multiple deprivations are visited upon a single woman. Furthermore, gains by women at the top can compensate for losses by women at the bottom.

Second, composite gender equity indices are also often populated by indicators that favour gains by better-off women over those that are relevant for worse-off women. For example, parliamentary representation may be a useful indicator of gender equity, but it does not tell us whether a woman is able to speak out and participate in her local council.[15]

12. For a review of the huge disparities between educational achievement and educational enrolment, see Pritchett, L. (2013) *The rebirth of education: Schooling ain't learning*. CGD Books.

13. The Gender Inequality Index, and associated notes, are available at http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/gii

14. The SIGI is available at http://genderindex.org

15. Decision-making opportunities closer to home can be easier for women to fit into their lives and may be a pathway to other elected roles or the spaces where women can express leadership in situations where life circumstances or cultural expectations limit their engagement in national parliament. Women's involvement at this level may be more accepted as an extension of their involvement in their communities. See, for example Quay, I. (2012) *Pacific Women's Leadership: Scoping Study*. Pacific Women's Leadership Program and International Women's Development Agency.

Third, composite gender equity indices provide no guidance on the allocation of resources within a country, or within subpopulations within a country. These composite indices cannot tell one whether, for example, women who are the heads of their households are worse off than women who are not the heads of their households, or whether women in rural areas are more deprived in a particular dimension than are women in urban areas. This considerably limits the usefulness of some composite gender equity indices.

Fourth, composite indices of gender equity often exclude important dimensions of deprivation. As they rely on information that is collected across a population, they are often constrained by existing data collection efforts, and thus cannot take account of, for example, control over decision-making, freedom from violence, or a person's labour burden.[16]

Composite gender equity indices therefore must be complemented by multidimensional measures of deprivation that are most relevant for the worst-off women and men, and can guide the allocation of resources and evaluation of projects amongst men and women who suffer varying levels of deprivation.

Participatory poverty assessments

An alternative approach to poverty measurement eschews setting objective, external standards for determining whether an individual is poor and rather provides a forum for community members to decide what indicators are best for determining a household's poverty status. Participatory poverty assessments are part of a broader movement of participatory development in which citizens are engaged in a range of development activities—identifying priorities for poverty reduction, specifying causes of economic and social problems, designing and evaluating anti-poverty programs, and generally strengthening the demand side of poverty-alleviating activities.

Participatory poverty assessments (PPAs) are capable of generating rigorous, quantitative measures of deprivation that can guide anti-poverty work (Chambers 2007). Although our project is premised upon the importance of the participation of poor men and women in designing measures of poverty and gender disparity, we do not believe that a mere proliferation of PPAs would be enough to adequately improve existing systems of poverty measurement. PPAs can be difficult to compare across contexts. If a community in Ethiopia identifies not having working livestock as an indicator of poverty, and a group in Peru identifies not owning land for farming, it is not clear how these two indicators can be used to make comparative assessments between the two groups. Furthermore, over time, community members may identify different indicators of poverty. This makes any assessment of the poverty trend in a given community difficult to determine and highly dependent on the indicators that are identified at any given time. Importantly, most PPAs take the household as the unit of analysis, thereby making it difficult to reveal disparities between men and women (although the process does allow for disparities between male and female headed households to be revealed). And PPAs are rarely scaled up. While often used to measure poverty at the local or district level, they rarely are used to generate national or supra-national poverty assessments.

New data is needed for better measures

Dissatisfaction with existing measures of poverty and gender disparity may lead one back to the range of surveys that are carried out across the developing world with varying frequency and reliability, to seek a new set of indicators that can be used to create a multidimensional, individual level measure of deprivation. Unfortunately, it simply is not the case that such a measure can be composed from existing data collection. If this were the case, participatory research would have simply guided the selection of indicators from already available information. Our participatory research revealed many dimensions considered by poor women and men to be important for poverty measurement but for which information is not currently collected at the individual level. The new measure we have developed will therefore require the collection of new data through either new multi-topic surveys or modification of existing multi-topic surveys.

Public reason: a joint approach to a new measure

We believe that improved measurement of poverty and gender equity can build on the strengths of existing measures of poverty and gender equity while responding to the flaws and limitations identified in this chapter. But the design of new and better measurement is not merely a matter of isolated academic discussion. Rather, our project is committed to the idea that important tools of social valuation must be developed through a process of public reason. The measurement of deprivation among the worst off must be particularly sensitive to the stated views and preferences of poor men and women.

Therefore, over two phases, across 18 sites in six countries (Angola, Fiji, Indonesia, Malawi, Mozambique and the

16. The UNDP noted the limitations in data as the primary reason for excluding other dimensions from its gender inequality index. See *Human Development Report 2010: The real wealth of nations: pathways to human development*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Philippines) we undertook participatory research with men and women in poor communities to identify how they view poverty and related hardships and the extent to which these views are gendered. We recognise that the selection of countries leaves some important geographic areas excluded. Our country selection was largely determined by the capacity and interests of our partner organisations, whose participation has been invaluable. Further insights would certainly be gained from running this exercise in Latin America, in South or East Asia, in Eastern Europe, or high income countries where significant pockets of deprivation persist. Nonetheless, the countries and sites involved in the fieldwork comprise a highly diverse group: our participants come from very low income, low human development countries and from slightly better off countries; from post-conflict countries; from a wide range of religious and ethnic backgrounds; from diverse social and familial structures; and from diverse political systems and histories.[17]

We sought participants from a wide range of life experiences and social locations, and aimed for equal representation for men and women across three age groups (youth and young adults, middle aged people, and older people) to allow for gender and age disaggregation. Young children were not included in the research for ethical and methodological reasons. First, participatory exercises with children raise distinct ethical concerns in the structuring of methods, the training of fieldworkers, and the publicising of research (both in the community of investigation and more generally), which generate new constraints on how the research should be conducted. Second, the best participatory methods for working with adults to construct a new measure of poverty are not the same methods that one would need to use with young children. The selection of sites and participants is discussed in more detail in the next chapter. The potential for future research involving children is explored in Chapter 7.

Our methodological approach[18]

We understand our project to be one not of discovery but of gaining insight from which to develop a just and justifiable measure. We do not seek to find out what the core of the concept of poverty is through simple analytic reflection or empirical investigation. Rather, we seek to develop a conception that is morally justifiable, useful as a public standard of deprivation, and capable of serving various purposes (such as being comparable across contexts, revealing gender disparity, and guiding anti-poverty policy and programs). This means that we will not simply adopt or inherit a received understanding, but will rather seek to develop a conception through participatory research. These processes will be in part justificatory: seeking to explain, in reasons that are shareable with others, why it is that certain areas of life should be relevant for assessing an individual's deprivation, in what space that deprivation should be measured, and why certain levels of achievement make an individual's position no longer of concern for anti-poverty policy.

The epistemological approach that underpins this project is shaped by an explicit recognition that existing measures of poverty suffer from two problems. First, they are insensitive to gender and second, they reflect the values and priorities of experts rather than those of women and men who have experienced poverty (Bessell 2010). To directly address these dual problems, our methodology was shaped by feminist principles and principles of participatory research.

Our methodology was underpinned by feminist insights that illuminate both the ways in which the gendered division of labour, gendered power hierarchies and social values interact to shape women's and men's experiences of poverty and the ways in which research must be sensitive to the gendered nature of power and social position among participants. Our starting point, and consistent principle throughout the research, has been that any just and justifiable measure of poverty must be able to reveal the ways in which poverty impacts differently on women and men.[19]

We sought to make gender central to the question of poverty measurement. Our methods were designed to explore with participants the ways in which gender is related to poverty and hardship and to ensure that men and women were able to discuss issues separately. Our analysis explicitly examined whether and how men and women differed in their responses to the same questions. By using a research model that involved local research teams in each country conducting the research in phase one and two, the project prioritised contextual knowledge.

Our methodology was also guided by principles of participatory research, whereby spaces are created so that women and men can confidently engage in a process of identifying problems and ways forward (Cornwall & Jewkes 1995, p.1669). Through phase one, in particular, we sought to recognise and value the knowledge of participants, and ensure that knowledge informed the development of the measure. While participatory principles underpin our methodology, this research does not claim to be fully participatory as participants were not involved in the conceptualisation of the project or in the analysis. However, phase two of the project, sought to ensure that our analysis and interpretations were in-line with the priorities of participants.

17. Further details on the countries, sites, and participants involved in the project can be found in the reports of the qualitative research undertaken in each country in phase 1, available at www.genderpovertymeasure.org.

18. For an extended discussion of the feminist methodology related to this project, see Jaggar, A., & Wisor, S. (2013) Feminist methodology in practice: Lessons from a research program. In Jaggar, A. (Ed) *Just Methods: An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader*. 2nd Edition. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

19. See Jaggar & Wisor (2013).

In bringing together principles of feminist and participatory research, we have taken seriously the stated views, preferences, and experiences of poor men and women. We recognise that these views have been systematically excluded from past efforts to establish official measures of poverty. We also take seriously that individual views are shaped by context and experience, and that further interpretation is required to make sense of the stated views and preferences of participants. The entire exercise is value laden, and we attempt to make explicit our value commitments and our disagreements where they arise.

In many cases, we have worked with researchers with previous experience working on gender and deprivation. Importantly, all research teams had a large number of women involved. More than half of the researchers on all research teams were women with a commitment to and understanding of gender equality and feminist principles, and all but one research team was led by a woman with experience in researching issues related to gender equality and poverty.

We are committed to transparency and reflexivity. Whenever possible we have made (or will make) publicly available information collected during research. We recognise that the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data is a matter of interpretation and others may interpret our research differently. We are also committed to supporting the further development of gender sensitive poverty measurement and have made the data collection and analysis tools developed through this research available for others to use and build on.