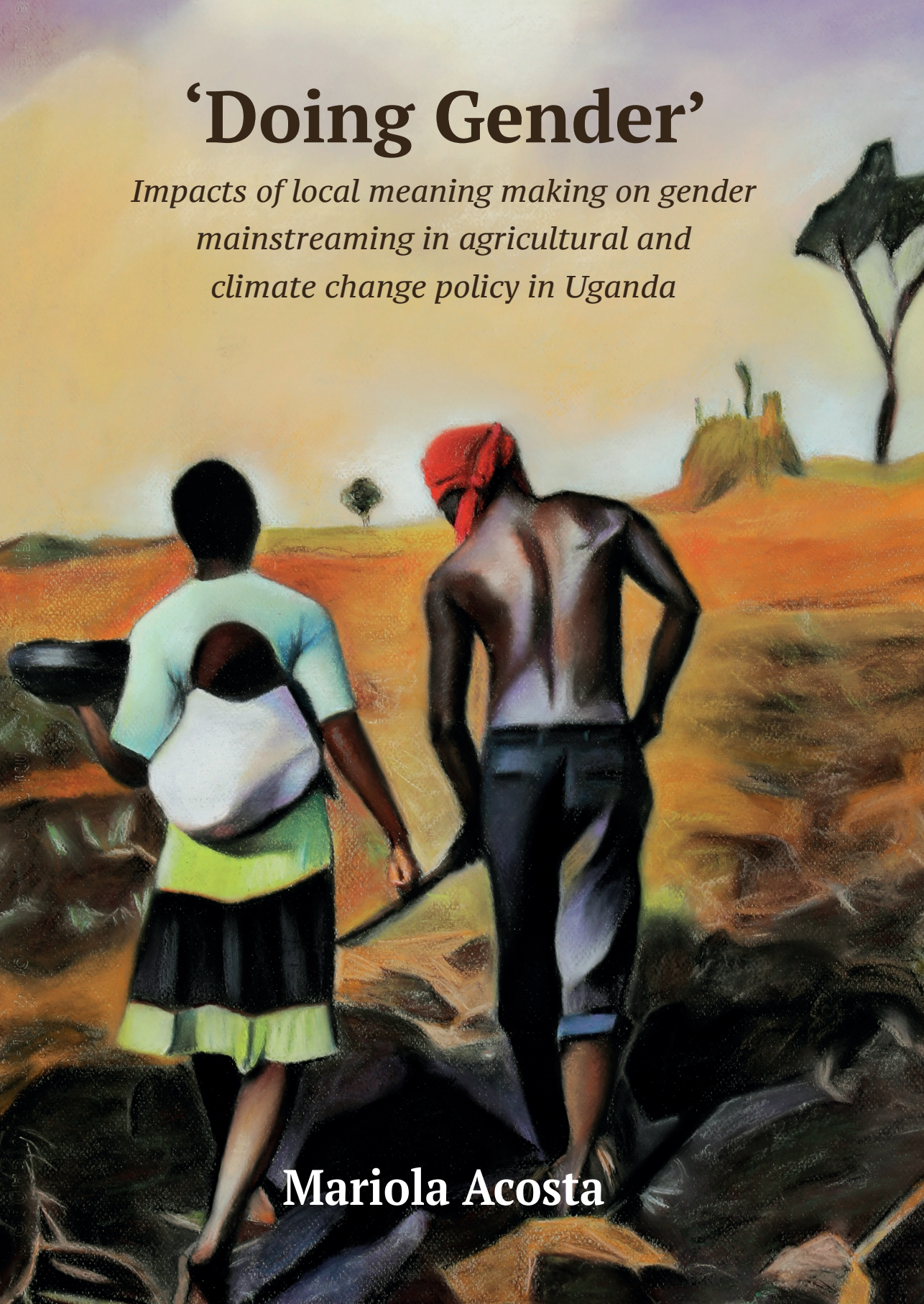
‘Doing Gender’

Impacts of local meaning making on gender mainstreaming in agricultural and climate change policy in Uganda



Mariola Acosta

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Thesis

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To my parents

A l'atzar agraeixo tres dons: haver nascut dona,
de classe baixa i nació oprimida.

I el tèrbol atzur de ser tres voltes rebel.

Maria Mercè Marçal, Divisa, 1977

Acknowledgments

As I write these words my mind goes back to when this journey started. I was in Thailand, headed back to Sri Lanka where I lived and worked, when a dear friend shared this opportunity with me. As I have found it is normally the case, one tends to find out about great opportunities at the very last possible minute. So there I was, at the airport in Bangkok, frantically putting together an application. I smile now about how little I knew back then about the journey I was about to embark on. A journey of steep learning curves and frequent frustration, but also a journey of discovery, excitement and opportunities. A journey that would even end with a global pandemic changing the world as we know it.

The last six years have been both challenging and incredibly rewarding, and have given me the opportunity to meet inspiring people without whom I could not have completed this journey.

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Prologue

It was 2015, and I had just moved to Uganda to work in a research program that aimed at improving the integration of gender and climate change issues in agricultural policy. As part of my quest to get acquainted with the country, its political context and its policy procedures, I had started attending gender, agriculture, and climate change-related policy events organized by different ministries and development agencies in Kampala. I was surprised how the need to mainstream gender was an inevitable topic that would surface in every meeting. However, even though "gender" was a frequent topic in the discussions, it was also, at the same time, often subtly derided. I remember particularly well one of these first meetings: one of the presenters had just finished summarizing the policy changes that were being proposed, the floor was opened to questions and several policy-makers from different ministries and organizations had their hands raised. The facilitator of the session then said: "Let's start with the question from the lady so that they don't think we are not gender sensitive". The audience laughed. While clearly intended as a joke, I thought that instances like these really encapsulated the paradox of gender equality having a prominent place in agriculture and climate change policy discourse, but also at the same time regarded as something that 'had to be done', an exterior mandate that had to be fulfilled. Gender mainstreaming was something that everyone talked about, yet not much action seemed to be happening on that front. Episodes like this one ignited and shaped my curiosity as to why gender seemed to be omnipresent in policy discussions but at the same time nowhere to be found in practice.

Chapter 1

General Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Climate change, agriculture and gender

The 2014 assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change identifies Africa as one of the continents with higher levels of vulnerability to climate change (Niang et al., 2014). Its production systems are among the most vulnerable in the world due to their high dependence on rainfed crop production, high exposure to climate variations and limited capacity to adapt (Boko et al., 2007). Moreover, in Africa, as throughout much of the world, agriculture is both a major contributor to climate change (S. Brown et al., 2012) and one of the sectors expected to be most severely affected by it (Jalloh et al., 2013). These processes, if left unabated, have the potential to exacerbate the situation in already food-insecure nations such as Uganda (Wichern, 2019).

The need to address climate change issues in the agricultural sector has been progressively carving out a niche in international climate change debates. Concurrent with the emerging climate change adaptation and mitigation debate, there is the recognition that climate change effects will have gender-differentiated impacts, considering the diverse roles that men and women play in agriculture and, at the same time, their differing responsibilities and rights (Huyer & Partey, 2020). In climate change debates, women are usually portrayed either as agents of change, assumed to have a fundamental role to play in tackling the effects of climate change, or as a vulnerable members of the society due to their high reliance on natural resources and generally higher rates of poverty (Arora-Jonsson, 2011; Dankelman & Jansen, 2010). The higher vulnerability of women to climate change is often also framed in terms of women's socio-economic and political barriers that might limit their ability to cope with climate shocks. For example, in the Global South, where agriculture often remains the backbone of the national economies, there are persistent levels of gender inequalities in, inter alia, ownership and access to productive resources such as land (Deere & Twyman, 2012; Ghebru, 2019), access to extension services and climate information (Gumucio et al., 2019), decision-making in productive and domestic activities (Aelst & Holvoet, 2018; Ambler et al., 2019), adaptive capacity and adoption of climate-resilient agricultural technologies (Jost et al., 2016; Rao et al., 2019), and control over income (Njuki et al., 2019). These gender inequalities are also expected to widen with the effects of climate change (Huyer & Partey, 2020). Failing to explicitly account for the different constraints, opportunities, and perspectives of men and women in rural communities thus leaves open the potential for seemingly gender-neutral climate and agriculture interventions to fail either in achieving their greatest possible potential or by reinforcing pre-existing inequalities within the community, or both (Terry, 2009).

1.1.2 The global policy agenda for gender equality

Over recent decades, gender equality has become a widely recognized policy goal, with different international conventions and agreements signed, and with international and national organizations committing themselves to action towards gender equality (Kantola & Squires, 2010). This inter- and transnational attention to gender equality at the global scale can be traced back to the 1970s. Alongside the growing momentum for gender equality gained by international feminist movements in the seventies, in 1975 the United Nations organized the first World Conference on Women in Mexico City and declared 1976-1985 the UN Decade for Women. At the end of the 1970's, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted and later ratified by 189 states. To date the CEDAW is considered by many as the International Bill of Rights for Women. Some years later, in 1985, the Third World Conference on Women was held in Nairobi, Kenya, which witnessed the largest gathering of women's right defenders and activists until that moment, including more than 15,000 participants from NGOs, and constituted a turning point for international action for gender equality. The event was labeled by some as the birth of Global Feminism (Cagatay et al., 1986).

Perhaps one of the most influential global gatherings for gender equality was the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, which ended with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The 1995 Platform for Action saw the establishment of "gender mainstreaming" as the new standard to address gender inequality (United Nations, 1996). Gender mainstreaming was later defined by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as

> *the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality'. (ECOSOC, 1997, p. 3)*

During the 2000s and 2010s, gender equality also gradually entered the decisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In 2001 (Decision 36/CP.7) and 2010 (Decision 1/CP.16) the UNFCCC included the promotion of gender equality and women's participation in decision-making in the convention,

while in 2012 the UNFCC promoted women's participation in all its delegations and boards (Decision 23/CP.18). Two years later, in 2014, the UNFCC established the 'Lima Work Programme on Gender' (Decision 18/CP.20) to promote gender balance and to achieve gender-responsive climate policy in all areas of the UNFCCC negotiations. Also in 2014, the 'Women and Gender Constituency' was created, which allowed civil society and non-government organizations working on women's rights, gender justice and environmental protection to interact with UNFCCC and to influence its conferences and negotiations. Finally, in 2015 the UNFCCC Paris Agreement (Decision 1/CP.21) included for the first time reference to gender mainstreaming in its global climate negotiations, which was followed by the establishment of the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan in 2017 (UNFCCC, 2017).

The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which outline post-2020 climate actions of nations, are also gradually starting to introduce gender equality considerations, albeit to different degrees (see Huyer et al., 2020 for a detailed analysis). Other climate change policy initiatives such as the integration of agriculture in the National Adaptation Plans (i.e. NAP-ag processes) have also had strong gender equality components (FAO, 2019). Similarly, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) include a specific goal on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (SDG 5), in addition to gender equality targets in the other goals, including the SDG 13 'Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts' (UN Women, 2016).

1.1.3 Global-local linkages and divides in gender equality strategies

Global gender equality strategies such as gender mainstreaming have permeated to national and sub-national policymaking, and have in this way created linkages between the global and the local. International networks, foundations and movements such as WECAN or the Mary Robinson Foundation for climate justice, transnational organizations such as the UN, and related international agreements have been essential for the creation of these global-local linkages and are the most influential drivers for the establishment, diffusion and continuity of the global gender equality discourse and practice (Alston, 2014; Jaquette, 2017; True & Mintrom, 2001). At a state level, governments have created Ministries of Gender and Women's Affairs, have established gender units or gender focal points in ministries and institutions, and have institutionalized gender mainstreaming in their policies and procedures. Sub-national governments have also often appointed gender officers and adhered to gender-mainstreaming practices. Development agencies and international NGOs also constitute an important link between global norms for gender equality and the local level since most of these organizations have subscribed

to global gender equality norms, and their funding is often conditional on the inclusion of gender-mainstreaming principles in local development programs (Collins, 2018; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Miers, 2011; Samarasinghe, 2014).

Notwithstanding the widespread adoption and institutionalization of gender mainstreaming, aspirations for far-reaching social transformation have remained largely frustrated and have not brought the desired gender equality outcomes (Alston, 2014; Brouwers, 2013; Eerdewijk, 2016; Jaquette, 2017; Mukhopadhyay, 2014). There are several explanatory factors that feminist researchers offer to elucidate the unsatisfactory results of gender mainstreaming. Notably, several studies have highlighted the contested, vague and open nature of the very idea of gender mainstreaming (O'Connor, 2014; Rees, 2005; Walby, 2005), manifest in the disconnect between formal institutional gender norms and the informal norms, practices and logics of local implementing organizations (Debusscher, 2016), and the often conflicting nature of differing gender policy narratives used at the local level (Mannell, 2014). Other studies have noted the extent to which the perception of gender mainstreaming as part of a foreign development and governance agenda has breed indifference and even resistance to the concept of gender mainstreaming (Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013; Peng, 2015; Sweetman, 2015; True & Mintrom, 2001; Wittman, 2010; Ylöstalo, 2016).

Further, procedurally, gender mainstreaming is often perceived as a bureaucratic, technocratic and tedious process (Baines, 2010; Daly, 2005; Eerdewijk & Dubel, 2012; Jaquette, 2017), at times leading to an excessive technicalization of gender (Mannell, 2012) and to an excessive focus on symptoms rather than to the structural causes of inequality, which are often reproduced in everyday life and local policymaking (Clisby, 2005; Eerdewijk, 2014; Eerdewijk & Davids, 2014; O'Connor, 2014; Shortall, 2015). Finally, research has also highlighted the various practical challenges to gender-mainstreaming policies, including insufficient information and capacity related to gender mainstreaming at all levels of government (Clisby, 2005; Ylöstalo, 2016), the limited monitoring and auditing systems in place (Peng, 2015), and an inadequate appreciation of the gendered realities and dynamics among local NGOs charged with implementation (Alfama Guillén, 2015; Desai, 2005; George, 2007; Tiessen, 2004), or even of the local beliefs, values and realities of these policies beneficiaries (Wendoh & Wallace, 2005).

All these factors which contribute to the unsatisfactory performance of the gender-mainstreaming norm are often not discrete but rather commonly interlinked with one another (Alston, 2014). Central to many of these factors is the transnational origin of the gender-mainstreaming norm, with the ensuing lack of resonance that it might have

with the local realities of signatory nations, and the insufficient attention of the multiple interpretations and representations that the norm take in different local contexts (Alston, 2014; Krook & True, 2012; Mukhopadhyay, 2014; Wittman, 2010). However, while these clashes between international norms and local realities and interpretations are central in the literature as a driver constraining effective policy implementation, there have been remarkably few efforts to document empirically how the dilution of the transformational ambition of gender policies and norms take place in practice in specific contexts.

In this thesis I tap into this research gap and empirically examine if and how local meaning-making affects the transformational potential of gender equality norms in agriculture and climate change policy in Uganda. The thesis constitutes one of the first studies conducted in the Global South that takes an interpretive perspective to study local processes on norm translation. I conduct a thorough examination of policy processes in Uganda, using different interpretive methodologies (e.g. conversional interviewing, document analysis, participant observation, focus group discussions) and different sources of data (e.g. stakeholder policy meetings, interviews, surveys, policies, budgets) in order to gain an insight on how norm translation processes come to be and the consequences of these for the effectiveness of gender equality norms. In the thesis, unlike most gender norm translation studies with a focus at the organizational or national level, I take a multi-level governance approach and study meaning-making processes at national, district, sub-county and village level. This allows for a more nuanced examination of how these meaning-making processes are enacted at different levels, and opens up the space to examine potential differences, similitudes or interactions across levels. The combination of an interpretive and a multi-level governance approach opens up novel insights into the multiple contextual processes of negotiation over meaning that mediate global gender-mainstreaming norms when implemented in social and political settings dominated by traditional patriarchic worldviews and norms.

1.2 Theoretical framework: A discursive approach to gender policymaking

"Gender equality" as a conceptual category to address social inequality, and related strategies such as "gender mainstreaming", have been highly contested policy constructs (Jalušič, 2009; Kantola & Squires, 2010; Walby, 2005). The multiple definitions and meanings that these constructs can assume and the broad range of practices that policy actors associate with these terms reflect, at least to a certain extent, their contested nature (Walby, 2005). The differing efficacy with which such concepts have served in guiding efforts to ameliorate gender inequality may stem partly from their various contextual

interpretations and the diversity of meanings with which they have been imbued (Jalušič, 2009; Verloo, 2005). Understanding how different policy actors interpret and use these concepts with differentiated meanings, and examining why some of these meanings might bring very limited change in specific contexts demands a discursive approach (Leipold et al., 2019; Wagenaar, 2015) to policymaking. In this thesis I use such approach to examine the impact of local processes of meaning making and interpretation for the effectiveness of gender equality norms and strategies.

Discourse can be defined as "an ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations that is produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities" (Leipold et al., 2019, p. 447 after Hajer 1993). A discursive approach to policymaking treats discourse as having both an enabling and a constraining role in how policy actors and the general public make sense, negotiate and act upon certain policy issues (Feindt & Oels, 2005). It acknowledges that policy-making and everyday sense-making is implicitly always political and achieved through meaning, beliefs, and argumentation (Durnova et al., 2016). In this thesis, I refer to discursive policymaking as "the intentional or unintentional engaging of policy actors in conceptual disputes that result in meanings attributed to the terms and concepts employed in specific contexts" (Lombardo et al., 2009b, p. 10).

1.2.1 Examining the discursive politics of gender: interpretive policy analysis

The study of meaning, beliefs and acts of argumentation are at the heart of interpretive policy analysis approaches (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006). An interpretive approach to policy examines 'the meanings that shape actions and institutions, and the ways in which they do so' (Bevir et al., 2015, p. 3). It focuses on the understanding of phenomena through the examination of the ways people give meaning to phenomena. Central to this perspective is the way different people live and experience events from their own standpoint, which is in part affected by their prior knowledge and lived experiences and by socio-cultural patterns of meaning-making (van Bommel et al., 2015). An interpretive approach considers that a gender-responsive agriculture or climate change-related policy, or any other policy, only becomes effective in interaction and through everyday practices, and that these are necessarily influenced by values, beliefs and feelings. Simultaneously, everyday life and practices are also saturated with meaning and contribute to the re-production of social order. Interpretive policy analysts consider this variety of interpretations, and the potential clashes derived from it, together with the ways people attach meanings to both policy concepts and events (Fischer, 2003; Fischer & Forester, 1993; Wagenaar, 2015; Yanow, 2000).

In this way, an interpretative approach establishes a link between discourse and specific material practices, and acknowledges that they will always be linked through some kind of communication process (Feindt, 2014; Leipold et al., 2019). How policy-makers communicate and make sense of novel challenges influences discourses and discourses in turn also influence what can be said, how it can be said, and how to act upon it. The way in which policy actors share and discuss certain policy issues may help legitimize certain practices and not others, creating linkages between discourse and practice (Feindt & Oels, 2005). In policy, these communication processes can constitute intentional or unintentional acts of foregrounding — e.g. emphasizing, highlighting or making a policy argument more prominent than others (Fairclough, 2013); backgrounding — e.g. downplaying specific parts of the discourse, making certain issues less relevant (Fairclough, 2013); or silencing — e.g. omitting certain arguments or certain parts of the discourse (Schröter & Taylor, 2018). Considering gender as a social construct, a discourse analysis permits the analysis of everyday conversations and communication acts through which men and women explain and reflect their everyday actions and by doing that, their deeply embedded gender relations and gender societal norms. In other words, the analysis of written text, conversations, practices and the micropolitics of everyday life can unveil how lived experiences produce and reproduce gender roles, power relation dynamics and processes of change (Cameron & Gibson-Graham, 2003; Wittman, 2010).

1.2.2 Norm translation and the travel of policy ideas

Nations across the globe together with other international organizations have over the years debated and jointly established global norms to ensure women's rights and achieve gender equality. These policy norms have been adopted by nations around the globe. As these norms and policy ideas travel across countries and across contexts, they are translated and adopted, or in other words, domesticated to local contexts. The concept of 'norm translation' can help understand how this travel of policy ideas occur, how policy actors navigate these translation processes, and how policy ideas are subjected to processes of local transformation (Clarke et al., 2015; Mukhtarov, 2014). Norm translation can be defined as practices through which norms are negotiated and adapted in different contexts (Clarke et al., 2015; Draude, 2017).

The open nature of the gender equality concept, and of related strategies such as gender mainstreaming, makes these policy norms particularly vulnerable to multiple interpretations and processes of local transformation in the different socio-political contexts in which they are being translated, constructed and contested (Bustelo & Verloo, 2009; Jalušič, 2009). These translation practices often involve processes of translation with

regards to the way gender inequality is defined and presented (i.e. what is the problem the policy is trying to solve) and to the way this gender inequality is proposed to be solved (i.e. what actions and solutions to the problem are conceivable and envisioned) (Lombardo et al., 2009b).

The way in which norm translation is largely conceptualized in policy studies conveys the expectation that there are globally negotiated norms that are translated and adopted into local contexts without major changes (Engberg-Pedersen, 2018; Engberg-Pedersen et al., 2020; Zwingel, 2012). However, this view neglects important processes of contestation and appropriation (Zwingel, 2012, p. 118) that regularly occur at the local level. Because there are no two identical contexts, especially when considering the highly localized nature of gender norms, any translation process will be 'generative' of new meaning (Gal et al., 2015, p. 615). Interpretation is an inherent element of these norm translation processes because local actors have to 'make sense' of the global norm, adapt it to their local realities and, through this process, create new meanings of the norm. Remarkably, the role of interpretation in processes of norm translation has been largely unexplored, with few exceptions (see for example Clarke et al., 2015; Gal et al., 2015; Mukhtarov, 2014; Zwingel, 2012). Most of these works, however, focus on either norm translation mechanisms at the national level or on translation processes by individual NGOs through their local institutional practices or projects. In this thesis I examine processes of norm translation at different governance levels (e.g. national, district, sub-county, and village level) to better understand translation dynamics across levels.

Interpretation is rather central in understanding how meaning molding processes in translation take place, and through which mechanisms this occurs. The etymology of the world 'translation' already sheds some initial light on the centrality of interpretation in translation processes. The verb "to translate" derives from the Latin translat* (past participle of transferre), meaning "carried across". Carrying across a concept, norm or idea from one context into another necessitates that the "receivers" of such a transfer interpret and adapt the original meaning into their own context. Following from this, it is to be expected that translation processes involving concepts or ideas that are largely perceived as alien will involve and necessitate more intense processes of interpretation than others which involve concepts that are already familiar and close to the "receivers" lived experiences in each specific context.

Adopting an interpretive approach involves thus the acknowledgment that policy translation is not only about "making equivalent" — from one context into another — but essentially involves interpretation, i.e. "shifting, moving terms around, linking and

changing them" (Law, 2009, p. 144). It involves acknowledging that norms and policy ideas do not simply spread into new contexts through processes of diffusion (Engberg-Pedersen, 2018), but that translation processes can only be enacted through interpretive acts. In other words, translation cannot happen without interpretation. In policy, translation needs an "active readership" of the concept or idea being translated by policy actors and the public, who will act both as interpreters and as creators of new meanings (Lendvai & Stubbs, 2007; Yanow, 1996). Through this process, the meanings attached to the original concept or idea being translated will be contested and questioned, and through these interpretive processes new meanings will arise (Yanow, 1996). These interpretations and subsequent new meanings might entail that the ambition or goals of the original policy idea are either reinforced or diluted, or that new ambitions and goals arise altogether.

As I will show in this thesis, understanding these interpretive processes of translation are fundamental to understanding why certain global norms, such as gender mainstreaming, do not produce the expected results when they are adopted in different contexts. By addressing the central and largely understudied role of interpretation in processes of norm translation, this thesis examines how local processes of meaning making can affect the transformational potential of global norms. I argue that norm translation implies adaptation and transformation processes that can dilute and even neutralize the original content and intention of the norm, and show how analyzing acts of communication is central for uncovering the different mechanisms through which such dilution and neutralization occur.

Using an interpretive lens, I study acts of communication through discourse analysis, and examine how these are used to promote certain political stances and actions and to justify specific gender interventions. I particularly focus on how gender-equality ideas travel through different governance levels in Uganda and how these are translated both in terms of policy problematizations and policy prognosis. I examine how discourse is used to legitimize or delegitimize gender inequality, to naturalize or denaturalize gender roles and to justify, undermine or normalize gender policy action. In doing so, this thesis takes policy research on norm translation a step further by conducting an in-depth, interpretive and multi-level governance study to examine the effects of local processes of norm translation and to identify the specific mechanisms through which local meaning-making processes alter the ambition and transformational potential of global norms.

Throughout the thesis, I use "local" in a broad sense, defining it as "concrete context of practical appropriation, interpretation and transformation of socio-cultural discourses,

ideas and practices that have their roots in global, regional and local interests, traditions and actors" (Bräuchler & Naucke, 2017, p. 426). In the context of this thesis, I use "local" to encompass meanings, understandings and interpretations generated at national, sub-national (i.e. district, sub-county), and at village level. In this sense, I use "local" in juxtaposition to "global", this is, the context where international and national organizations collectively debate and establish understandings or discourses to guide development and security actions worldwide. Thus, generally speaking, in this thesis "local" denotes a context that is significantly more integrated in parochial than in transnational communication processes that largely influence development language across the globe.

1.3 Research aim and research questions

In this thesis, using the case of Uganda, I address the gendered nature of the contexts and institutions where the gender equality strategies are to be implemented. I examine how local meaning in policy is made, and the implications that this can have for the effects of gender equality strategies in the country. By making this visible, and therefore debatable, in this thesis I also explore ways in which to advance gender equality, and to examine whether alternative local meaning making could be a possible way forward.

The research aim of this thesis is to study how a gender policy implementation gap in agricultural and climate change policy is linked to local acts of meaning making, and to examine if alternative acts of meaning making in novel strategies could prove promising. To fulfill this aim, the thesis addresses the overarching research question: How does local meaning making shape policy and practice on gender equality in agricultural and climate change policy in Uganda?

To address this overall research question, the thesis adopts the corresponding sub-questions:

- What are the main narratives on gender, agriculture and climate change adaptation among policy-makers in Uganda and what are their effects?
- How do processes of international norm translation into domestic policies in Uganda affect the transformative ambition of gender mainstreaming?
- What are the differentiated meanings that male and female farmers attach to specific gender equality policy constructs and how do they differ from those found in policy and development programs?

- What are the potentials and advantages of locally formulated solutions to gender inequality in agricultural and climate change policy as compared to those found in international discourse?

These four sub-questions are condensed versions of the questions addressed in the different empirical chapters of this thesis. The examination of policy narratives in sub-question 1 provides an entry point into understanding the role of local meaning in the processes through which issues of gender are discussed, maneuvered and thought about at the national level. This already provides with some pointers into why the simple formulation global gender equality strategies might not suffice to tackle gender inequality in these local contexts. The sub-questions 2 and 4 take a multi-governance level approach to investigate how policy documents and policy actors, respectively, problematize and provide local solutions to gender inequality in agriculture under climate change. These two chapters show a mismatch between problematizations and proposed solutions and examine the ensuing consequences for the effectiveness of gender equality strategies. Similarly, sub-question 3, using the case of a gender equality and women's empowerment construct that is widely used in policy and development programs (i.e. "joint-decision making"), compares the understandings of local men and women with the understanding of these concepts in Ugandan agricultural policy and development programs. Together, the four sub-questions address acts of communication from different governance levels, different actors, and through complementary lines of inquiry to examine the role of language and local meaning making in shaping gender equality policy and practice in agricultural and climate change policy in Uganda.

1.4 Dissertation context: Uganda

The Republic of Uganda, a low income country in East Africa, has around 40 million people with 84% of its population living in rural areas (FAO, 2018). Contributing almost a quarter of Uganda's Gross Domestic Product, agriculture constitutes one of the major economic engines for the country (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2012). Around 70% of Uganda's population is engaged in agriculture, of which 89% are smallholder farmers who have on average one hectare of land (FAO, 2018). Coffee, tea, cotton and tobacco constitute the main crops grown for export while maize, beans potatoes, cassava and bananas are the main crops grown for home consumption (MAAIF, 2018).

Climate change is expected to negatively affect the agricultural sector in Uganda (MAAIF, 2018). Rising minimum and maximum temperatures and decreasing or increasing rainfall patterns have already been reported in different parts of the country (Kikoyo & Nobert,

2016). Current changes in temperature and rainfall patterns are already threatening farming systems and negatively affecting food security in the country (Wichern, 2019). Future climate projections describe an even direr situation for the future of the sector (Adhikari et al., 2015). Acknowledging this, the Uganda Country Vision 2040 (The Republic of Uganda, 2013b) and the 2016-2020 National Development Plan (The Republic of Uganda, 2015b) — the two main national policy documents that guide the development efforts of the nation — place and recognize climate change as one of the major threats to Uganda's economic and social development. Notably, these documents assert the need to include gender considerations in any development action in the country.

Uganda is regarded in the region as a point of reference in their gender-mainstreaming efforts (The Republic of Uganda, 2013a). This reputation is not unfounded, and for example, most agriculture and climate change policies include at least some mention of the importance of considering gender issues (Ampaire et al., 2019). The Uganda Constitution (1995) also grants equal status to all citizens, fosters affirmative action, and protects women against patriarchal cultural practices. Different parliamentary acts have, over the years, also been passed to promote gender equality and equity, such as The Equal Opportunities Commission Act [2007]; The Local Governments Act, Cap. 243; The National Women's Council Act, Cap. 318; The Land Act, Cap. 227; The Public Finance Management Act, [2015]; and The Local Government Act [1996]. Furthermore, Uganda is signatory to different international mandates advocating for gender equality and women's rights, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [1948], the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women [1979], the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action [1995], the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa [2003], the Sustainable Development Goals [2015], and the East Africa Community Gender Equality and Development Act [2017].

The attention to gender issues in agriculture in Uganda grew largely during the 1980s and 1990s and is seen as mainly the result of the influence of international organizations, NGOs and community based organizations, and also partly as the result of donor conditionality 'rather than of efforts or pressure from the women's movement', whose involvement was initially portrayed as 'weak' for the agricultural sector (Karuhanga-Beraho, 2002, p. 90). Many regions in Uganda have a patrilineal inheritance system and a patrilocal residence, which denies women the opportunity to inherit land or assert their right on matrimonial land. Further, under customary law in some communities, widows are "inherited" and taken care of by some of the husband's relatives, often a brother, and frequently thrown out of the land with no arrangements made for her future wellbeing (Ellis et al., 2005). Similarly, some customary laws prevent women claiming matrimonial land upon divorce.

Even though formal legislative procedures in Uganda forbid these practices, the customary norms are still practiced pervasively throughout the country, with many women often unaware that such legal protections are in place (Ellis et al., 2005). Even though women constitute an important labor force for agriculture in Uganda, their limited opportunity to hold a title or secure tenure — together with their eminent role as care givers and their disadvantage position in education — directly affects their ability to have a strong decision-making power in the household and in the land, limits their access to agriculture and extension services, restricts their ability to access to financial services and to appropriate technology (Ellis et al., 2005). These patterns of gender inequality in agriculture are not only a matter of a distribution or a fairness issue but also have important economic consequences for the entire country. Gender inequality has been estimated to reduce agricultural productivity in Uganda by around $67 million, underscoring that gender inequalities in the agricultural sector are pronounced and holding back the country's economic development (UN Women, 2015b).

1.5 Methodological approach

1.5.1 Case study approach and case selection

The thesis deploys a case study approach (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 2002). A case study is an in-depth empirical inquiry and comprehensive research strategy that relies on multiple angles and sources of evidence to examine a contemporary phenomenon within its specific contextual circumstances (Yin, 2002). The case study approach is particularly well-suited for studying complex societal issues, and results in a considerable wealth of detail that allows for a nuanced view of the phenomenon under scrutiny (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Considering the complex nature of the issue addressed in this thesis (i.e. how local meaning affects or influences gender policy), and the highly contextual nature of gender norms and gender relations, a case study approach was deemed the most appropriate to address the research question and sub-questions.

Uganda constitutes a critical case to study the impact of local meaning on gender discourse and practice in agriculture and climate change development in countries of the Global South. A critical case can be defined as 'having strategic importance in relation to the general problem' (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 229). The strategic importance of Uganda emerges from its eminently rural nature that has driven a considerably policy emphasis on developing gender and climate-sensitive solutions to agriculture (Ampaire et al., 2017, 2019; Eriksen et al., 2019). Further, even though the country has adhered

to most international laws and norms on gender equality, there remains a pronounced contrast between these formal policy and legislature procedures and traditional cultural practices, which have been reported as seriously hindering and constraining efforts towards gender equality in the country (Benedetti et al., 2012; Cooper, 2010; Moncrieffe, 2004). Finally, in Uganda, as is the case in other countries in the global south, most agriculture and climate change adaptation efforts at the local level materialize through donor-assisted projects (Ampaire et al., 2017), which often mandate the adherence to gender-mainstreaming procedures. In such a context, meaning making processes that mold and adapt transnational policy constructs such as gender mainstreaming to local realities and to patriarchal cultural environment are to be expected. In this way, Uganda constitutes a critical case to study how local meaning-making processes affect the effectiveness of gender equality efforts, and can prove informative for other East African contexts with similar cultural, biophysical and socio-economic characteristics.

The research of this dissertation was embedded within the 4-year research project "Policy Action for Climate Change Adaptation" (PACCA), led by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and funded by the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS). Through a network of multi-stakeholder platforms, at district and national level, the PACCA project linked the scientific community with policy actors from national to district and sub-county level, with the overall aim to provide evidence-based information to improve the inclusion of gender and climate change considerations of agricultural policy in Uganda and Tanzania (Acosta, Ampaire, et al., 2019). I spent a total of three years living in the capital of Uganda, Kampala, and frequently travelled to different regions of the country.

In Uganda, the project worked closely with the Climate Change Department of the Ministry of Water and Environment; the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries; the Parliamentary Forum on Climate Change; the Local Governments of five different Districts (namely Nwoya, Luwero, Rakai and Mbale), and different NGOs and civil society organizations such as Environmental Management for Livelihood Improvement (EMLI) and the Makerere University Climate Change Research Institute. The set-up of the PACCA project provided me with the opportunity to attend many district and national policy events and platform meetings, and observe firsthand how issues of gender equality and climate change adaptation for the agricultural sector were being discussed and addressed.

As I describe in the prologue, it was by attending those first meetings that I gradually got interested in understanding why despite gender being discussed in virtually every

meeting I attended — and almost every policy I read —there were also signs that these issues were in practice being treated quite lightly in comparison to how they were being presented in official policy discourse. The development of the case study thus followed an abductive logic of inquiry (Yanow et al., 2015), where this puzzle and tension drove my research interest into understanding how local processes of meaning-making could be affecting gender policy in the country. As the research progressed, new understandings and concepts emerged, as did my realization that a stark contrast between a well-established gender equality discourse and practice in agricultural development and climate change adaptation had also been commonly reported in other countries of the Global South (Alston, 2014; Arora-Jonsson, 2011). In this sense, and as I state above, Uganda constituted a critical case to study this disconnect between gender discourse and practice.

1.5.2 Data collection

The texts, dialogs, symbolic objects (e.g. policy documents) and acts (or lack of thereof) of policy actors are some of the types of data that interpretive policy analysts use to understand how local meaning is produced and conveyed. To collect this data, interpretive researchers often resort to three main research methodologies: observation, interviews and document analysis (Yanow, 2000). Together, these methodologies allow for an understanding on how local actors discuss and make sense of novel policy challenges.

Observation constituted a fundamental element for data collection and interpretation throughout this thesis. Through daily sense-making acts such as reading the local newspapers, collecting brochures, and attending multi-stakeholder policy meetings, I was able to build a situational familiarity with the context of study. I regularly took notes of these sense-making acts, highlighting the issues I perceived as important for the study of gender policymaking in the country. As months passed by, these sense-making acts allowed me to acquaint myself with the country's history and socio-political context, and to understand what gender policy issues were framed as important and how these were being discussed. This background information was fundamental for the design of the interview guides and other methodologies used in this thesis. Being immersed in the country for three years and thus in a context of continuous observation of events and processes, also allowed me to interpret the empirical data that I collected within the context where it was being generated. Indeed, it is only through a deep enculturation in the study context that the researcher is able to interpret the emerging discourses, narratives and different meaning making constructs (Rhodes, 2011; Wagenaar, 2015).

Interviews were a main source of data collection in this thesis. I conducted a total of 67 semi-structured interviews (used in Chapter 2 and Chapter 5) that aimed at examining discourses and narratives regarding how policy actors were dealing with gender mainstreaming in their day-to-day work, their perceptions on the current challenges to gender equality, and their locally proposed solutions for addressing gender inequalities in agriculture and climate change in Uganda. Interview questions were open-ended and broad, offering the interviewees time and freedom to share and elaborate their discourses and narratives (Roe, 1994; Wagenaar, 2015). With informed consent, interviews were recorded and transcribed in full.

Policy document analysis was another main source of data for this thesis. I collected and studied a total of 107 policy documents from national, district and sub-county level to examine how gender in agriculture and climate change discourses and policy instruments materialized in policy documents. While national policy documents were generally readily available online, this was not the case for the policies at the level of districts and sub-counties. Collection of sub-national documents involved physically visiting local offices located across the nation, making appointments with the districts' and sub-counties' chief administrative officers, and formally requesting to borrow a physical copy of the document for photocopying. Such requests were not always granted and thus prevented access to specific documents.

In addition to observation, interviews and policy document analysis, this thesis also turned to an intra-household survey and participatory methodologies (Chapter 4) to examine local understandings of decision-making processes; and to self-administered questionnaires (Chapter 5) to explore meanings in proposed local strategies for gender equality in agriculture and climate change policy. In Table 1.1 I present an overview of the methods used and types of respondents targeted for each of the empirical chapters of this thesis. A more detailed explanation about the specific use of each methodology can be found in the corresponding chapters.

Studying local meaning with data from different sources (i.e. written sources, oral sources, observation and participation), different organizations and individuals, and from different governance levels (national, district, sub-county, village) allowed me to access and interpret local knowledge from different perspectives. This in turn allowed me to iteratively make sense of the data.

Regardless of the methodology used, prior to the collection of any information during the course of this research, participants were informed about the aim, relevance and funders of the project and were asked for their expressed willingness and informed concern to

Table 1.1. Overview of methodologies

Chapter	Methodology used	Amount	Types	Period data collection
Chapter 2	Semi-structured interviews	30	Experts from five Ugandan ministries. Representatives from development agencies, NGOs and national farmers' associations.	2015
	Multi-stakeholder meetings	10	Variety of policy and development actors	2015-2016
Chapter 3	Policy document analysis	107	13 National 23 District 71 Sub-county	2016-2018
Chapter 4	Intra-household survey	474	Couples	2014
	Case study, Lodi Village			2018
	- Participant observation	3	Families	
	- Focus group discussions	16	Couples	
	- Experimental game	16	Couples	
Chapter 5	Semi-structured interviews	37	Experts from five ministries and other formal government structures; district and sub-county officers; representatives from development agencies, NGOs and academia.	2018
	Self-administered questionnaires	78	Government actors (from local governments, ministries, and the Ugandan Parliament) and non-government actors (including NGOs, research institutes, and civil society organizations).	2018

participate. In all informed-consent procedures, participants were legally and mentally competent to give consent, were given enough information for an informed decision of their participation, were never prompted to comment on any topics that they considered controversial or sensitive, and their participation remained at all times voluntary. Consent was given prior to interviews being recorded and flexible meeting times were used to accommodate male and female participants' schedules as to minimize any effect on their daily activities. In order to ensure commitment to high ethical standards, the research of this thesis was examined and approved by the Ethical Committee of the Wageningen School of Social Sciences and by the Uganda National Council of Science and Technology.

1.5.3 Data analysis

While the specifics for data analysis are provided in each of the empirical chapters, in general data analysis followed an interpretive perspective on policy processes, which emphasizes the need to understand how policy-makers make sense of their world. Data analysis in chapters 2, 3 and 5 aimed at identifying recurring topics, key constructs, discourses and narratives around gender equality in agriculture and climate change, and identifying the mechanisms through which local meaning could be impacting the effectiveness of gender policy. The analysis generally followed the inductive codes-to-theory model (Saldaña, 2013), where these recurring topics, key constructs, stories and discourses were iteratively given codes and through consecutive rounds of coding later aggregated into themes. These themes and codes always inductively analyzed against the theoretical background of interpretive policy analysis and discursive approach to policymaking. These iterative processes of coding and data analysis were supported by the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti (version 8.1.2).

Depending on the focus of the chapter, data analysis varied slightly. Chapter 2 focused on analyzing the use of narrative constructs in interaction, and implied the need to reconstruct the identified narrative shifts and examine how they were affecting the creation of meaning around gender equality issues. In chapter 3, the analysis implied a process of consolidation of codes into themes and concepts that related to ideas of policy translation and diffusion, and later a process of inductive identification of processes of norm translation through which gender policies were being domesticated. Similarly, in chapter 5, the analysis implied a first round of coding with a categorization of the challenges to gender equality and the solutions envisioned to address them, and then a second round of coding with an examination of the extent to which these challenges and perceived solutions directly addressed changing local patriarchal gender norms, the extent to which they were translated into local policy and whether such translations and attached meanings resonated with or provided alternative understandings for global gender strategies. Chapter 4 presents the particularity of including a quantitative analysis of a survey of 474 households in Northern Uganda, from which I examined intra-household differences on perceived decision-making power among spouses. The analysis of the survey data was conducted using R version 3.3.0 (R Core Team, 2016) and RStudio version 1.0.136 (RStudio Team, 2016). The rest of qualitative methods used in chapter 5 followed a process of analysis and interpretation similar to the other empirical chapters. Generally, data analysis was conducted in an iterative manner, and often required multiple rounds of interpretation. During data analysis and the write up of the results, I also ensured that all data were anonymized and written up in a way to guarantee that informants could not identified.

1.5.4 Researcher positionality in the study

An interpretive approach acknowledges that the subjects researched as well as the researchers are socialized through particular social contexts and cultures, as manifest at any single moment in time. As Yanow (1996, p. 40) puts it: "humans make meanings; interpret the meanings created by others; communicate their meanings to, and share them with, others. We act; we have intentions about our actions; we interpret others' actions. We make sense of the world: we are meaning-making creatures."

Therefore, the research and interpretations of this thesis are inevitably shaped by the collection of the researcher's values and lived experiences. In this way, whether consciously or unconsciously, decisions regarding the ways to collect data, what policy events to attend and prioritize, and how to present and interpret the findings — to name just a few — are intrinsically linked to the researcher's lived realities. In particular, this thesis is heavily influenced by a feminist standpoint and by the belief that science is not neutral and not a universal truth, but rather a socially constructed practice. Hence, the production of knowledge is connected to identity (e.g. nationality of the people producing the knowledge), authority (e.g. whose truth counts more, whose methods are to be used), and power (e.g. what would one achieve by telling a particular truth). In other words, knowledge is always "situated" — i.e. conformed by positional perspectives — (Haraway, 1988) and thus an "objective" truth is not accessible.

As a feminist scholar, I find it both imperative and urgent to study the historical, material and contextual conditions that still, in 2020, allow for the maintenance and perpetuation of gender inequalities worldwide. This conviction is in one way or another imprinted throughout this thesis. My background as an agricultural engineer and my interest in agricultural development make me question gender inequality issues for the agricultural sector in particular, and in the context of development in countries of the Global South. The increased threat of climate change, and its potentially devastating consequences for gender equality and for farming systems across the globe, make it paramount that issues of agricultural development and gender equality are studied in the context of a changing climate.

1.5.5 Navigating the research environment

Being a 'mzungu' — originally a Kiswahili term for a white person or a foreigner, now widely used throughout East Africa — was something I needed to navigate in my day to day research in Uganda. Often, the mzungu status implied that policy actors were potentially associating me with a development aid donor. As a matter of fact, I was

regularly asked whether I had some development projects or funding opportunities to offer to them. This inevitably meant that often my questions were answered in very general terms and in what they considered was the most correct way to please 'the donor'. In Uganda, as is the case in many other countries, gender mainstreaming is a stipulation for funding by major development agencies and NGOs, independently of the type and nature of project being funded. Policy actors in Uganda know this well, and consequently portrayed gender mainstreaming and gender equality very prominently and positively in our discussions. There was thus a social desirability effect based on expected associations with development donors and aid agencies. Breaking through social desirability barriers was not always easy. However, when confronted with very general and politically correct answers to my questions, I found that asking about particular projects that their office was implementing helped in provoking more substantive answers. For example: 'When was the last time that your office…?' 'How did that translate into the activities of your office…?'. Contextualizing questions in their own office practices and their own localities meant that actors were partially forced to provide more specificity to their answers.

However, even with this social desirability effect, during the research I was able to access less prominent gender discourses, which was facilitated also in part by my outsider position. Notably, the mzungu status allowed me to pose questions in an innocent manner and allowed me to ask some questions that might not have necessarily been appropriate if a Ugandan national was posing them. For example, in instances where God and the divine superiority of men over women would arise in our conversations, I used my mzungu and agnostic status to show genuine interest and ask them to elaborate on how these beliefs affected or translated to their day-to-day policy practices and interactions. The fact that these less prominent, often patriarchal, gender discourses emerged during the course of the research, despite my mzungu status, suggests that these could be more prominent in everyday life and outside of formal research and policy setting.

1.6 Policy relevance

The analysis of local meaning making for the effectiveness of gender equality offered in this thesis provides insights for gender activists, policy-makers, and development practitioners into the processes through which international, national and sub-national gender policies interact and are interwoven in everyday policymaking in Uganda. It highlights the gendered nature of local governments and national actors, and the ensuing influence on how global gender norms are interpreted and adopted in local contexts,

at the same time exposing tensions between global formulations and local translations, and the dilution of the transformational potential that often ensues.

By doing so, this thesis raises awareness to the role of meaning and discourse in the shaping of gender equality norms. This will assist policy and development actors in identifying, confronting or avoiding some of the discursive mechanisms through which the ambition of gender equality norms is diluted or neutralized. Thereby this thesis will hopefully help persuade policy-makers to introspectively examine their own understandings, assumptions, and cultural norms that might be inadvertently shaping gender policy and action.

The analysis of local discursive processes in this thesis will also allow development practitioners to better grasp the effects of discourse in how gender equality mandates are enacted and implemented in development initiatives. It will help them to identify, question, and contest micro-processes of resistance that are reinforcing gender inequality on the ground. Finally, this thesis will also provide local feminist organizations and women's movements in Uganda with empirical evidence with which to confront current tokenistic policy discourses, and with which to hold governments accountable for the limited results of their gender policies for rural women in the country.

Overall, the findings from the thesis will assist gender activists, policy-makers, and development practitioners in fostering an enabling environment capable of promoting more effective policy and development strategies for gender equality by helping to identify possible entry points for improving its effectiveness.

1.7 Outline of the thesis

Following this introductive chapter, this thesis presents four empirical chapters and one final concluding chapter. Overall, the four empirical chapters contribute to investigate the main research question: How does local meaning making shape policy and practice on gender equality in agriculture and climate change in Uganda?

In Chapter 2 I examine how policy-makers narrate issues of gender equality in agriculture and climate change, in order to gain insight into the interpretive processes through which these issues are locally understood, addressed and maneuvered in practice. Based on semi-structured interviews and notes from multi-stakeholder meetings, the chapter answers the sub-question: What are the main narratives on gender, agriculture and climate change adaptation among policy-makers in Uganda and what are their effects?

Chapter 3 presents the results of an analysis of processes of international norm translation and domestication and explains what happens to the transformational ambition of international gender equality strategies when they are adopted at the local level. Based on policy document analysis, the chapter addresses the sub-question: How do processes of international norm translation into domestic policies in Uganda affect the transformative ambition of gender mainstreaming?

Chapter 4 explains how a specific gender equality construct (i.e 'joint-decision making'), commonly found in Ugandan agricultural and climate change policy, is understood by male and female farmers. The chapter uses joint decision-making as an example of a gender construct that has been widely operationalized and promoted at national and district policy level in the country. Using a survey and a case study in the village of Lodi in Northern Uganda, the chapter answers the research question: What are the differentiated meanings that male and female farmers attach to specific gender equality policy constructs and how do they differ from those found in policy and development programs?

Chapter 5 engages with the promise of localization, i.e. the expectation that local approaches to tackle gender inequality can ease the tensions between local and global understandings of gender by proposing context-specific solutions. Through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires I examine the potential of "the local" in designing more effective and transformative gender policy. The chapter answers the sub-research question: What are the potentials and advantages of locally formulated solutions to gender inequality in agricultural and climate change policy as compared to those found in international discourse?

The final Chapter 6 provides a summary of findings from the four empirical chapters and reflects on the theoretical contributions of the dissertation, discusses implications of the research for policy and practice, and answers the main research question of the thesis.

Chapter 2

The Power of Narratives: Explaining Inaction on Gender Mainstreaming in Uganda's Agricultural and Climate Change Policy

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Abstract

Expectations that gender-mainstreaming efforts would effectively advance gender equality have been disappointed in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa. Examining this apparent disconnect, we focus on the narratives through which policy-makers relate to, and dis/engage with, gender issues. Using in-depth interviews and stakeholder meetings, our multi-step analysis identifies story episodes from which we reconstruct stories and narratives. The analysis reveals a complex ecology of 22 stories, clustered in five main narratives. While most stories unfold a gender equality narrative, four competing narratives emerge. Shifts during conversations from the gender equality to other narratives reveal that the discursive engagement with gender mainstreaming is accompanied by simultaneous resistance, deconstruction and revocation. These narrative shifts exercise four distinct power effects: They (1) shift blame for ineffective gender implementation; (2) legitimize policy inaction; (3) foreground and naturalize patriarchy; and (4) promote the diversion of resources. The implicit communicative strategies exercise power through ideas (persuade listeners that the equality narrative is inappropriate), power over ideas (gender equality ideas are rejected or frustrated) and power in ideas (entrenched patriarchy ideas are reproduced). Attention to ideational power through policy narrative contributes to explain implementation issues with gender mainstreaming in Uganda, and is likely to be relevant beyond this case.

2.1 Introduction

Over the last two decades the consideration of gender issues in agriculture and climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies has gained momentum in national and international policy making. Numerous studies have explored how the gendered nature of the impacts of climate change differ within regions, providing evidence that women and men are affected differently by climate change and differ in their adaptive capacity (Bhattarai et al., 2015; Godden, 2013; Jin et al., 2015; Jost et al., 2016). Consequently, gender mainstreaming has increasingly been viewed as a fundamental element of agricultural climate adaptation policies in order to ensure that the distinctive roles, preferences and challenges of men and women are equally considered. However, the expectation that gender-mainstreaming efforts would contribute towards greater gender equality in the realms of agriculture and climate change interventions has been mostly disappointed (Alston, 2014).

This research aims to address a puzzle that Alston (2014) raises: "Why, despite the rapid adoption of gender mainstreaming across the globe, do mainstreaming processes and practices not produce greater gender equality?" Our starting point is the disjuncture between a firm establishment of the gender-mainstreaming discourse in policy and the limited visible effects in terms of reducing gender inequalities (Allwood, 2013; Arora-Jonsson, 2014; Cornwall et al., 2007; Debusscher & Ansoms, 2013; Hankivsky, 2005; Meier & Celis, 2011; Mukhopadhyay, 2004). In examining the causes of this apparent disconnection between policy and practice, a great body of research has critically evaluated gender-mainstreaming policies and development programs, with a focus on identifying structural barriers that inhibit effective implementation (Brouwers, 2013; Bustelo, 2003; Debusscher & Ansoms, 2013; Moser, 2005; Moser & Moser, 2005). Considering that many gender programs are realized at local levels, other researchers argue that to understand this implementation gap we need to examine the meanings and interactive processes through which policy-makers and practitioners relate to, and dis/engage with, gender issues at the local level (Jalušič, 2009; Wittman, 2010). This query resonates with an interpretive perspective on policy processes, which emphasizes the need to understand how policy-makers make sense of novel challenges. This requires listening to the stories they tell and reconstructing the underlying narrative or, in other words, the overall pattern of meaning, the characterization of different actors and groups and the implicit moral (Bevir & Rhodes, 2006; Rhodes, 2011).

Examining how gender issues are narrated in specific policy-making contexts provides insight into the interpretive and strategic processes through which issues are understood,

addressed and maneuvered in practice. Narratives articulate and structure the ideas that are part of the policy context in which a policy issue is understood and enacted (Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016; Hay, 2002). Analyzing policy narratives therefore helps to understand ideational and discursive power effects. Narratives can serve to exercise power through, over or in ideas (Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016), and at all three levels policy narratives will influence how a specific policy issue can or cannot be discussed and addressed. Linking gender policy narratives to ideational or discursive power, this study draws attention to the role of everyday narratives among policy-makers in the micro-processes of policy making that support, perpetuate or create resistance against the concept of gender mainstreaming, or against policy change more broadly. Using gender mainstreaming in climate change adaptation policy in Uganda as a case study, we address two research questions: (1) Which narratives on gender and local climate change adaptation circulate in policy-making spheres; and (2) What are their ideational power effects?

2.2 Gender mainstreaming in climate change policy making

Climate change has widely been recognized as posing a critical threat to rural livelihoods in countries that are highly dependent on agriculture and natural resources. This is the case in Uganda, where climate change has increasingly been identified as a significant threat to the country's economic and social development in key national policies and strategic plans — e.g. 2016-2021 National Development Plan (The Republic of Uganda, 2015b); Country Vision 2040 (The Republic of Uganda, 2013b). The Uganda National Climate Change Policy (The Republic of Uganda, 2015d) was adopted in 2015 as an attempt to embrace a coordinated approach towards this goal. In the agricultural sector, the Climate-Smart Agriculture Country Plan (The Republic of Uganda, 2015c), adopted in 2015, constitutes a key policy document on climate change.

Against this background, the gender mainstreaming in climate change discourse has become more salient in recent years. Climate change is expected to exacerbate pre-existing social inequalities, among which gender disparities are considered most prevalent (Aguilar, 2010). Gender also occupies a central position in climate change mitigation discourses, for example in calls for equitable benefits from REDD+ compensation schemes (UN-REDD, 2013). International organizations advocate that mitigation strategies such as climate-smart agriculture consider gender issues from the onset (World Bank et al., 2015). Gender considerations have also been at the forefront in international climate change negotiations where quota systems and other efforts are adopted to ensure that women's voices are better represented (UNFCCC, 2001).

Many governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other institutions have also signed up to gender-mainstreaming policies (Moser & Moser, 2005). More specifically, in Uganda many of the agriculture and climate change policies and strategies have integrated gender considerations, although to different degrees (see Ampaire et al., 2019 for a detailed overview). The government has also developed sectoral gender strategies and has established focal gender officers within national ministries. However, implementation of these gender considerations is lacking (Acosta et al., 2015; Mukasa et al., 2012; UN Women, 2015a). Sharp contrasts between formal gender policy mandates and traditional cultural practices have previously been reported as historically and pervasively constraining any effort towards improved gender equality (Benedetti et al., 2012; Cooper, 2010; Moncrieffe, 2004).

While gender mainstreaming has been an effective strategy to promote the consideration and inclusion of gender issues in policy and program formulation, not only in climate change arenas but across other policy sectors, radical and transformative change has been rare (Alston, 2014; Brouwers, 2013; Eerdewijk, 2016; Walby, 2005). According to Alston (2014), the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming has been in part limited because strategies were crafted in international arenas, while the gender mandates have to be implemented in local contexts. Here, the specific cultural and social contexts give rise to variegated interpretations and conceptualizations of gender that are shaped by local norms and background knowledge. Indeed, as Jalušič (2009) points out, it is important to consider how local officials construct their gender meanings and from which contexts and experiences these meanings are emerging from. This is particularly important as the institutions entrusted with gender mainstreaming are gendered themselves, which often creates structural barriers to implementation. For example, through a political ethnography in the Scottish Executive, Wittman (2010) found that, while the organization has an important role in determining practices and policies towards gender in the region, established relations and everyday bureaucratic practices within the organization hampered the success of its gender policies. Attention to the dynamics between interpretations of gender in a local context is therefore important for understanding the conditions for effective and ineffective gender mainstreaming.

In the next section we explain how a focus on the policy stories told among policy-makers can help gain an understanding of the gaps that persist between formally adopted gender considerations in policy and project documents, which are often driven by the requirements of international organizations and donors, and the multifaceted gendered understandings of the policy-making agents in Uganda.

2.3 Conceptual framework — Narrative policy analysis

Narrative policy analysis belongs to the broad range of interpretive approaches to policy analysis. These share an emphasis on the importance of the subjective and multiple experiences of people and their interpretations for the social construction of the meaning of a public policy and the understanding of policy issues (Yanow, 2000). Storytelling is an important part of these processes of meaning-making. Within the broader field of interpretive policy analysis, narrative policy analysis (Fischer & Fischer, 2003; Roe, 1994; Wagenaar, 2014) therefore examines the processes and strategies through which certain policy understandings are constructed, consolidated, challenged or resisted in a particular policy setting by focusing on the reconstruction of policy stories and their narrative logic.

We understand stories as "symbolic representations of human action in practical, concrete situations. They simultaneously functions [sic] as explanation, justification, and instruction [… and make] past actions understandable while creating the conditions for future action" (Wagenaar, 2014, p. 216). Emerging from people's perception and understanding of the world, the stories a narrator tells are partly a reflection of a specific cultural ideology, dogma or political understanding that an individual holds at a particular point in time. Studying the background understanding and ideological principles (tenet) from which the stories are generated will facilitate the reconstruction of a narrative pattern. Narrative patterns are the background understanding that create interconnections between multitudes of more confined, specific stories. In this study we use "narrative" as a shorthand formulation for "narrative pattern".

Importantly, policy contexts are usually characterized by competing interests and agendas, diverging problem perceptions and differing values. We can expect these to be expressed through stories that are inscribed into different narratives. Roe (1994) suggests that in each policy arena, a dominant policy narrative that justifies and legitimizes the established policy is contested by counter-narratives and/or less well-developed and inconclusive "non-narratives" that express viewpoints and experiences which are excluded from the dominant narrative.

Storytelling is a universal medium that humans use to communicate how they perceive the world around them. The stories that people share echo their perceptions and understandings of society (Ingram et al., 2015; Lejano et al., 2013; Shenhav, 2015). Stories are used to interpret events in daily life. They are therefore an important medium for the creation and transformation of the social meanings attached to events, objects and abstract concepts encountered in daily lives (Fischer & Fischer, 2003). As Fischer (2003, p. 162) explains "it is through the act of storytelling that individuals assess their social

positions in their respective communities, grasp the goals and values of their social groups and communities, internalize their social conventions, and understand who they are vis-à-vis one another."

Within a specific policy-making context, the study of stories is a way for the policy analyst to understand how certain topics are discussed, communicated and contextualized. Understanding the moral to a story deserves particular attention, as it will implicitly or explicitly convey what should or should not be done with regard to a specific policy issue. The analysis of the stories told offers insights into the dominant and the neglected narrative patterns that are used in policy circles to problematize and justify specific policy interventions (Fischer & Fischer, 2003; Roe, 1991, 1994).

In policy making, narratives may exert power through, over or in ideas (Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016). Policy actors can use narratives strategically to persuade others, thereby exerting power through ideas, or to marginalize and suppress alternative ideas in an attempt to exercise power over ideas (Bachrach & Baratz, 1962). But narratives can also produce and reproduce implicit knowledge structures, which determine and shape the realm of available subject positions and legitimate ideas. These are instances of power in ideas, which are conveyed by the implicit ontologies and epistemologies of policy stories (Lukes, 2005). These different forms of ideational or discursive power can be seen "as pervasively filtering through everyday life through language and practices" (Arora-Jonsson, 2012, p. 21).

Different times, locations and events will create context-specific stories that cannot be extrapolated to other situations. It is the narrative context within which a story is interpreted that will provide the meaning to the story (Fischer & Fischer, 2003). Conceptualizations of gender and climate change can be rather abstract, obtaining much of their meaning in locally specific contexts and through the stories shared between specific groups of actors. A narrative policy approach therefore aims to capture stories-in-context, or situated stories, either through overhearing everyday conversations or through in-depth interviews which allow participants to explain and reflect their everyday policy-related actions and experiences. By sharing their stories, participants also provide insight to experienced gender relations, local understandings of gender and gender-related norms. A policy analyst will only be able to interpret stories against the background understanding of the narratives in which the story is embedded. However, understanding the narrative requires knowing a range of stories and comprehending their connections. The interpretation of stories and the reconstruction of the relevant narratives is therefore an iterative process, reminiscent of hermeneutic interpretation but

without the focus on the speaker's or author's intention. In this sense, it is only through a deep enculturation in the local study context that the policy analyst will be able to validly interpret the emerging stories and narratives (Rhodes, 2011; Wagenaar, 2014).

Within a specific policy issue and context, a multitude of stories is likely to emerge, which will often cluster into several narratives. In this study we refer to this ensemble of stories and narratives as a narrative landscape, using a conceptual metaphor. During the course of a conversation, or within a document, a speaker or author might tell variegated stories that belong to different narratives. We call the instance when the narration shifts from one narrative to another a "narrative shift". The movements from one to another are analogous to a harmonic shift in a piece of music where the melody (the narration of the speaker) moves into a different context of mood and meaning (a different narrative). We have therefore termed these occurrences narrative shifts: a shift in a speaker's narration that demarcates a change of tenet in the stories being told. During our analysis, the regular occurrence of such shifts captured our attention. Many interviewees, engaging with the dominant policy narrative most of the time, chipped in stories that apparently followed a very different logic and articulated skepticism and resistance or even effectively revoked the dominant narrative. Therefore, after presenting our findings, we argue that the concept of narrative shifts will not only help us to better understand how policy actors navigate complex narrative landscapes, but also to discover sites of discursive power and resistance.

2.4 Methodology

The study deploys a multi-step narrative analysis. The empirical material consists of thirty semi-standardized expert interviews as well as excerpts from 10 multi-stakeholder meetings on the themes of climate change, agriculture, rural livelihoods and gender. The multi-stakeholder meetings were attended by several co-authors between April 2015 and August 2016. The semi-standardized expert interviews were conducted between June and August 2015. They included 16 experts from five Ugandan national ministries and 14 interviews with representatives from development agencies, NGOs and national farmers associations.

To allow narratives to develop, interview questions were open-ended and broad, offering the interview partners time and freedom to share and elaborate their stories (Roe, 1994; Wagenaar, 2014). The interview questions were aimed to explore how the interviewees were dealing with gender mainstreaming in climate change issues in their day-to-day

work. Following prior consent, the interviews were recorded and fully transcribed. The multi-stakeholder meetings were also recorded and interventions that made reference to gender and climate change issues were transcribed.

Since the study aimed to identify and delineate competing narratives that provide meaning to distinct subsets of stories, a multi-step narrative analysis was required that we explain below. It is worth noting that the analysis of the research data was a highly inductive and iterative process, and thus repetition of these steps was at times necessary.

2.4.1 Identification of story episodes

The analysis started with an in-depth examination of all available transcripts to identify story episodes, including instances or elements of a story. We have selected story episodes as the basic unit of analysis since often full stories — with a beginning, a middle and an end — were not completed, while story episodes were recurring elements in the conversations in our text corpus. A story episode can take multiple forms, for instance, a characterization of actors in a specific setting or an argument representing an unfinished story with a beginning — or setting the topic of the story — and a middle — or setting the plot — but no clearly defined end. Using the data analysis software Atlas.ti, the story episodes were coded for different elements (plot, characterization and/or moral). This analytical step produced a total of 709 story episodes. The list of story episodes was repeatedly discussed by the author team and revised where necessary.

2.4.2 Co-construction of stories

After the story episodes were extracted from the transcripts, the next interpretive step encompassed a process of inductive aggregation of story episodes into stories. First, using the Atlas.ti codes, story episodes were grouped together if they communicated the same moral, presented a common set of characters and characterizations or constituted complementary parts of a common plot. By iteratively reading through the different story episodes, similarities and meaning sharing elements between story episodes were identified. Inductively, similar story episodes were assembled to create, through an iterative process of aggregation, full stories that encompass episodes with shared characters, settings, moral and plot.

In order to increase inter-coder reliability, the coded story episodes and the constructed stories were continuously reviewed by several of the researchers in the team.

2.4.3 Identification and interpretation of narratives

The following analytical step entailed a reconstruction of the background understanding and the ideological principles (tenet) from which these stories were generated. Through several rounds of synthesis, stories were grouped into narratives with shared plots and morals, but often different characters and settings. This required developing an in-depth understanding and enculturation in the local context, which in our case entailed a 15-month stay in Uganda by the lead author, and maintaining constant communication with local partners. The identified narratives were then given a title and a brief plot summary. To increase transparency of the aggregation process, selected quotes that were particularly rich and that embodied elements representative of a narrative were included in this study. The aggregation of stories and the delineation and characterization of the various narratives were repeatedly discussed and revised by the team of authors. However, the construction of narratives is an iterative and interpretive process, and we consider narratives ultimately a co-constructive product of the participants' narration and the researchers' reconstruction of story elements and stories.

2.4.4 Narrative landscape and the study of stories in interaction

The ensemble of stories and narratives constituted what we call the narrative landscape of our policy context. We conceptualize the narrative landscape as a cartography of the stories found, distributed across bordering regions (the narratives). The analogy of the landscape helped us to visualize how sequences of story elements connect different narratives during the course of an unfolding conversation. The sequence of stories can be pictured as a journey through the regions of the narrative landscape. Crossing the border from one narrative region to another constitutes a narrative shift. Such a narrative shift demarcates a change of the tenet or standpoint from which stories are being told. Comparing the frequency and direction of such shifts across interviews, we were intrigued by the stark differences. We therefore tried to reconstruct the narrative shifts and examine how they were affecting the creation of meaning around the policy issue in question. This implied a move from conceptualizing narratives as isolated ontological entities towards seeing them as a complex interplay, or as narratives in interaction. We were particularly interested in understanding whether the narrative shifts betray tensions between the dominant gender equality narrative and other narratives that expressed skepticism and resistance; and whether these narrative shifts could indicate the exercise of ideational power.

2.5 Mapping the narrative landscape of gender and climate change adaptation in Uganda

Our analysis of the narratives used by Ugandan policy-makers when talking about issues of gender in agriculture under a changing climate found a complex landscape of 22 stories, clustered into five narratives. For each narrative, we first explain the ideological principles (tenet) from which the stories were being narrated. We then present a table with all stories and story plots that belong to the narrative before providing a more detailed commentary on some of the most insightful stories. At the end of each sub-section an interpretive note explains how and why the presented stories reflected the narrative.

2.5.1 The gender equality narrative

The core of this narrative is the consideration that all individuals should have the same rights and opportunities in life, regardless of their gender. According to this narrative, women have traditionally been a disadvantaged group in Ugandan society, and thus there is a need to empower women, advocate for their equal rights and defend their interests. Consequently, special programs and policies should be developed and implemented to ensure that women will no longer be disadvantaged and will benefit equally from public policy.

The gender equality narrative was the most frequently used (59 per cent of story episodes). Of the interview partners, 28 out of 30 told stories that contributed to it. It was also prominent during the multi-stakeholder meetings. Half of the stories identified in our text corpus belong to the gender equality narrative, underscoring its richness. These eleven stories (Table 2.1) present a variety of situations in which women are typically portrayed as vulnerable and as victims of climate change (and society). This exposition is linked to a moral plot that calls for support by emphasizing the need to create special programs that empower women and enhance equality. The exception to this pattern is the story of "A better woman, a better world" in which women are not portrayed as victims but rather as agents of change who capably contribute to the development of the country and to more effective adaptation to and mitigation of climate change, from which also their families and communities benefit.

"The striker's syndrome" represents a particularly interesting example of a tale generated from this narrative. The story presents women's limited land ownership as one of the main barriers to women's empowerment and emancipation. It encapsulates the experience that patriarchal institutions are strong and must be challenged to tackle structural constraints, or otherwise the gender gap will persist. The following story episode, told

Table 2.1. Stories generated from the gender equality narrative

Gender equality narrative	
Story	Story plot
The last straw	This is a rescue story about urgency. Ugandan women, who were already among the most vulnerable members of the Ugandan society, are disproportionately affected by climate change, which exacerbates their difficult situation. There is an urgent need to act and to consider women in all government efforts, including climate change policies, in order to alleviate their vulnerability.
The lazy woman	This is a tragedy about women who, because of climate change, must walk ever further to fetch water and firewood while the home garden yields also decline. Women work more and more to produce less, and this creates conflicts with their husbands who believe they have become lazy.
The striker's syndrome	This story is a drama recounting how rural women are marginalized: they are expected to work on the family farm but keep none of the profits, they are prevented from inheriting or owning land, and are excluded from household decision-making. The story stresses how structural barriers must be overcome if women are to advance and have their efforts and interests recognized to become, in metaphorical terms, the strikers of a football match.
A better woman, a better world	This is a story of success, a story of women who have been empowered by a development program. After years of development programs only benefiting men, the focus on empowering women brings radical change: the empowered women are able to rapidly improve the status of their family, their community and the nation.
Developing gender strategies	This is a commitment story. Due to the paramount importance of considering gender issues in agriculture under a changing climate, special gender strategies are being developed for the sub-sector and gender focal persons are installed to ensure that gender considerations are at the forefront of sub-sector interventions.
Hearing women's voices	This is an optimistic story about inclusion and representation. Women who had been traditionally excluded from policy-making are now given a voice through affirmative action in every department, council and program. With this measure, the women are now represented and more equitable and gender-sensitive decisions take place.
Culture, our biggest challenge	This skeptical story presents culture as the biggest hurdle to any changes in gender roles and relations. Strong cultural traditions constrain change in both rural and urban society, where women are discriminated against.
My land, my household, my money	This is a drama about unintended effects. Implementation of gender considerations in agricultural programs brings certain benefits to women. This disrupts traditional power relations in the household, brings jealousy and ultimately results in open family conflict, thus representing the failure of gender programs.
The leadership ladder	This story is a drama about men in higher government positions without interest in pursuing gender mainstreaming. Women, who remain in lower governmental positions, are therefore constrained in their push for gender equality initiatives.
The time-saving technologies	This is a success story in which women, who were already overloaded with work, are now faced with an increased time burden due to the negative effects of climate change. Programs that introduce time-saving technologies (i.e. improved cooking stoves) liberate women from this burden and they then have more time for themselves and their families.

Table 2.1. ***Continued***

Gender equality narrative	
Story	Story plot
Patience, it's a slow attitude change	This is a story about prudence and the importance of keeping pace with tradition. Gender issues are increasingly being talked about in agriculture and climate change policy developments, but are not yet considered very seriously. The process of considering gender issues is slow since it sometimes clashes with traditional beliefs, but it is on the right track.

Source: Co-constructed stories from interviews and multi-stakeholder meetings.

by a male policy maker in a gender multi-stakeholder meeting, narrates the multiple tasks that women perform in the agricultural fields and at home. Using the metaphor of a football striker, the narrator points to women's high workload, lack of recognition and marginalization:

> *There is a striker's syndrome […] where every other person plays on the football pitch but tomorrow the headlines read out one person who scored. The women, on the football pitch, goalkeepers [...], defenders […], mid fielders do a lot of work to make sure the deliverables reach where a striker will score. Awards go to strikers. Recognition goes to a striker. However, the people that did all the work for the striker to become relevant on the football pitch are forgotten not only in contribution recognition but even rewards. That is the status women have been condemned to. Men have become strikers, so can't women be trusted to be strikers? To get out of the garden, get out of the home and go to fetch out and score in the market?*

The striker's syndrome story portrays women as victims. The story could take a fatalistic turn, but its moral is a call for change: meaningful empowerment of women requires tackling structural constraints of gender inequality and liberating women from their traditional, disadvantaged position in society.

Similarly in "My land, my household, my money", women are victims without clearly personalized culprits. In this story, the woes originate from the climate change and agricultural gender programs that do not give enough consideration to traditional household roles, which causes the programs to fail. The male household members are portrayed as secondary miscreants who act out of disappointment. The story communicates the moral that gendered programs that try to benefit only women might not be successful or even counter-productive. However, the story plot unfolds because men are not ready to accept equal gender relations, which could convey a different

moral if this was not naturalized as an unchangeable fact. The following story episode captures the essence of this story:

> *He says "this is my money, because this is my land. And yes, you did a project fine, but it is [up to] me to decide what to do with the money". So there will be tension. You will find a project where livestock is given to the woman […]. The woman says "It's my cow, the milk is mine and therefore it is my money". And the man says, "Yes, it is yours, but the land is mine and I am the head of this household. I need to get the money and see what to do with it". So it [the project] brings an issue of power and tension in the home. It requires a skill set that is multilevel to be able to pick out those instances at program level but even at implementation level.*

The common moral or principles encapsulated in these stories convey the need to create special programs and strategies that reduce gender inequality in the context of a changing climate. This moral points to the gender equality narrative as the "generator" of these stories.

2.5.2 The gender nescience narrative

A second set of stories narrates the insufficient and unclear knowledge about gender issues and the ensuing consequences at different levels and stages of climate change policy-making. The gender nescience narrative is embodied in 11 per cent of the stories in our sample (Table 2.2). We can distinguish two main types of stories within this narrative.

Table 2.2. Stories generated from the gender nescience narrative

Gender nescience narrative	
Story	Story plot
They got it all wrong	This is an accusatory story. Even as policy-makers window-dress gender as an important aspect to be considered in climate change policy-making, behind the scenes gender is an after-thought, with most policy actors not having a clear idea about what constitutes a gender-sensitive policy. This contributes to ineffective implementation.
Game of numbers	This is a drama about the lack of knowledge that exists around gender. Gender, which is mostly understood by "number of women included", is not properly implemented in either governmental nor NGO climate change programs. This lack of understanding constrains any advancement in closing the gender gap in agriculture.

Source: Co-constructed stories from interviews and multi-stakeholder meetings.

The tale "They got it all wrong" highlights the generally insufficient knowledge of gender issues and the ensuing ineffective policy implementation. The "Game of numbers" story evolves more specifically around the problem that in many agricultural and climate change programs establishing quotas for female participants remains the only proposed "gender activity". An example is the following story episode:

> *The problem with gender is that it has never been understood. When they say gender, they look at numbers: one two three. "The women are there, so what are you telling me!", they say. People don't understand gender, there is still need for getting them to understand what gender is, to unpack gender. When I commented on that [policy] draft, it was about numbers, number of women. How do you make people understand gender? It's not about numbers.*

Noticeably, most of the story episodes originating from the gender nescience narrative were told in the third person. This seemed to indicate an effort from the narrator to distance him/herself from the stakeholders that do not understand gender issues. These ignorant organizations and individuals constitute the villains of the story. The victims are women held back from empowerment. The implicit hero is the storyteller, who understands gender and accuses other stakeholders of slowing down gender sensitive policy formulation and implementation. Both stories emerging from the gender nescience narrative share the moral that an improved understanding of gender issues is needed.

2.5.3 The structural inertia narrative

A number of stories converged on stakeholders' difficulties to comply with gender-mainstreaming guidelines in the face of institutional and political constraints. The structural inertia narrative generates stories about a system that is slow to change, the problematic structure within which policy actors operate, and their lack of power within these structures, all of which undermines policy formulation and implementation for gender mainstreaming.

The structural inertia narrative generated 12 per cent of the stories in our sample (Table 2.3). We distinguished four stories:

Table 2.3. Stories generated from the structural inertia narrative

Structural inertia narrative	
Story	Story plot
Counterfeit participation	This is a story about frustration. A stakeholder group is asked to participate in a climate change policy consultative process. They do their best to provide input on the policy draft. In the end, they are surprised to see that their views are not incorporated in the policy. The participatory process seems meaningless and counterfeit.
We are at an impasse	This story narrates the deadlock that different stakeholders have reached with considering gender in their projects. Its moral is the importance of developing indicators and associated budgets in the formulation process so that gender mainstreaming can become a reality in the implementation phase.
The mainstreaming hoax	This is a drama that contrasts high ambitions for gender mainstreaming with the lack of operational clarity and insufficient budgets. The drama unfolds when gender has to compete with other mainstreaming issues (e.g. HIV, climate change) for one common budget. Consequently, gender mainstreaming is frustrated in policies and programs. The moral is clear: unless more resources are allocated to gender mainstreaming, the situation will remain hopeless.
The shelf replete with policies	This is a drama about the deficient implementation of the gender considerations in agricultural and natural resource policies. Uganda is renowned in the region for advanced gender policies, but the mandates remain largely on paper. If insufficient policy implementation is coupled with insufficient dissemination, the inclusion of gendered considerations in policy documents does not per se create the capability to promote meaningful change.

Source: Co-constructed stories from interviews and multi-stakeholder meetings.

Within the structural inertia narrative, only the "Counterfeit participation" story referred to a poor participatory component of the policy formulation process, while the other stories focused on implementation deficits of gender considerations in agricultural and climate change policies. "We are at impasse" is an interesting case of a non-story as the narration offers no clear explanation (conclusion) how gender indicators and associated budgets would overcome the deadlock.

"The mainstreaming hoax" narrates the difficulty that stakeholders face when trying to operationalize gender mainstreaming in the context of climate change, with numerous cross-cutting issues that need to be considered in Ugandan policies. The following story episode gives an account of how puzzling it becomes to mainstream gender in climate change issues, as the latter is also officially considered to be a cross-cutting issue:

> *One major challenge we have is mainstreaming a cross-cutting issue within another cross-cutting issue (Laughs from the audience). Gender is cross-cutting, climate change is cross-cutting. Now, bringing the two cross-cutting issues [together] is a challenge.*

The fact that mainstreaming seems to stop at policy formulation level was also very much present in the narrations, which emphasized that mainstreaming issues are given a very limited budget. This suggests that while gender mainstreaming is largely included in policy documents, in practice it remains a secondary issue:

> *Most of the time when we call it mainstreaming it stops at the documentation or programming level, but actual budgeting and costing may not be reflected there. So when you integrate, you make it part and parcel so that you benefit from funding from the gender mainstreaming.*

The stories presented here shared a mood of frustration with entrenched administrative and political barriers, which were blamed for ineffective gender formulation and implementation processes.

2.5.4 The male supremacy narrative

A number of stories convey the moral that men are naturally, and by divine purpose, superior to women and therefore men and women need to be treated accordingly. Any policy intervention needs to respect men and consider them as belonging to a higher social rank than their female counterparts. These stories are generated by what we call a male supremacy narrative. With 8 per cent of the stories on our sample, this was the least frequently used narrative. It was mostly, but not exclusively, told by male narrators. Male supremacy stories (Table 2.4) only emerged during interviews in which a certain rapport between the interviewer and the interview partner had previously been created. Their absence during the meetings indicates that they cannot be used in official deliberations. We distinguished three stories (Table 2.4).

The story "They will overthrow us!" instigates the belief that women's empowerment should be strictly limited; otherwise the traditional social order will be jeopardized. An underlying but tangible motive is the fear that "too much" female empowerment will challenge or overthrow male supremacy. This is a non-story, since the end or, in other words, what happens when men are overthrown, is not clearly articulated. The following story episode, told by a manager of an international organization, ponders whether gender issues are too foreign and at odds with eternal divine wisdom:

> *Maybe as humanity, we are forcing it because … biblically from creation, we were given to say that the woman will be submissive to the man but the man should love the woman so it is important that that happens.*

Table 2.4. Stories generated from the male supremacy narrative

Male supremacy narrative	
Story	Story plot
Run before it's too late	This is a drama about abandonment. As climate change has brought progressively bad fortune to the house, the husband cannot take the situation any longer and decides to abandon the house in search of a better fortune, leaving his wife and family behind. Moral: male behavior is not to be condemned, men have the agency and freedom to look for a brighter future for themselves.
They will overthrow us!	This is a story about limits. In the center is a woman who has been economically empowered by the government and NGO programs. After she starts doing better, the man starts to mistrust her and worries that his superiority might be in jeopardy. Moral: women's empowerment should have limits and never overcome men's superiority.
A woman's place is in the home	This is a drama story about control. Empowerment programs that encourage women to go outside their homes produce moral and social decay. Moral: women should be empowered but within their existing gender roles and domestic space.

Source: Co-constructed stories from interviews and multi-stakeholder meetings.

The story "A woman's place is in the home" narrates how women's empowerment is viewed as a potential threat to the current gender power dynamics in the household:

> *When the woman becomes more powerful, the other men look at it as a threat. They begin to imagine that the more their women grow, the more their women get income, the more it makes them vulnerable. Therefore they will begin to respond defensively, to make sure that the women are always kept in their place of course, because I think their place is the kitchen.*

The male supremacy narrative genuinely and directly challenges the gender equality narrative with its moral that men are, and should be considered to be, superior beings. It presents the proponents of gender mainstreaming as villains who disrupt social order. Often, the women are presented as misguided and victims. The men are not presented as mere victims since they take counter-action. Their responses to female empowerment are not presented as reprehensible, but condoned against the background of tradition and divine revelation.

2.5.5 The reconciliatory narrative

The reconciliatory narrative encompasses a number of stories in which gender approaches are reconciled with marriage and family life. Their plots suggest that successful gender interventions must take an inclusive approach that takes not only women but all members

of the household into account. Programs succeed if they approach the main male and female decision makers of the household for joint planning.

Of the stories in our sample, 10% belong to the reconciliatory narrative, which consists of two main stories (Table 2.5).

Table 2.5. Stories generated from the reconciliatory narrative

Reconciliatory narrative	
Story	Story plot
It's all about the family	This is a story about family endurance. Negative effects of climate change for one member of the family are also felt and transmitted to other members of the household. The family needs to adapt as a whole to cope with the negative effects of climate change.
Family, the key for gender success	This is a story about hope. Traditionally, gender programs have failed due to their lack of inclusion (focusing mostly on women). However, learning from this, there is a bright scenario ahead, where gender programs consider the family structure and include the men.

Source: Co-constructed stories from interviews and multi-stakeholder meetings.

The story "Family, the key for gender success" promotes the idea that gender and climate change programs will likely fail if both spouses are not included from the onset. A joint-spouse approach will thus increase the likelihood of improved outcomes of gender programs. Women in Development programs, in which the sole focus is on women, are presented as culpable with the disappointed women as the victims, while the new, inclusive gender programs are the heroes of this story. The following episode encapsulates the essence of this story:

> *I think one thing we do appreciate, and we have appreciated for long, is that we need men as partners on the journey to gender equality. It is something that in civil society we are continuing to work around, so maybe not a lot of mention was made about men, but we do acknowledge that we need to work with them. We also do acknowledge that many times, because some of these things come with money and power, then it creates power issues within relationships. So it is also about talking to the men about how to deal with some of the power issues that emerge when women become more empowered.*

The reconciliatory narrative presents itself as a middle ground between the gender equality and the male supremacy narratives by acknowledging the need for women's empowerment while accepting traditional gender roles and promoting a "family

perspective," which implicitly defines women only in relation to the wellbeing of their family.

2.6 Narrative shifts: mapping narratological power in action

The analysis and interpretation of the stories told in the gender and climate change adaptation policy communities in Uganda has revealed a complex narrative landscape in which 22 different stories emerged around five main narratives. Rather than a competition between two or more policy understandings, as commonly found in policy narrative studies (M. Jones et al., 2014; Roe, 1994), we found a situation with an apparently predominant narrative, the gender equality narrative, that was widely used among policy actors, while several other narratives emerged and were used alongside it.

Importantly, during the interviews, stories fitting into the gender equality narrative were frequently interspersed with stories that followed a different narrative logic. These narrative shifts were identifiable by a variation in the story setting accompanied by a change in the standpoint from which two consecutive story elements were generated.

Due to the numerous, brief stakeholder interjections and subsequent digressions that take place in multi-stakeholder meetings, the narrative shifts were more easily identifiable during individual conversations with our interview partners. An interview setting provides more time to expand and elaborate a narration, so that narrative shifts, should they occur, are more easily traceable.

It is worth noting that even though narrative shifts were identified and examined within the confines of an interview setting with a young, white female conducting the interview, the stories and narrative shifts are likely to reflect a discursive reality beyond the interviews. The narrative shifts that we identified not only open a window to the ways in which policy-makers in Uganda negotiate different understandings of gender. These shifts also hint at the strategic use of narrative that policy-makers employ. It is reasonable to assume that the practice of narrative shifting reflects that the actors navigate complex social realities. Their stories have to link up to multiple overlapping social contexts, for example: gender mainstreaming policies, funder expectations, norms of professional and social peers, traditional norms and so on. Under such circumstances, a strategic use of storytelling has to be expected. We were particularly interested in shifts from the gender equality to other narratives. These shifts create specific semantic effects by placing the dominant gender equality narrative in a different context that indicates the intention of the speaker to modify or even invert the meaning of the equality stories. But that context

also points to a discursive practice of interlinking gender equality stories with narratives that provide very different plots, actor characterizations and morals.

By identifying and inductively analyzing the narrative shifts in our data, we found four different effects of narrative shifts at the level of policy-making. The first two effects were (1) blame-shifting for the ineffective gender implementation; and (2) a legitimization of policy inaction. For example, a recurrent shift from a gender equality discourse to a gender nescience narrative occurs if the narrator starts with the vulnerable situation of Ugandan women in the face of climate change but then shifts the narration to the general lack of understanding of gender issues in the country. The effect of this shift is to question the activating moral of the gender equality narrative, to legitimize the policy lethargy on implementing gender considerations and to shift blame to other stakeholders who do not understand gender issues. These two political effects, blame-shifting and legitimization of policy inaction, were also clearly present in shifts towards structural inertia narratives. Here, flaws in the system, such as an insufficient gender budget, are narrated to justify inaction and shift the blame to the central government and other funding institutions. While it might be difficult to ascertain that these shifts were strategic in nature or just a pure expression of frustration, their narrative logic — in terms of plot and moral — produces a legitimization of policy inaction and blame-shifting in the gender-mainstreaming policy process.

The narrative shift from a gender equality discourse towards a male supremacy narrative implied engaging with two completely opposite tenets. For example, the narrator starts with stories about the disadvantaged position of women in society and the need to empower them, and later emphasizes that men are naturally and divinely supposed to be of a higher social rank than their female counterparts, justifying an unequal status quo. This shift had the clear narratological effect of (3) foregrounding and naturalizing patriarchy; and (4) promoting the diversion of resources that were previously allocated to women's programs by claiming that men should have control over any income entering the household. Shifts from the gender equality to the reconciliatory narrative had similar effects, albeit more subtly. In these instances, the initial equality discourse was diverted towards a "family" approach in which gender programs would "accept" existing forms of family life and tradition, including the unequal intra-household power structures. This entails the suggestion that a change of focus from women to households, or families, was needed in all gender and climate change programs. This shift implied a perpetuation of patriarchy, since the male head of the household would now need to be included and consulted. It also implied a call for the redistribution of resources previously allocated to women to the family as a whole and therefore, as tradition mandates, to the control of the male head of the household.

Attention to narrative shifts allows a better understanding of ideational power in policy discourse. In our data, the discursive effect of the narrative shifts by policy-makers from the gender equality narrative to the other narratives works as a widespread, and mostly rather subtle, disempowerment of the equality discourse. The superficial predominance of the gender equality narrative was repealed by the iterative use of other narratives that undermined its moral—the need for greater gender equality in climate change adaptation. Through the repeated implicit blame-shifting, the legitimization of gender inaction, the promotion of a diversion of gender resources and the foregrounding of patriarchy, policy-makers achieved a strong disempowering effect in which the ambition of the gender equality discourse was effectively reduced and counteracted.

2.7 Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this research was to contribute to the explanation of implementation gaps in gender mainstreaming through the analysis of policy narratives, based on the assumption that policy-makers provide meaning to a complex and unfolding situation through the sharing of policy stories (Fischer & Fischer, 2003; Roe, 1994). Using climate change policy-making in Uganda as a case, we identified story elements and reconstructed stories and narratives that connect the story elements through a common plot with similar characters and a shared moral.

Our analysis found that a gender equality narrative dominated, but four other narratives provided a variety of alternative understandings of gender mainstreaming in agriculture and climate change. With this study we do not suggest that these are the only stories in policy-making circles in Uganda, but rather they are those we were able to access and reconstruct. We also acknowledge the influence that the presence of a young, white, female researcher could have had on the conversations. Interview partners might have perceived her as closely related to the international donor community, thereby making some narratives more prevalent than others. It is, however, remarkable that even with this methodological caveat we found competitors to the dominant gender equality narrative, suggesting that the latter might be less central in everyday conversations and outside of a formal interview setting.

The gender equality narrative identified in Uganda greatly resonates with international standards and treaties that advocate equal opportunity of rights and responsibilities, regardless of gender. Many development aid donors require adoption of gender-mainstreaming policies. Policy-makers in Uganda therefore have a collective interest

to engage with a gender equality narrative. However, the predominance of the gender equality narrative in terms of frequency in our data might not only reflect the demands of the international development community, but also genuine concerns by policy-makers about the detrimental impact of gender inequality on agricultural development and climate change. At the same time, the other narratives were present in almost all interviews, betraying a tension between a superficial acceptance of gender mainstreaming and more skeptical understandings. Many of the frequent shifts from the gender equality narrative, which actors felt they had to engage with, to narratives about structural inertia, male supremacy or the need to focus on families rather than women, revealed frustration and strong reservations towards the dominant narrative. They had immediate discursive effects in questioning responsibilities, justifying inaction, naturalizing existing patriarchal power structures and promoting the diversion of resources.

Our findings point to a highly distributed exercise of ideational power in gender mainstreaming and development arenas: (1) Top-down discourses influence the formulation of policies and programs in developing countries dependent on foreign aid, such as Uganda. (2) Lateral discourses mold the meaning of gender mainstreaming in the specific national and policy context and tend to limit the transformative effect of gender mainstreaming. These findings partly lend support to Alston's (2014) explanation of the limited success of gender-mainstreaming strategies: while gender mainstreaming had a transnational origin, it is applied within a local context, which imbues it with a variety of interpretations. The findings furthermore demonstrate that discursive power on gender-mainstreaming issues can be seen in everyday life conversations and practices (Arora-Jonsson, 2012).

The stories told by policy-makers construct in this way a double social reality: while apparently engaging and complying with international gender-mainstreaming discourses, the narratives that many policy actors share question the feasibility and sometimes even the desirability of gender mainstreaming. This has implications for ideational power in the sense of Carstensen and Schmidt (2016). First, while the gender equality narrative might look hegemonic in official discourse, the frequent shifting suggests limited persuasive power (power through ideas) of this narrative among many policy-makers. Second, many stories reproduce entrenched patriarchal ideas, thereby executing power in ideas, for example in the understanding of family roles and dynamics. Third, most stories in the gender nescience, structural inertia and reconciliatory narratives narrate power over ideas when equality ideas are rejected or frustrated. Fourth, the male supremacy narrative is an outright exercise of power over ideas in plainly rejecting gender equality ideas. Consequently, even the inclusion of gender mainstreaming in policy documents is unlikely to exert significant power in ideas by effectively structuring

the relevant subject positions and actor relations. Certainly there was little evidence that the gender equality narrative had power over ideas by silencing alternative views.

These findings suggest that, amidst key structural constraints to gender equality in Uganda, narratives that policy-makers use have their own role to play and are valuable when examining the performance of gender-mainstreaming strategies in climate change policy-making. By delving into how policy-makers relate to gender mainstreaming through the stories they tell, and the tensions that emerge when these stories are studied in interaction, our work has shown the role of ideational power in shaping gender policy processes on the ground, which otherwise would be silenced, overlooked or neglected. Our findings are therefore especially useful for development practitioners working in contexts where the compliance with gender mainstreaming is often assumed as a given and frequently goes unquestioned.

This research has called into question the apparent dominance of gender-mainstreaming discourses within governance and development organizations in Uganda by exposing conflicting and more skeptical understandings, which were made visible through storytelling. This resonates with the suggestion by Allwood (2013) that, even when gender appears to be mainstreamed in development policy, unintended consequences arise in part because these policy-making processes are themselves gendered and premised on gendered assumptions. We expect that questioning precisely these gender assumptions — and the micro-processes of resistance to gender mainstreaming — and addressing them through an improved understanding of ideational power can help to make gender mainstreaming more effective in future climate change adaptation and mitigation policy-making processes.

Chapter 3

Discursive Translations of Gender-Mainstreaming Norms: The Case of Agricultural and Climate Change Policies in Uganda

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Abstract

While the international norm on gender mainstreaming, UN-backed since 1995, has been widely adopted in national policies, gender inequalities are rarely systematically addressed on the ground. To explain this limited effectiveness, this paper takes a discourse analytical perspective on gender policy and budgeting, with a focus on the translation of the international norm into domestic norms and policies. An in-depth, inductive analysis of 107 policy documents in Uganda examines how the gender mainstreaming norm has been translated at three administrative levels: national, district, sub-county. The analysis finds five processes that reduce the norm's transformational potential: neglecting gender discourse, gender inertia, shrinking gender norms, embracing discursive hybridity, and minimizing budgets. Overall, gender mainstreaming largely stopped at the discursive level, and often paradoxically depoliticized gender. The findings explain why gender mainstreaming might be helpful but not sufficient for advancing gender equality and suggest additional focus on promising practices, women's rights movements and stronger monitoring.

3.1 Introduction

> *The whole world now eagerly awaits the outcome of this Conference. While the Conference has provided the international community with an opportunity to reflect on our past achievements and failures with regard to the advancement of women, it should in the same breath endeavour to provide solutions. The challenge is to have the Platform for Action translated into concrete programmes that will achieve tangible results for all women at all levels. We should continue to "maternize" globally but act locally.*
>
> *Statement extract by Specioza Kazibwe, Vice-President of Uganda*
> *Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995)*

The extract above conveys the expectation that was created around the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), as an event that would constitute a turning point in how governments address gender inequalities at all scales. The event did not disappoint. The declaration of the conference, known as the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, instituted "gender mainstreaming" as the new standard that governments and organizations would follow to address gender issues globally (United Nations, 1996). Two years later, in 1997, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) established guiding principles for gender mainstreaming which was defined as "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality" (ECOSOC, 1997, p. 3). Since then, this international norm on gender mainstreaming has guided policy-making and development programs' actions on gender around the globe (Moser & Moser, 2005).

In addition to transmitting the expectations raised at the Fourth World Conference on Women, the speech given by the then vice-president of Uganda, Ms. Kazibwe, directed attention to the challenges faced by nations in terms of translating this international norm into local actions and concrete programs. These processes of translation, she emphasized, would ultimately constitute the success or failure of the global ambition. Her remarks underlined how negotiation processes involved in the establishment and signing of international norms, together with the translation of the norms into domestic policy, would have to create linkages between international, regional, national and sub-national policy-making.

This paper takes a discourse-analytical perspective (Feindt & Oels, 2005; Wagenaar, 2011) and critical policy instrument analysis (Bacchi, 2009; Colebatch, 2014) to analyze processes of gender norm translation in Uganda. We understand norm translation as practices through which norms are negotiated and adapted in different contexts (Draude, 2017). These norm translation processes often imply exercises of meaning molding, i.e. a process in which the meaning of a concept is shaped so that it fits into local discursive and normative contexts (Fejerskov, 2018). Indeed, through the establishment of collective expectations and the processes of norm translation into domestic policy, exercises of meaning molding arise, first to reach international consensus and then to adapt these global norms to the respective local contexts (Gherardi & Nicolini, 2000; Laet & Mol, 2000). Through processes of meaning molding, policy issues are foregrounded or backgrounded, which also affects the level of ambition of gender-mainstreaming efforts (Lombardo et al., 2009a). Global norms also guide most international development efforts, which organize their programs in accordance to gender equality principles and goals. In many Sub-Saharan countries, this also creates linkages between development organizations and governments, as compliance with gender equality principles is often a conditionality to access development funds (Arora-Jonsson, 2014; Collins, 2018; Miers, 2011; Samarasinghe, 2014).

More than twenty years after the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, Uganda has not only succeeded in introducing a gender discourse in policies and development programs, but has actually become a point of reference for their gender-mainstreaming efforts in the East Africa region (The Republic of Uganda, 2013a). The large proportion of areas that are rural in Uganda has made gender issues in agriculture and rural development a priority in policy-making and development programs (World Bank, 2014). More recently, with climate change increasingly threatening many of these rural livelihoods, examining gender issues in agriculture within this context has also gained prominence in the country (Nyasimi et al., 2018). Notwithstanding these policy efforts, gender inequalities in the agricultural sector of Uganda remain large (UN Women et al., 2015).

Uganda is not an isolated case but is rather an example of a widespread phenomenon. Gender mainstreaming as a strategy has not yet yielded the desired results, as exhibited by the rampant levels of gender inequality in agriculture still prevalent across Sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere (Alston, 2014; Brouwers, 2013; Eerdewijk, 2016; Gumucio & Tafur Rueda, 2015). To understand this gender implementation gap and to determine the extent and manner to which global gender norms have been translated into domestic policies, numerous review studies and monitoring and evaluation programs have emerged (Allwood, 2013, 2015; Kabeer, 2015; Moser & Moser, 2005; Nhamo,

2014). Often these review and monitoring processes stop at assessing the integration of global norms in national level policies, not looking into the activities and outcomes at local level. Other studies focus on local situated practices and discuss how gender implementation has failed at this local level (see for example Fejerskov, 2018) or explore how gender-mainstreaming policies are performed in informal domains within the context of development interventions (Nandigama, 2012, 2019). What remains largely unproblematized is the role of sub-national level government policies in translating internationally agreed gender norms and the processes through which these norms are translated into policy action and thus their potential in tackling gender inequalities.

The international norm on gender mainstreaming is embedded in a policy discourse that emphasizes gender inequality as a policy problem and presents gender mainstreaming as the policy solution that allows countries and communities to live up to the norms of gender equality (Woodward, 2008). Policy actors on lower levels of the hierarchy have to adopt a gender discourse in policy documents, partly as a pre-condition of access to funds, and have to build this discourse into their existing discourses and practices. However, gender equality norms might conflict with other norms dominant among local communities or policy-makers at sub-national levels. The question is how, depending on the local context, "global" discourses that challenge locally prevalent norms are translated so that they make sense and fit within the local context (Zimmermann, 2014). A related question is whether the adoption of a gender discourse will affect the thinking (cognitive and normative beliefs) of local actors and their practices, or whether local actors merely pay lip service to imposed requirements but insulate their local discourse and practices from the external discursive intervention, or perhaps, a combination of both.

Using Uganda as a case study (Yin, 2002), this study examines what happens to gender issues in agriculture and climate change adaptation when they are mainstreamed and domesticated in different governance levels (i.e. national, district and sub-county). It investigates the processes through which global gender-mainstreaming norms are translated into policy programs by national governments and decentralized administrations. In trying to answer the research question: "How do processes of international norm translation into domestic policies in Uganda affect the transformative ambition of gender mainstreaming?", we examine how discursive translations of gender norms affect the meanings of gender equality and its transformational ambition. Understanding this process of norm translation can contribute to explain how the apparent mismatch between the adoption of global gender norms and the limited visible effects at the local level comes into being. The findings from the case study suggest that a focus on the gender mainstreaming policy discourses and policy instruments

being implemented in national and sub-national governance levels is fundamental to understanding their links to the global discourse, and how they can produce policy change.

3.2 The domestication of international norms

Norms are generally understood as "standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 891). When standards are negotiated and agreed upon by numerous states, an international norm is formed. Krook and True (2012, pp. 103–104) define an international norm as "organizing principles or standardized procedures that resonate across many states and global actors, having gained support in multiple forums including official policies, laws, treaties or agreements".

International norms involve establishing collective expectations and standards, which inherently imply the creation of shared understandings and meanings as to what is considered legitimate, feasible, and appropriate to attain pre-determined goals (Altinay, 2013; Cold-Ravnkilde et al., 2018). Within the realm of women's rights, international norms prescribe what is considered to be "adequate policy" and "adequate development" to advance the status of women globally. They establish commonly expected patterns of behavior that nations and international organizations ought to follow in order to meet women's empowerment and gender equality goals. In this way, a sense of individual and common obligations are set between agents (Pettenger, 2007). International norms are often formalized in the international community through the signing of an agreement (e.g. a convention or treaty). The signatory nations are then expected and encouraged to adopt these international norms in their territories. In this way, international norms influence and shape national policy-making and agenda setting (Krook & True, 2012; Martinsson, 2011).

As international norms emerge, nations embark on processes of norm translation into domestic policy (Risse et al., 1999). Linguistically, to translate is to make two words equivalent (Law, 2009). However, as Law (2009, p. 144) points out, considering there is no such thing as two completely equivalent words, "translation is both about making equivalent, and about shifting. It is about moving terms around, about linking and changing them". Kjær and Pedersen (2001, p. 219) describe translation as a process "whereby concepts and conceptions from different social contexts come into contact with each other and trigger a shift in the existing order of interpretation and action in a particular context". Following this definition, the translation of international norms

into domestic policy involves (1) a translation of discourse (interpretation), whereby international norms are translated into domestic norms; and (2) a translation of these domestic norm interpretations into policy instruments, whereby domestic norms are translated into actual policy action. Policy instruments constitute in this way the "end point" of processes of international norm translation. Analyzing these processes will offer an understanding on how the international norm has been ultimately disseminated and problematized at the local level, establishing in this way specific relationships between the "governing and the governed" which express specific social theories of control (Lascoumes & Gales, 2007, p. 11).

Acts of norm "translation" entail processes of reconstruction and meaning molding, where struggles over meaning often arise (Lombardo et al., 2009a). In particular, through these translation processes, governments and organizations interpret international norms in particular ways that prioritize and/or downplay specific discursive elements in a way that can both resonate with international norms and be adjusted to domestic norms and logics (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004; Petersen, 2018; Zimmermann, 2014). In this way, practices of norm translation can be considered as processes of discursive maneuvering at work, through which non-coherent normative environments are navigated (Law et al., 2014). Silencing specific issues or part of the discourse, for example, is a common discursive mechanisms of control in policy-making processes (Schröter & Taylor, 2018).

These dynamics expose the need to understand norms as processes, whereby norms are constantly subjected to exercises of meaning molding and meaning negotiation between actors (Krook & True, 2012). As Finnemore and Sikkink point out (1998, p. 893), international norms always "work their influence through the filter of domestic structures and domestic norms, which can produce important variations in compliance and interpretations of these norms". Krook and True (2012) argue that this is possible because of the ambiguity in which these international norms are often negotiated, which allows for these norms to be "domesticated" in different ways in different contexts, with processes of meaning molding and adjustment evolving over time. Domestication is used here to refer to processes through which a country adapts international policy norms to be used within their territory (i.e. to bring into domestic use), and through which non-coherent normative environment work within these differences (Law et al., 2014).

Additionally, government and development organizations normally navigate through, and operate within, different normative environments, so that they can satisfy different "audiences" (Cook et al., 2020; Goffman, 1959; Petersen, 2018). However, these processes of translation and navigation within different normative environments (e.g. international

and domestic) imply that international norms are often not implemented in full to local contexts. Martinsson (2011, p. 1) asserts that few translated domestic norms "lead to transformational change on the ground because of (the) cultural and political economy challenges that were not considered in the (international) norm formation".

An examination of the translation mechanisms involved in the domestication of international norms — namely (1) the translation of discourse and (2) a translation of domestic discourse into policy instruments — can help uncover the ways in which these translation mechanisms affect the transformational ambition of international norms. For example, Lombardo and Meier (2009) warn that reductionist or simplistic "translations" of international gender norms in policy could reduce the transformational potential from the onset. Understanding processes of "translation" thus becomes important in contexts where internationally well-established discourses, such as gender equality in development, are adopted and molded in non-welcoming political contexts.

3.3 Methodology

To study processes of gender norm translation in agriculture and climate change policy in Uganda, we used discourse analysis (Feindt & Oels, 2005; Wagenaar, 2011) and critical policy instrument analysis (Bacchi, 2009; Colebatch, 2014) at three different governance levels, namely national, district, and sub-county. The discourse analysis was conducted at a macro-textual level, i.e. we were concerned with an intertextual understanding (i.e. interrelationship between texts) of discursive elements taking into account the institutional, political and socio/cultural context within which they were produced (Barry et al., 2006). For the policy instrument analysis we focused on an examination of budgets, as elements that reflect governmental priorities and financial means to implement policy instruments (Bacchi, 2009; Colebatch, 2014).

We examined how discourses and policy instruments addressing gender issues in relation to agricultural development and climate change materialized in policy documents and budgets at the three governance levels. For this purpose, we followed the inductive codes-to-theory model described in Saldaña (2013), supported by the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti (version 8.1.2). In a first round of coding, we assessed (1) whether documents mentioned gender mainstreaming, gender, gender equality, women and men; (2) how gender issues were contextualized, problematized and diagnosed and (3) what gender issues were budgeted and what amounts were allocated to the policy instruments. Through category building, we then grouped the initial codes into themes

and concepts that related to ideas of policy translation and diffusion, through a process of consolidation of conceptual thinking with the data. Finally, we examined how the themes and concepts interrelated and allowed us to inductively identify different processes of norm translation through which gender policies were domesticated.

To contextualize the policy documents, the analysis built on the main author's contextual observations during a thirty-month research stay in Uganda that included frequent interactions with policy, development and advocacy actors. The study was embedded within a wider project on climate change policy-making that was implemented by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in four districts of Uganda: Nwoya (Northwest), Luwero (Central), Rakai (Southwest) and Mbale (East).

Table 3.1 provides an overview over the documents included in the analysis. At national level, we selected key policies in the realms of agriculture, climate change and development. At sub-national level we assessed an 8 to 10-year period of local development planning, which allowed to compare how gender issues are addressed at two different points in time. We selected districts and sub-counties because they are the lowest level in Uganda's decentralized governance system that is required to produce annual action

Table 3.1. Policy documents analyzed

Sources	Number of documents	Documents
National	13	Uganda Succession Act Amendment Decree (1972) The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) National Development Plan (NDP) 2010/11 – 2014/15 Uganda Vision 2040 (2013) National Land Policy (2013) National Agriculture Policy (2013) Local Government Development Planning Guidelines (2014) Guidelines Integration of Climate Change in Sector Plans and Budgets (2014) National Climate Change Policy (2015) Second National Development Plan (NDP II) 2015/16 – 2019/20 Uganda Climate-Smart Agriculture Country Program 2015-2025 Agriculture Sector Strategy Plan 2015/16-2019/20 Agriculture Sector Budget Framework Paper Financial Year 2017/18
District	23	5-year Development Plan 2009/10-2014/15 (n=4) 5-year Development Plan 2015/16 – 2019/20 (n=4) Principles and Practices of Customary Tenure in Acholiland District Annual Actual Budget Financial Years 2010-2015 (n=14)
Sub-county	71	5-year Development Plan 2009/10-2014/15 (n=8) 5-year Development Plan 2015/16 – 2019/20 (n=11) 3-year Development Plan 2010/11 – 2012/13 (n=2) Sub-county Annual Actual Budget Financial Years 2010-2015 (n=50)

plans and five-year development plans. Thus, the documents allowed us to examine the translation of norms in national policy into sub-national governance structures. Working within the framework of IITA's project provided us with contextual knowledge of the different territories; gave us access to state agencies at the district and sub-county level; and allowed for frequent interactions with policy officials which in turn provided us access to policy documents. Within each district, three sub-counties were selected on the bases of the ease of accessibility to the development plans and budgets: Nwoya (Alero, Anaka, Purongo sub-counties), Luwero (Makulubita, Kamira, Zirobwe), Rakai (Lwanda, Dwaniro, Kasasa), Mbale (Bufumbo, Busoba, Namanyonyi). The sub-counties selected represented more than half of the population in each respective district.

3.4 Findings

3.4.1 Setting the scene

As a signatory of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), Uganda's national regulations establish that gender should be mainstreamed in all policies and policy instruments (The Republic of Uganda, 2010, 2013b, 2014). In 2004, a budget call circular instructed all ministries, departments, agencies and local governments how they would address gender and equity issues through their budgets. More recently, the Public Finance Management Act (2015) made it compulsory for ministries, local governments and other agencies to address gender and equity issues in their activities and plans. The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) assesses the budget framework paper (BFP) and other policy statements of these institutions and then advises the Ministry of Finance to issue a certificate of compliance of Gender and Equity issues, if they have attained certain minimum standards. The institutions' BFP that are considered non-compliant are then rejected by Parliament, their funding is withheld, and the BFP referred back to the corresponding institution. The agricultural sector scored 54% in the BFP of Financial Years 2016/17 and 51% in the Financial Year 2017/18, signaling a decline in the gender responsiveness of the sector, and barely passing the bar for compliance (>50%). Local governments had not yet been assessed for their BFP at the time this study was written.

The governance system of Uganda comprises central and local governments, which operate through a decentralized system. Local governments are mandated to develop their own development plans through the guidance of nationally set strategic directions. In rural areas local governments are composed of district councils, which in turn consist of sub-county councils, parish councils and village councils. The key national documents

that guide local government policy are (1) the Uganda Vision 2040, which provides long-term (30 years) development paths and strategies, and (2) the Second National Development Plan (NDP II), which provides planning frameworks and sets specific goals and strategies for a ten year period (2015/16 – 2019/20). At the same time, these national guiding documents affirm to comply with international mandates such as the Sustainable Development Goals (The Republic of Uganda, 2013b, 2015b). In this way, local governments at district and sub-county level are expected to translate national priority areas to the realities of their territories, which at least to some degree should reflect international agreements.

3.4.2 Translation of discourse into policy action

In line with international norms on gender mainstreaming, all national and sub-national policy documents reviewed incorporated certain references to gender issues. In the sub-national development plans reviewed, gender issues were listed as one of the development priorities and were given a prominent place throughout the document. Analyzing these national and sub-national gender discourses and the translation of the discourses into policy action, we identified five main processes through which the international norm of gender mainstreaming was molded in domestic policy: neglecting gender discourse, embracing discursive hybridity, shrinking gender norms, gender inertia, and minimizing budgets.

3.4.2.1 Neglecting gender discourse

The domestication of gender mainstreaming in the climate change discourse in Uganda involved instances of neglecting gender discourse in sub-national policy documents. We found a progressive disappearance of the gender discourse in climate change policy-making as it translated to lower governance levels. A gendered climate change discourse was prominent in Uganda's national policies, with key national policies including gender connotations: NDP II (2015/16 - 2019/20), Agriculture Sector Strategy Plan (2015/16-2019/20), Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) Country Plan (2015c), Uganda National Climate Change Policy (2015d), Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (2015) and the Mainstreaming Guidelines for Climate Change (2014). The attention to gender issues in national climate change policy-making became also clearly tangible in December of 2017, when members of the Ugandan Parliament rejected the much-expected Climate Change Bill partly due to its insufficient consideration of gender issues (Namuloki, 2017).

However, in the sub-national policies reviewed, the translation of a gendered climate change discourse did not materialize to the same extent as at national level. In district

policies, the climate change discourse, while generally present, presented very limited gender connotations. All former (2009/10-2014/15) and current 5-year development plans (2015/16-2019/20) incorporated a climate change discourse. In the districts of Luwero and Rakai this did not include any gender connotations. In Nwoya, while the 2009/10-2014/15 development climate change discourse did not consider gender, the 2015/16-2019/20 plan advocated for the promotion of "*gender-sensitive climate change local government interventions*", although the discourse was not further elaborated (Nwoya LG, 2015, p. 285). The plans of the Mbale district acknowledged that women, due to their reproductive roles, could be more adversely affected by climate change than men (Mbale LG, 2010, 2015) and also highlighted the low involvement of women and youth in climate change activities (Nwoya LG, 2015).

The sub-county development plans presented a total absence of any gendered climate change discourse: only 38% of the plans considered climate change issues, and in none of these instances was gender mentioned. When climate change was acknowledged as a constraint to sub-county development and a matter that needed urgent adaptation and mitigation strategies, it was disentangled from gender — farmers were mentioned in general without consideration of gendered effects or the need to consider gender issues when designing climate change policies. Gender issues in climate change adaptation and mitigation processes were in this way neglected from sub-county policy-making processes.

The absence of gender considerations in the climate change discourse at sub-county level and the very limited gendered discourse at district level exemplify the disconnect between national and sub-national policy-making. The translation of gender mainstreaming in climate change discourse was in this way neglected as the norm advanced through the different levels of policy-making. At the local level, where climate-specific interventions are to be implemented, the gendered discourses largely disappeared, leaving gender issues unproblematized and excluded from policy considerations and this way rendering the gender in climate change discourse unpoliticized.

3.4.2.2 Embracing discursive hybridity

The existence of different normative environments with regards to gender issues was evident in the policy documents reviewed. Even though gender language had been translated and adopted at national and sub-national policy, the policy discourse explicitly acknowledged that gender equality policies and programs operate within entrenched patriarchal cultural norms (Alero LG, 2010, 2015; Luwero LG, 2010, 2015; Purongo LG, 2010, 2015; The Republic of Uganda, 2013a, 2013b). Critical among these were the constraints that Ugandan women face in relation to access, control and ownership of productive

resources, such as land. These constraints were framed by national and sub-national policy as being the result of engrained cultural beliefs and traditions, in which women do not normally inherit land and are not considered as co-owners of their husband's properties. For example, the Bufumbo development plan (2010) identified "*culture and tradition*" as a main factor constraining women's access and control of productive resources, and provided the following example to substantiate how patriarchal traditions affected intra-household power relations: "*paying of bride price make (sic) women feel that they are owned by men and the men to feel that the women have no say in what happens to them and their households, after all 'he paid a high bride price for her'*". Even though discriminatory traditions and customs are banned in Uganda's regulatory frameworks, several policies acknowledge that the custom has not yet substantially changed (Alero LG, 2010, 2015; Luwero LG, 2010, 2015; Purongo LG, 2010, 2015; The Republic of Uganda, 2013a, 2013b). In this regard, the National Land Policy (2013a, p. 6) for example emphasizes that "although traditions, customs and practices which discriminate against women in matters of access, use and ownership of land have been outlawed by the Constitution, the practice does not acknowledge these changes". Culturally embedded practices and norms co-exist in this way with formal regulatory frameworks.

In some cases, these cultural norms were even further institutionalized through formal clan statutory regulations, exposing cases of legal pluralism (i.e. cases in which multiple legal systems co-exist). For example in Nwoya District, inhabited mostly by Acholi people, land tenure was regulated through the "Principles and Practices of Customary Tenure in Acholiland" (Ker Kwaro Acholi, 2008). These regulations establish that a married woman's land rights are lost when she leaves the clan by divorce or death (Ker Kwaro Acholi, 2008, sec. 2C)[1]. This implies that widows lose all rights (e.g. access to land) that were previously granted to them by marriage. This is in contradiction to Uganda's Constitution (1995), the National Land Policy (2013a) and other national laws such as the 1972 Succession Amendment Decree, which acknowledges women's right to inherit from their husbands, allowing them to remain in their marital homesteads after the passing of their spouses (The Republic of Uganda, 1972). These contradictions between formal governmental and established exceptionalist laws exemplify the different normative environments in which policy actors often operate, i.e. one in which gender equality is framed within international norms of gender mainstreaming and one in which gender inequalities are naturalized by cultural norms and written statutes.

[1] Acholiland is governed by a customary system in which land is transferred through a male line of inheritance. Women born within a clan are expected to marry outside the clan, and do not retain land rights from their ancestral clan. Women from outside the clan, marrying someone in the clan, do not have land ownership rights from their spouses either.

The co-existence of these two normative environments are at times also enshrined in policy. For example, in a sub-section called "Gender in relation to agriculture" of both Kasasa and Lwanda sub-county development plans (Kasasa LG, 2015; Lwanda LG, 2015), we found the following extract:

> *Because it is mostly women are engaged in this business [agriculture] and they are naturally weak, they cannot do much. They end up producing very little and at times they are limited by the scarcity of land. This ultimately means that very little will be earned from this business and therefore low income for the households. Men should also wake up and start involving themselves in agriculture in their households if poverty is to be kicked out of the sub-county in particular and Uganda in general.*

In this case, we see how exercises of gender mainstreaming co-existed with a discourse that used certain gender stereotypes (i.e. "women are naturally weak") to account for the low agricultural productivity of households, while the action of men was presented as being required to reverse the situation. In this way, the quote simultaneously constituted an exercise of gender mainstreaming and an expression of patriarchy, through which local gender stereotypes (e.g. women as weak, men as saviors) were reproduced. This apparent incoherence was not problematized and both realities existed side by side. This allowed two very different logics — gender mainstreaming as means for gender equality and a reproduction of local unequal gender relations — to co-exist (embracing discursive hybridity). It allowed for policies to comply with gender-mainstreaming norms while not altering already pre-existing gender relations in these territories. The potential for transformation of gender-mainstreaming strategies was in this way limited.

In some other cases, e.g. in Dwaniro, women's views were regarded as important to development, while certain gender stereotypes (i.e. "women inferiority complex") also appeared in the discourse to explain the underdevelopment of the sub-county:

> *Women inferiority complex is another very big problem that has retarded development in the sub-county because women's views are rarely brought forward yet some of their views can contribute much to the development of the Sub-County and the District as a whole (Ddwaniro LG, 2010, p. 86).*

Similarly, in Bufumbo sub-county, gender stereotypes (i.e. "lack of courage and knowledge") were used to describe the lack of action on gender and development in the region:

> *Lack of courage and knowledge by women voters to support candidates with clear political agenda on gender and development. Their husbands or*

significant males in their lives influence most of their voting choices (Bufumbo LG, 2010).

What we find in these local gender diagnoses (i.e. statements about the gender issues that require policy intervention) is that, implicitly (and sometimes explicitly), gender stereotypes are employed to explain low agricultural productivity rates, environmental degradation or the underdevelopment of the sub-county. Hence, paradoxically, in these cases the process of translating the gender-mainstreaming norms involved naturalizing certain cognitive and normative beliefs (e.g. women as weak, with limited agency and subordinated to men) rather than a politization of gender equality issues.

3.4.2.3 Shrinking gender norms

The translation of gender-mainstreaming norms into national and sub-national policies in Uganda has in practice implied that documents largely incorporate a "gendered" language, both in terms of problematizations (diagnosis) and proposed prescriptions. However, this process of norm translation implied that certain key gender issues that were highlighted by domestic policies (diagnosis) were not necessarily directly addressed by the proposed prescriptions, especially when it came to sub-national policy.

In national level policies, five main gender problematizations were highlighted for the agricultural sector, namely (1) women's limited ownership and control over land; (2) insufficient access to financial credit; (3) limited access to extension services and formal training; (4) time-poverty resulting from productive and unpaid care work; and (5) limited decision making over agricultural incomes and women's consequent economic dependence. Overall, national prescriptions remained at a very generic level. For example, women's time poverty was proposed to be tackled through "gender-responsive mechanization" (The Republic of Uganda, 2015b) and "gendered innovation in agricultural research centers" (The Republic of Uganda, 2015b, 2016), without offering further elaboration on their operationalization and thus remaining abstract "ideals". It was therefore unclear through which pathways the proposed strategies would lead to policy change in this regard. Compared to national policies, sub-national policies presented similar problematizations concerning gender issues in the agricultural sector. Districts presented more varied prescriptions than those of sub-counties, which placed a stronger focus on the unequal ownership of productive resources. Analogous to what we found in national level policies, the proposed strategies for both district and sub-county were phrased in very general terms, often given as bullet points, and no pathways of change were provided. For example, the district of Nwoya proposed the "*promotion of equal ownership of assets between men and women*" (Table 3.2). However, the prescription stopped with this state-

ment. It remained thus unclear through which mechanisms this would be operationalized or realized, even more so considering the Acholi institutionalization of loss of land rights by death of the spouse and divorce. While the Rakai District addressed issues beyond the unequal ownership of productive assets (e.g. access to credit, decision-making), the proposed prescriptions remained equally abstract (Table 3.2).

While sub-county plans also placed a clear emphasis on the unequal ownership of productive assets, the prescriptions offered did not directly address this. For example, in Bufumbo sub-county the low participation of women in fish farming was problematized by men's ownership of fishponds, but the proposed "sensitization" activities were directed to women in order to improve their "morale" (Table 3.2). This mismatch between problematizations and prescriptions and the emphasis on "sensitization" activities were also found in Namanyonyi, Bufumbo, Busoba and Lwanda sub-counties (Table 3.2). Gender inequalities were in this way problematized as an issue of ownership and access to productive resources while the prescription framed the issue as an education problem, with sensitization activities implicitly assumed to trigger attitude change within the communities.

Less frequently, sub-national policies proposed the implementation of agricultural programs targeting women. For example, the Busoba sub-county development plan (Busoba LG, 2010, 2015) stated that "*improved seeds and breeds of poultry and goats may empower women because they have ownership and access over these resources*". Similarly, the Kamira development plan advocated for training groups of women in poultry keeping (Kamira LG, 2010). However, the transformative potential of these interventions remained limited, as they tackled enterprises on which Ugandan women already had a certain degree of agency (i.e. poultry and small animals). While the increased income might have reduced material inequalities, the program reinforced pre-existing gender roles rather than opening up new fields of activity for women.

Overall, the translation of the gender-mainstreaming norm in sub-national policy involved the introduction of a gendered language. In the agricultural sector, the unequal ownership of assets held a central place in the gender diagnosis for the sector. However, the prescriptions proposed — centering largely on sensitization of gender roles activities — confined the problem of gender inequalities in ownership of resources to the policy area of education, portraying a particular interpretation of the issue and thus backgrounding other structural areas (e.g. discriminatory patterns of inheritance), and consequently shrinking the meaning of the gender-mainstreaming norm, as means of equality, to one of education.

Table 3.2. Gender problematizations and prescriptions for the agricultural sector in Uganda (selection sub-counties, districts)

Development plan		Gender problematization	Prescription
Sub-county	Namanyonyi 2010/11-2014/15	- Women have no ownership and control over land, cattle, farm produce	- Sensitize the community about gender roles
	Bufumbo 2010/11-2014/15	- Low participation of women in fish farming. The existing five fishponds in the sub-county are owned by men	- Sensitize women about fish farming in order to boost their morale
	Busoba 2015/16-2019/20	- Women have less ownership and control over high value factors of production	- Sensitize women about their potential to raise household incomes
	Lwanda 2015/16-2019/20	- Women's lack of control over resources like land - Denying women chances of engaging in income generating activities since men are the bread winners	- Sensitization of men and women on their responsibilities - Sensitization of community on the roles of women in development
	Kamira 2015/16-2019/20	- Men put little or no labour on farm. - Women are denied access to resources and are refused to participate in decision-making. Gender inequality has led to low agricultural production and persistent poverty	- More sensitization of communities on gender issues - To promote equity in access to opportunities and control of resources
Districts	Nwoya 2010/11-2014/15 2015/16-2019/20	- Women own no assets (land) but work the land owned by men	- Promotion of equal ownership of assets between genders
	Rakai 2010/11-2014/15 2015/16-2019/20	- Women do not own land or any other productive assets - Culturally women are not adequately empowered in income generating activities - Accessibility to credit is more skewed to men than women - Women culturally are inhibited from fishing activities - Limited decision-making over incomes generated from agricultural produce in households - Unequal distribution of productive and reproductive work	- Gender senstitization and advocacy - Recruitment of more female extension workers - Establish women credit schemes - Women group formation - Mobilization and sensitization of women councilors on skills enhancement and income generating activities - Training women in resource mobilization and savings

Source: Selected sub-county and district development plans.

3.4.2.4 Gender inertia

The analysis of two consecutive 5-Year development plans allowed to compare how gender issues were examined and addressed at two different points in time, and to

identify certain discursive patterns. Within each district, the discourse analysis revealed little change in the way gender was incorporated and addressed. For example, the Luwero and Rakai DDPs presented a section where the strategies to address gender inequalities in the district were listed. For both districts, the proposed gender actions were exactly the same in the 2010/11-2014/15 and the 2015/16-2019/20 plans. Similarly, in Nwoya the "*proposed strategies to overcome gender disparities*" were identical in the two consecutive DDPs. Furthermore, the two consecutive DDPs in Rakai highlighted the same gender issues and proposed activities in the productive sector, using exactly the same wording. As we found in the case of the districts, the "*situation analysis of gender*" and the "*gender priorities and objectives*" in the sub-county development plans were often "copy-pasted", either from one development plan to the other, or from the district to the sub-county plans. Evidence of this practice was found in ten out of the twelve sub-counties analyzed for this study.

Perhaps even more revealing were instances in which the reported gender achievements, which normally reflect progress in addressing gender inequalities identified in the preceding development plan, were also copy-pasted. In Kamira sub-county, both development plans also reproduced word by word their "*Gender, Equity and Equality Achievements*" from the previous plan as: (1) gender awareness training (2) having specific programs targeting women, training of women in chicken rearing skills among others, and (3) NGOs support gender. Similarly, in Makulubita sub-county, identical issues were reported as gender achievements as in the implementation of the previous year's development plan: (1) Each parish received goats (women groups), coffee, maize, beans; (2) funded Women's Day celebrations; (3) gender training workshop for technical staff and councilors. Also in Luwero District the section "*Achievements in Gender Mainstreaming*" in 2010/11 – 2014/15 and 2015/16 – 2019/20 plans was reported in an identical fashion. Finally, in the Lwanda development plan of 2015/16 – 2019/20, the section "*Gender in relation to agriculture*" reported as their own an analysis from another sub-county, signaling that the analysis was copy-pasted from elsewhere, but failed to change the name of the sub-county: "*The main economic activity in Byakabanda sub-county is farming and it is mostly women that are engaged in ....*".

This stale reproduction of set pieces of text and measures in gender planning and reporting at sub-national level points to significant levels of inertia in thinking and practice around gender-mainstreaming issues. Furthermore, the static translation of gender norms into district and sub-county plans also hints to a practice of including gender issues merely as part of a bureaucratic requirement in order to comply with international gender norms and budgeting requirements.

3.4.2.5 Minimizing budgets

The analysis of budgets at national and sub-national level revealed a limited translation of gender mainstreaming into policy instruments. For example, while the national agricultural sector budget for the financial year 2017/2018 highlighted the importance of promoting labor-saving technologies for women, increasing women's access to agricultural finance, and women's engagement in agro-processing; the budget did not contain any gender-sensitive performance indicators and outputs (The Republic of Uganda, 2017). A similar situation was found in the Operation Wealth Creation Program (OWC), the main program for farm input delivery and agricultural extension services in the country. The program guidelines emphasized inclusion, gender equity and non-discrimination in the delivery of inputs and services. However, the annual review report of the Equal Opportunities Commission (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2016) found that the OWC had no firm arrangements to ensure gender equity in receiving inputs, with records of beneficiaries remaining as "number of people benefited" without further disaggregation by gender. This hints to an exercise of norm translation where gender mainstreaming was largely limited to the discursive level, with the inclusion of gender considerations in national policy, but was generally absent from the translation of discourse into graspable policy instruments.

A similar situation was found when analyzing district and sub-county budgets. Under the "*key achievements*" that sub-national budgets highlighted, we found no mention of gender. This contrast with the central role given to gender issues in the objectives of the district and sub-county development plans indicates again a norm translation exercise that largely stopped at the discursive level. Similarly, in the agricultural sector (production department), no gender activities were reflected in the district budgets for the different financial years analyzed, nor were there any gender-disaggregated data for the sectoral achievements that were highlighted in the budget.

On average, for the five consecutive financial years analyzed (2010/11 to 2014/15), the districts allocated between 0% and 0.06% of the total budget to gender issues. Gender activities that received funding were labelled under three different categories: "*workshops and seminars*", "*women's councils*" and "*gender*". Sub-counties allocated between 0% to 1.208% of their budgets to gender issues, and the most common activities budgeted were labelled as: "*women*", "*gender*", "*international women's day*", "*gender workshops*", and "*women's affairs*".

The amounts allocated to gender within the sub-national budgets remained limited, likely constraining the outreach of the activities. For example, in the Financial Year 2013/2014

the Luwero District allocated 883,600 Ugandan shillings (Ugx), the equivalent of USD235[2], to "*workshops and seminars*", which theoretically had to be able to cover these activities for a population of 458,158 people (according to the August 2014 census). Similarly, several sub-counties reported an annual gender budget of just 200,000Ugx, the equivalent of USD53 (e.g. Zirobwe FY 2011/12; Alero FY 2014/14, Busoba and Namanyonyi FY 2014/15), with other sub-counties not having any budget for gender activities in some of the financial years (e.g. Kamira FY2014/15, Zirobwe FY2012/13, Anaka FY 2013/14, Alero FY2014/2015).

Outside of the established budgets for gender, sub-counties also managed the Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Program (UWEP), a national initiative of the Government of Uganda that aimed at improving women's access to financial services, providing skills for enterprise growth, value addition and marketing. Groups of women of 10 to 15 people were provided a loan to start and finance their operations. The average loan per group was 4,000,000 Ugandan Shillings, the equivalent of around USD1064 (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2016). Though the program was not exclusively designed for the agricultural sector, the rural nature of most districts in Uganda meant that in the financial year 2016/2017, 77% of all UWEP groups were related to agriculture or wholesale and retail trade (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2016). However, this program encountered several difficulties. While it had a national reach, only 56.6% of the total allocation of funds were realized in the FY 2016/2017 and 44 districts (out of 121) had not been allocated any funds (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2016). This practically meant that the group of beneficiaries had to be greatly reduced. Indeed, in the sub-counties considered in the study, the number of financed women's group ranged from 1 to 4, implying that a maximum of 60 women in any given sub-county were able to benefit from the program. Furthermore, within the funds that were officially released by the central government, serious cases of corruption in district and sub-counties across the country were reported (New Vision, 2017a, 2017b).

The broad denotation of the items that were listed in sub-national level budgets ("*women*", "*gender*", "*women's affairs*") and the restricted resources that were allocated to them indicate that — similar to what we found at national level — the translation of gender-mainstreaming norms largely stopped at the level of the policy discourse and did not translate to the same extent to government policy instruments. Furthermore, the ambition of national gender initiatives such as the UWEP program was not fully realized at local level, with less than 1% of the women in the districts being able to

[2] 1USD =3758,75Ugx Exchange rate for 31st August 2018. Source: Bank of Uganda.

benefit due to insufficient funds, delay in releasing the available funds and corruption (New Vision, 2017a, 2017b). It is worth nothing, however, that this study did not assess non-governmental work on gender, such as NGOs and development partners, which may have complemented the sub-national budgets allocated to gender issues.

3.5 Discussion

This study has adopted a discourse analytical perspective (Feindt & Oels, 2005; Wagenaar, 2011) on gender policy and budgeting, with a focus on the notion of norm translation (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Krook & True, 2012; Zimmermann, 2014). Our data show that the national and sub-national governments translated the international norms of gender mainstreaming into all policy documents that we analyzed, thereby seemingly complying with the treaty obligations of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. However, this study revealed five processes that collectively contributed to weakening the potential for transformation of this internationally recognized norm.

First, neglecting gender and climate change discourses at sub-national level policies, notably in sub-county plans, suggested a certain level of disconnect between national and sub-national policy, where localized systems of governance left climate change and gender issues unproblematized and thus unpoliticized. Neglecting specific aspects of the discourse — a common discursive mechanism of control in policy-making (Schröter & Taylor, 2018) — are important to consider and can help us to understand why and what gets excluded in gender policy exchanges (Smyth, 2010). Second, cases of discursive hybridity allowed us to examine how policies that seemingly embraced a gender-mainstreaming discourse, simultaneously perpetuated gender stereotypes, not challenging pre-existing unequal gender relations and, consequently, dampening the gender equality ambition of gender-mainstreaming strategies. These cases of adoption of a hybrid discourse are enabled by the generic terms in which the gender-mainstreaming norm was crafted, which has allowed governments and development organizations to engage with gender-mainstreaming discourse while at the same time maintaining the incumbent local social order (Krook & True, 2012; Lombardo et al., 2009a). For example, Nandigama (2012) shows how a gender-equal participatory mechanism inn India promoted through a development program, was perceived, contextualized, adapted, and used in different terms by men and women in the community. Unequal distributions of power and agency between men and women, and between castes, restricted a gender-equal participation which was ultimately perceived to alter the local social order (Nandigama, 2012).

Third, cases of shrinking norms revealed that while gender inequality was discussed as a legitimate object of governance, at no level of administration was this language ever sufficiently elaborated. This was especially notable in policy prescriptions, often given as bullet points, presented without any envisioned pathway for change. This "shopping list" approach to gender is not unique to Uganda but has also been observed in a study examining gender equality policies of the Netherlands and Spain (Lombardo & Meier, 2009). The simplification of discourse in processes of norm translation between different contexts, as Fischer (2003, p. 155) reminds us, often imply a "reduction of complexity and loss of information". Fourth, pervasive cases of gender inertia — stale reproduction of text in the gender analysis from development plans at sub-national level — hints towards acts of purely symbolic politics in the mainstreaming of gender in sub-national policy as a compliance to bureaucratic requirement. The institutional engagement with gender mainstreaming as part of everyday bureaucracy, or as symbolic politics, is also widely reported in the development literature (Arora-Jonsson, 2014; Collins, 2018; Miers, 2011; Samarasinghe, 2014). Finally, the abstract nature of budget items coupled with the restricting budget allocations to gender issues revealed that the translation of the gender norm largely stopped at the discursive level and did not extend to meaningful policy instruments. Colebatch (2014) and Bacchi (2009) assert that indeed government budgets may reveal specific choices of problem-solving strategies and the relative importance given to them. From this, the abstract nature of the gender activities budgeted at the sub-national level points to a clear disjunction between gender discourse and action. Together, these five processes illuminate how the transformative ambitions of gender-mainstreaming norms are diluted during the process of domestication.

In this way, our discursive approach to norm translation has specified some of the processes through which gender norms are translated in a way that simultaneously resonates with international discourses and permits adjustment to domestic norms and logics, which was a phenomenon commonly highlighted in the gender in development literature (Barnett, 2018; Petersen, 2018; Smyth, 2010). While from our findings we cannot infer causation, Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) have explained this phenomenon by the fact that international gender norms have often clashed with strongly held domestic norms, and thus governments had no apparent interest in the adoption of such norms. The fact that policies have incorporated a "gendered" language might reflect a state interest in engaging in international discourses, either to gain international credibility and reputation (Krook & True, 2012; Ssewakiryanga, 2002) or to comply with donor's normative requisites (Collins, 2018; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Miers, 2011; Samarasinghe, 2014), or both. Finnemore and Sikkink have further referred to this as processes of "strategic social

construction" in which "actors strategize rationally to reconfigure preferences, identities or social context" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 888). This strategic social construction resonates with other literatures, including Scott (1985) on everyday forms of resistance, the work of Li (2016) on the dynamics established between actors in development projects, and the work of Tsing (2005) on friction.

Our findings differ from the idea proposed by Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, p. 893) which asserted that domestic influences over international norms are strongest at early stages, but that they "lessen significantly once a norm has become institutionalized in the domestic system". In the case of Uganda, while the influence of international gender-mainstreaming discourse was clear, processes of norm translation showed that local norms and patriarchal settings were still very powerful. This finding is consistent with research showing that informal and local gender norms can affect the performance of success of gender-mainstreaming strategies and development programs (see for example Fejerskov, 2018; and Nandigama, 2012, 2019). In the case presented here, the observation that documents incorporated a "gendered" language, but the discourse remained at a prescriptive and abstract level, could be attributed to the influence of local norms. Through the five identified mechanisms, the translation processes — either unintentionally or intentionally — enacted, naturalized or favored certain realities over others. This created the overall performative effect (Arts & Babili, 2012; Nandigama, 2012, 2019) of limiting the transformational potential of the proposed gender actions, and ultimately depoliticizing gender (Jalušič, 2009; Manicom, 2001; Smyth, 2010).

3.6 Concluding remarks

Although gender mainstreaming has been globally accepted as an international norm to achieve gender equality, the strategy to establish an international norm that is then translated into local contexts has not yet succeeded in reducing the gender inequalities as envisioned (Alston, 2014; Brouwers, 2013; Eerdewijk, 2016; Walby, 2005). Previous research has suggested that existing gender inequalities are partly reproduced in translation processes of international norms into national and sub-national policies, where implementation mostly takes place (Allwood, 2013; Krook & True, 2012). Through an in-depth inductive analysis of policy documents in Uganda, this study found that, while the international norm of gender mainstreaming had been formally adopted, its transformational potential was reduced through five distinct processes during norm translation.

In particular, during the process of drafting national and sub-national documents, certain gender discourses were either overlooked or completely ignored (neglecting gender and climate change discourse), gender discourses at sub-national level remained static (gender inertia), prescriptions remained at a very generic level (shrinking gender norms), and gender-mainstreaming exercises co-existed with certain contradictory normative cultural understandings (embracing discursive hybridity). Finally, the lack of relevant budgets indicated that gender mainstreaming largely stopped at the discursive level and did not extend to meaningful policy instruments (minimizing budgets). Taken together, these five processes greatly reduced the potential for transformation of the international norm on gender mainstreaming. The transformational potential of international norms on gender mainstreaming should however not be taken as given, nor should be stipulated as the only or most obvious source of transformational change in gender relations. In this sense, due importance should be also placed to examining the influence of local norms and situated practices of actors in the performance of success of gender-mainstreaming strategies (Nandigama, 2012, 2019).

Examining acts of norm translation from a discursive perspective opened up the possibility of understanding norms as processes (Krook & True, 2012). From this angle we were able to reconstruct the mechanisms through which international norms are hedged in to defuse their transformational potential when translated to local contexts. While our results can only speak for the Ugandan context, given the extensive academic literature reporting a gap between formal adoption of gender-mainstreaming strategies and their limited effects at local level (Alston, 2014; Brouwers, 2013; Eerdewijk, 2016; Walby, 2005), we can expect that similar processes of defusing norm domestication are also occurring elsewhere.

Our findings suggest that the formulation of a global strategy will likely not suffice in dealing with highly localized and context specific gender dynamics, and in dealing with structurally embedded gender inequalities that are often spread through all aspects of a society. In this way, the assumption that international gender norms could significantly affect local patriarchal contexts needs to be reassessed. While the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming might be helpful for gaining legitimacy and public awareness on the matter, other strategies will likely need to be in place for its success. The effects of gender-mainstreaming exercises in policy could be enhanced, for example, by placing a stronger focus on promising practices already shaping gender relations in specific territories (Njuki et al., 2016); by increasing the attention to women's rights movements (Tripp & Kwesiga, 2002); by establishing stronger monitoring and evaluation processes of gender-transformative programs (Hillenbrand et al., 2015); or by lessening the influence

and dependence on donor gender requirements, and prioritizing policy action on context specific gender issues constraining local equitable development (Siachitema, 2010). This, however, would require willingness for gender-transformative change and strong gender analysis capabilities from policy-makers at all levels. The latter, in Uganda is still largely deficient, with officials at sub-national and national level having declared insufficient skills to support meaningful gender analysis in agricultural development and climate change issues (Acosta et al., 2015).

The findings suggest several avenues for future research. First, research on international norm translation could benefit from linking up to the work of Scott (1985), Tsing (2005) and Li (2016) to examine the ways in which local policy actors and development practitioners might shape the meanings of international norms and devise strategies to maintain the incumbent local social order and operate amidst highly fixed bureaucratic development policies. Research should thus also assess what kind of locally-crafted strategies could help gender-mainstreaming strategies thrive (i.e. success factors) and support the renewed politicization of gender issues. Finally, considering that non-government organizations often receive funds from donor organizations and thus need to guide their gender work in accordance with international standards and expectations (Ssewakiryanga, 2002; Tortajada, 2016), they are consequently active actors in international norm translation and domestication processes at the local level and might also contribute to processes of either re-politicization or de-politicization of gender issues (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; True & Mintrom, 2001; Zwingel, 2005). Further research would therefore benefit from examining the interactions of these organizations with national and sub-national governments to obtain a more complete picture of processes of gender norm translation on the ground. This, in turn could help identifying possible entry points and strategies to move towards more effective strategies to address gender issues.

Chapter 4

What does it Mean to Make a "Joint" Decision? Unpacking Intra-household Decision Making in Agriculture: Implications for Policy and Practice

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Abstract

Strategies to empower women in development contexts frequently address their authority to take decisions within their household, including decisions that are taken jointly by couples. Assessing empowerment in joint decision-making has traditionally followed a dichotomous approach: decisions are either joint or not, with the former associated with women's empowerment. This paper contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the empowerment effects of joint decision-making, based on case study data from Uganda. We present survey data revealing significant gender differences in perception of decision-making over the adoption of agricultural practices and consumption expenses. Women reported joint decision-making more often than men, who presented themselves more as sole decision makers. We supplement the survey data with an in-depth study in Lodi village, where we reconstruct meanings attached to joint decision-making using focus group discussions, a decision-making game and participant observation. Reported joint decision-making included a range of practices from no conversation among partners to conversations where female spouse's ideas are considered but the man has the final say. The findings suggest that local interpretations of joint decision-making, in at least this case of a dominantly patriarchal context, can limit its potential for assessing women's empowerment.

4.1 Introduction

Women's authority in intra-household decision making in rural areas has been at the center of considerable research for development. On the one hand, assessing women's role in domestic production and consumption decisions in agricultural households has been central to efforts to determine their level of empowerment (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007; Kabeer, 1999; Murembe, 2015). In these efforts, the degree to which women have sole or joint decision-making authority in different areas is considered to indicate their level of empowerment (Alkire et al., 2013). This stream of research takes women's empowerment as a desirable goal in itself to which increased decision-making authority contributes. Apart from its intrinsic value, increased decision-making power of rural women has also been found to positively correlate with important development outcomes such as reproductive, maternal, neonatal and child health; increased expenditure on household health and education; and household nutrition (Anderson et al., 2017).

Within this context, increasing joint decision making in intra-household decisions has been identified as a way of transforming the power-relations between men and women (Hillenbrand et al., 2015), thereby contributing to both women's empowerment and improved development outcomes (Ambler et al., 2017; Anderson et al., 2017). This understanding has influenced development efforts aimed at improving rural livelihoods (Satterly, 2016; USAID, 2012). Targeting couples' decision making, rather than women or men separately, is for example a key pillar of the "Gender Action Learning System" (GALS) methodology, which has been used in development programs in several countries (IFAD, 2014a; Mayou & Oxfam Novib, 2014).

Intra-household decision-making patterns among spouses in agricultural and domestic spheres have traditionally been assessed through surveys based on a dichotomous understanding of joint spousal decision making: a couple was considered to have taken a decision either jointly or not jointly and a "joint decision" was assumed to reflect more empowerment than a decision reported as being made solely by the male. This concept rests on the assumption that women would participate as equals in the "joint decision". More recent efforts, such as the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), have transcended this dichotomy and introduced scales that allow respondents to differentiate the extent to which spouses participate in decisions (i.e. "*not at all*", "*small extent*", "*medium extent*", "*to a high extent*"), although this approach still partly leaves open what the different values on the scale actually mean in practice (Alkire et al., 2013).

Traditionally, surveys about decision making in rural households were administered to one spouse, normally the head of the household. But what transpires when these

questions are asked to both spouses within the same household? Recent studies have found that spouses often report differing perceptions on how specific household decisions are taken (Ambler et al., 2017; Anderson et al., 2017; Deere & Twyman, 2012; Ghuman et al., 2006). These disagreements suggest the presence of gendered differences in the perception of decision-making processes. They also point to the need to consider that "joint decision making" may involve complex intra-household negotiation processes and that the concept can be interpreted differently depending on the local and social context. Unpacking these differences in spouses' experiences and interpretations of joint decision-making processes has been identified as a fundamental need for a better understanding of the relationship between participation in decision-making processes and women's empowerment (Seymour & Peterman, 2018).

This paper aims to add to the literature on intra-household decision making and how we measure empowerment. We use data from a case study in the rural District of Nwoya in Northern Uganda to develop a more nuanced understanding of "joint decision making" between spouses. Uganda presents an important case: in both academic and development spheres, women in Uganda have been portrayed as having low levels of decision-making authority within their households and policy and development programs currently aim to increase their decision-making power (IFAD, 2014a; Nwoya LG, 2015; The Republic of Uganda, 2013b), which between rural household spouses typically includes production and consumption decisions. In the case study region, where climate change is negatively affecting the livelihood of smallholder farmers (Mwongera et al., 2014) and where the adoption of climate resilient agricultural practices has become central to major development investments (IFAD, 2014b), a focus on decisions to adopt climate-smart agricultural (CSA) practices (i.e. practices that provide mitigation, adaptation and increased productivity for farmers, FAO, 2013), along with selected consumption decisions, is suitable to assess the degree of joint decision making across a range of intra-household decisions. With this focus, our first research question is: Are there gendered differences in men's and women's reporting of intra-household decision making? The second research question aims to unpack the understanding of joint decision making across a wider range of agricultural and consumption decisions: What are the gender-differentiated meanings attached to taking joint agricultural and consumption decisions? While the first question is addressed with a survey, the second question is answered through an in-depth study based on focus group discussions, a decision-making game and participant observation in the village of Lodi, Nwoya District.

4.2 Background

The desire to increase joint decision-making power in households has been recognized by policy and development programs around the globe (USAID, 2017; WFP, 2016). In Ugandan policies, joint decision making as a way to empower women has been introduced fairly recently. The National Country Vision 2040, which provides long-term development paths and strategies, acknowledges the lower participation and influence of women in household decision making and calls for men and women to be treated as "*equal partners in development right from the household to the Country level*" (The Republic of Uganda, 2013b, pp. 96–97). Similarly, the National Climate-Smart Agriculture Programme 2015-2025 emphasizes the cultural limitations that restrict women's decision-making power in their households (MAAIF & MWE, 2015, p. 18). Furthermore, the national Climate Change Policy encourages that "*both men and women participate meaningfully in planning, testing and rolling out adaptation and mitigation activities*" (The Republic of Uganda, 2015d, p. 14).

While these policies acknowledge the lower decision-making power of Ugandan women, they do not directly promote joint decision making at the household level. However, the National Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan (ASSP) 2015/16–2019/20 for Uganda foresees training activities in joint decision making in all community-based development programs (MAAIF, 2016, p. 63):

> *MAAIF […] will mainstream gender analysis and gender-based budgeting in all community-based development programmes. The activities will include: 1) Facilitating training in joint decision making and planning of the household agroenterprise(s); promoting gender equity in ownership, access and control over production resources such as: land, livestock, agricultural equipment, labour and capital/credit (…)*

Sub-national development plans also emphasise the promotion of joint decision-making processes between spouses. For example, the five-year development plan (2015/16-2019/20) of Nwoya prioritizes "*couple counselling for informed couple decision-making*" (Nwoya LG, 2015, p. 199). However, these policies leave the concept under-defined and ambiguous. They neither elaborate what type of joint decision making the trainings and counselling would aim at nor do they specify how much voice and decision-making authority each member of the household should have.

The ambiguous terminology surrounding joint decision making between spouses reappears in current iNGO and NGO programs in Uganda. An example is the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) methodology, which aims to "*give women as well as men*

more control over their lives and catalyze and support a sustainable movement for gender justice" (Oxfam Novib, 2014, p. 8). The GALS methodology has been widely adopted in Uganda and is currently used by multiple NGOs and development organizations (e.g. Caritas Uganda, Oxfam, IFAD) operating in several districts, including in Northern Uganda. Some of the activities that the GALS methodology proposes, such as the "Gender Balance Tree", have a clear focus on achieving a more equal distribution of ownership and decision making among couples (Oxfam Novib, 2014). However, the GALS manual does not clearly define "joint decision", leaving the concept open to a variety of interpretations. This ambiguity is transferred to development projects that use the GALS methodology or variations of it. For example, we found no explanation what would be constitutive of a "joint decision", or what a joint decision would entail, in IFAD projects using the GALS methodology in Uganda such as the District Livelihoods Support Programme (DLSP) and the Project for the Restoration of Livelihoods in the Northern Region (PRELNOR) (IFAD, 2013, 2014b, 2016).

Overall, while the promotion of joint decision making has permeated policy and development practice in Uganda, the relative voice and decision-making authority of the spouses entailed in the concept is rarely an explicit consideration. The ambiguous use of the term extends to the expected contribution of joint decision making to women's empowerment, which would vary significantly depending on the quality of women's participation in a "joint" decision.

4.3 Examining "joint decision making" in research for development

The extent to which women participate in intra-household decision-making processes, either individually or with their spouses, is often used as a metric for women's bargaining power (Anderson et al., 2017) and women's empowerment (Alkire et al., 2013; Seymour & Peterman, 2018). "Empowerment", following Kabeer (1999), refers to the expansion of people's ability to make life choices in cases where this ability was formerly denied to them. "Bargaining power" is often used as one of the components to assess women's empowerment and refers to the ability of one person to exert influence over another during a negotiation process (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005; Doss, 1996; Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007; Kabeer, 1999; Malhotra et al., 2002; Narayan-Parker, 2005). Decision-making authority is commonly used as an indicator of women's bargaining power (Anderson et al., 2017).

Participation in decision making is usually measured by examining "who" makes a specific decision. As Doss (2013) explains, survey questions surrounding who in the household

makes decisions are believed to capture, at least partially, women's bargaining power and therefore how involved and influential women are in decision making. Assessing women's participation in intra-household decision making about agricultural production and domestic consumption can be achieved through examining the degree to which they make autonomous or joint decisions, with the literature being unclear which contributes more to women's empowerment. For example, the WEAI aggregates joint and sole decision-making without further differentiation (Alkire et al., 2013, p. 73), while other studies prioritize sole over joint decision making (see for example de Brauw et al., 2014).

The way in which "joint" decision making is measured in nation-wide representative datasets is not homogeneous and varies across survey instruments. For example, in the USAID's woman's model questionnaire (Phase 7) of Demographic Household Surveys (DHS), "joint" is either both included directly in the question and as an option for the enumerator to code[3] or it is not included in the question and just remains an option for the enumerator to code[4]. In contrast, in the Living Standards Measurement Study Integrated Surveys on Agriculture (LSMS-ISA) — a household survey implemented in eight African countries — questions about production-related decision making deploy the phrasing "Who are the decision makers concerning...?, inviting the respondent to name up to two household members (see for example Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2013).

Whether a survey included "joint" as an explicit category (e.g. DHS) or invited respondents to freely name decision makers in the household (e.g. LSMS-ISA), the subsequent analysis typically categorizes responses into decisions take alone by the women, jointly with her spouse, jointly with other members of the household, or woman's non-participation (see for example Anderson et al., 2017; Twyman et al., 2015). Only few studies — most notably the WEAI and pro-WEAI indexes (Alkire et al., 2013) — analyze the kind and degree of women's and men's participation in reported joint decisions. This is problematic since, even though the term "joint" denotes a certain degree of equality of input between the spouses, earlier studies found that this is not always the case (Hindin, 2004). Therefore, it remains unclear to what extent "joint" decisions as measured in representative surveys reflect meaningful participation by women (Seymour & Peterman, 2018).

Surveys assessing reported decision-making patterns of both spouses (see for example: Ambler et al., 2017; Anderson et al., 2017; Seymour & Peterman, 2018; Twyman et al., 2015) add an additional layer of complexity. They found that spouses often disagree

[3] E.g. "Who usually makes decisions about [health care]: you, your (husband/partner), you and your (husband/partner) jointly, or someone else?" with enumerator choices: 1: respondent; 2: wife/partner; respondent; 3: wife/partner jointly; 6: other.

[4] For example 'Who usually makes decisions about major household purchases'?

how a specific decision was taken, with levels of spousal disagreement varying across different decision issues and study regions. Recent intra-household decision-making studies conducted in Ecuador, five Asian countries, Bangladesh and Tanzania found, for example, rates of disagreement ranging from 34–57%, 25–50%, 38–55% and 29–40%, respectively (Ambler et al., 2017; Anderson et al., 2017; Deere & Twyman, 2012; Ghuman et al., 2006). Women are more likely to report joint decision making than men, who tend to report sole decision making (Allendorf, 2007; Ambler et al., 2017; Deere & Twyman, 2012), however, again with variation across types of decisions and study regions. For example, Bradshaw (2013) found that women in Nicaragua largely considered contraception as a "female" decision, while men favored "joint" for the same type of decision. In contrast, Anderson, Reynolds and Gugerty (2017) in rural Tanzania and Ghuman, Lee and Smith (2006) in five South Asian countries found that husbands tended to report more authority for their wives than wives reported for themselves.

While some of these asymmetries between spouses' answers are thought to result from random measurement error, the literature seems to agree that this alone does not account for all the differences. For example, intentional asymmetries were found in Nicaragua, where reported joint decision making by women was influenced by the presence of their spouses during the survey, indicating that at least some responses might have been given as a result of inhibition (Bradshaw, 2013). Other authors hypothesize that unintentional asymmetries might happen for example when decision-making questions are posed generally, without including reference to a specific timeframe, since spouses might respond in reference to different specific instances (Deere & Twyman, 2012; Seymour & Peterman, 2018), or when spouses have different threshold or might attach different meaning to the questions and decision-making processes (Ghuman et al., 2006).

That spouses may disagree on decision-making authority makes it difficult to assess women's involvement in household and agricultural decisions and by extension their bargaining power or empowerment level. In light of these asymmetries in spouses' responses, contextualizing how decision-making processes take place and capturing the associated meanings that female and male respondents attach to different types of decision-making processes is key. In this sense, complementing quantitative surveys with in-depth qualitative research could provide valuable insights into these differentiated meanings and decision-making negotiation processes (Ghuman et al., 2006; Richardson, 2018; Seymour & Peterman, 2018). In particular, applying an interpretive approach (Wagenaar, 2015; Yanow, 2000) can help unpack the different meanings attached to joint decision making processes from different angles of inquiry. This would facilitate an examination of decision-making authority that goes beyond considering "who" makes

the decisions to exploring "how" decisions are understood to be made. Understanding people's social construction of meaning and interpretation surrounding joint decision making will in this way prove useful in considering the potential for employing this concept as a measure for bargaining power, and consequently women's empowerment, in development settings.

4.4 Research methodology

This study was conducted in Nwoya, a district located in the Acholi sub-region in the Northern Region of Uganda. Acholi society is patriarchal, with men generally considered to be the heads of the households (Omona & Aduo, 2013). Rain-fed smallholder farming systems are predominant in the district, with groundnut, beans, and rice as the main cultivated crops (Mwongera et al., 2014). Climate change has increasingly affected rural livelihoods in Nwoya and climate-resilient approaches such as CSA have become central to major development programs in the area (IFAD, 2014b; Mwongera et al., 2014). The study first uses a survey to quantitatively examine differences in spousal perception in decision-making patterns, and then a qualitative in-depth study in the village of Lodi to delve into the gender-differentiated meanings that are associated to decision making processes.

4.4.1 Survey

To answer the first research question (Are there gendered differences in men's and women's reporting of intra-household decision making?), we use quantitative data from a survey conducted in December 2014 in the District of Nwoya. Through a probability proportionate to size sampling approach (Skinner, 2016), we sampled a total of 585 households from the four different sub-counties of Nwoya (Figure 4.1). We administered the survey separately, and in parallel, to the principal male and female decision maker in each household. Previously trained enumerators conducted the interviews face-to-face and in Acholi, a dialect of the Luo language. Questionnaires took on average 180 minutes to complete. The survey had a focus on intra-household decision-making processes, adoption of CSA practices and agricultural production (Mwungu et al., 2017).

From the sample, in 99 households only one principal decision maker was interviewed (either because they were single-headed households or for other reasons), and in 12 the two principal decision makers interviewed were not spouses. This study only considers the households where two spouses were interviewed (n=474). Our analysis focuses

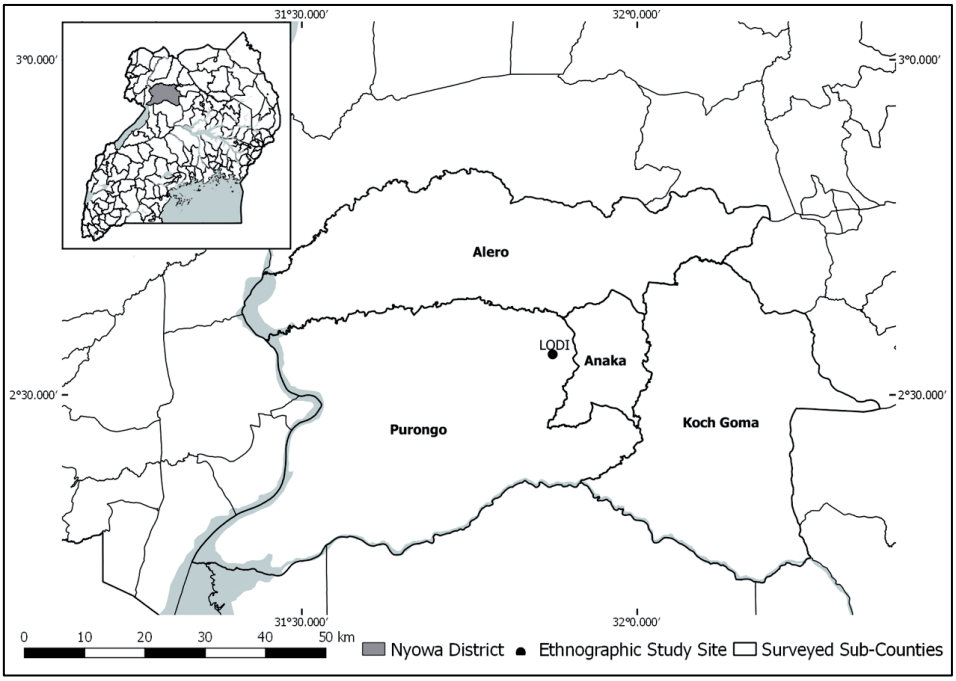

Figure 4.1. Map of Nwoya District, portraying the surveyed sub-counties (Alero, Purongo, Anaka, Koch Goma) and location of the in-depth study site (Lodi).

on men and women's reported intra-household decisions in consumption choices (i.e. who decides on budget for food cost, expenses for the children, purchases of major household items) and in the three most frequently adopted CSA practices in the area (i.e. intercropping, fallow and seed selection). For each of the decisions, the principal male and female decision makers in the households were asked: "Who decided on…?" Interviewees could mention up to three members in their households. The analysis of the survey data was conducted using R version 3.3.0 (R Core Team, 2016) and RStudio version 1.0.136 (RStudio Team, 2016).

4.4.2 In-depth case study in Lodi Village

The second research question (What are the gender-differentiated meanings attached to taking joint agricultural and domestic decisions?) is answered through an in-depth case study in Lodi, located in the Purongo sub-county (Figure 4.1). Lodi was selected because among the villages included in the survey, it had the highest share of households practicing a range of CSA practices (i.e. intercropping, fallow, seed selection, channels,

covers cropping and live fences). The in-depth study, however, considered decisions beyond the adoption of CSA, covering a wide range of agricultural and domestic decisions. The in-depth study used three main research methods: focus group discussions, a decision-making game and participant observation.

4.4.2.1 Focus group discussions

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were organized with sixteen couples from Lodi, and one additional female that attended the FGD without her spouse. Discussions took place in Acholi dialect and were moderated by five previously trained native research assistants. We purposively selected the couples from the survey participants in order to capture a diversity of decision-making patterns related to the adoption of CSA. Discussions took place concurrently and separately in two groups, one with the male (n=16) and the other with the female participants (n=17), to provide spaces in which women and men could express their ideas among peers and would allow for a separate dialogue on gender issues. The FGDs evaluated decision-making perceptions of 24 agricultural and domestic activities. In the two groups, each participant was given three color cards: green (for decisions made by the man), pink (for decisions made by the woman), and yellow (for decisions made together by the couple). Each of the 24 activities was read out loud and we asked participants to raise a card, depending on with who they instinctively associated the decision-making process. To reduce mutual influence, we asked participants to raise cards at the same time. For each activity, after the number of cards of each color was noted, follow-up questions were asked to encourage a group discussion.

4.4.2.2 Decision-making game

The decision-making game involved two events with sixteen different couples. The first event took place on April 22nd 2017, as couples arrived to the FGDs described above. In order to study the couples' interaction in a concrete decision-making process, we offered them to choose between two varieties of maize and two varieties of beans, after having been briefed about the characteristics of each variety. Seeds were offered to participants as a sign of appreciation for having participated in the FGDs. The second event with the couples took place on May 2nd and May 3rd 2017, during which we asked the male and female spouse individually whether they had felt part of the decision when choosing the seeds. Separating the first and second part of the exercise, while potentially introducing memory bias, was seen as necessary to limit the effect of FGD on participants' responses.

4.4.2.3 Participant observation

The lead author and a female Acholi translator shadowed three different couples from Lodi for a period of seven days each. This approach facilitated access to everyday practices of decision making (both domestic and agricultural activities) and, to an extent, allowed us to grasp the intra-household power dynamics that are involved in these processes. We purposively selected the couples for stating different views and levels of spousal accord in intra-household decision making in the adoption of CSA in the survey used for the quantitative analysis.

4.5 Results

4.5.1 Survey results: joint decision-making patterns

Table 4.1 provides an overview of summary statistics that describe the sample used in the analysis.

Table 4.1. Summary statistics

Variables	N	Mean	SD
Age male spouse	474	39.37	12.24
Age female spouse	474	33.77	11.64
Education of male spouse	474	7.92	1.77
Education of female spouse	474	8.24	1.18
Total family size	474	6.92	2.68
Proportion of adult men in household (ages 16+)	474	0.25	0.13
Proportion of adult women in household (ages 16+)	474	0.23	0.10
Proportion of young male in households (ages 0–15)	474	0.26	0.18
Proportion of young female in households (ages 0–15)	474	0.26	0.17
Total cultivable land held by household (acres)	473	10.62	13.16
Housing			
% Dried bricks (wall)	474	97.26	n/a
% Mud & dung (floor)	474	87.34	n/a
% Thatch (roof)	474	97.47	n/a

Source: Own calculations based on author's survey.

Pearson's χ^2 Test returned a test statistic of 357.57 and a p-value of 2.2e-16 for adoption of CSA practices and a test statistic of 23.91 and p-value of 2.6e-05 for consumption decisions, indicating a strong association between gender and perceptions about decision making. From the analysis of standardized residuals, for both CSA adoption and consumption decisions, men are disproportionately more likely than women to report

sole male decision making while women are disproportionally more likely to report either joint decision making or sole female decision making (Table 4.2).

Comparing differences in the perception of decision making between spouses within the same household confirmed this pattern (Table 4.3). For this analysis, only couples in which both members agreed that a specific decision was taken or a specific CSA practice was adopted were considered. Overall, asymmetrical spousal perception (spousal disagreement) of decision making on CSA adoption was more common (59.3% of couples) than spousal symmetrical perception (40.7%). Regarding the consumption decisions, asymmetrical and symmetrical spousal perceptions constituted 48.8 and 51.2% of the cases respectively (Table 4.3).

In the case of the adoption of intercropping and fallow, the most common decision making pattern was spousal agreement on joint decision making. This was followed by spousal disagreement with male spouses reporting they solely made the decision and female spouses reporting the adoption decision was jointly made. In decisions about the adoption of seed selection, the latter constituted the most common decision-making pattern. Agreement on joint decision making was the third most frequent answer for seed selection (Table 4.3). With regard to decisions on children expenses and major household purchases, the most common decision making pattern was spousal agreement on joint decision making, followed by spousal disagreement where male spouse reported own sole decision making and female spouse reported joint decision making. Perceived decision making for food expenses differed considerably from the other types of decisions investigated in the study. The most common decision making pattern for decisions regarding food expenses was spousal agreement of sole female spouse decision (38.2%), followed by spousal disagreement where the male spouse reported sole decision making by female spouse and the female spouse reported joint decision making (22.1%).

We have reason to assume that the differences in the response patterns found across practices partly reflect gendered roles and responsibilities. For example, compared to other practices, women might be relatively more inclined to perceive the adoption of seed selection as a decision solely taken by themselves if they are normally in charge of preserving or selecting seeds in the households. Similarly, the fact that food preparation is a domain predominantly feminine in Acholi culture (Omona & Aduo, 2013) could explain the distinct pattern that decisions on food expenses presented in comparison to the other types of decisions investigated. Such differences in gendered attribution underline the importance of assessing a wide range of agricultural and household decisions in efforts trying to assess women's bargaining power and women's empowerment.

Table 4.2. Counts and standardized residuals χ^2 test for independence of sex and decision-making on adoption of agricultural practices and consumption decisions

		Joint couple		Sole male spouse		Sole female spouse		Others	
		Count	Standardized residuals χ^2	Count	Standardized residuals χ^2	Count	Standardized residuals χ^2	Count	Standardized residuals χ^2
Intercropping	Female (n=252)	189	2.06	14	-6.03	49	3.92		n/a
	Male (n=222)	117	-2.20	101	6.42	4	-4.18		n/a
Fallow	Female (n=198)	146	1.95	25	-4.39	27	3.07		n/a
	Male (n=170)	85	-2.10	84	4.74	1	-3.32		n/a
Seed selection	Female (n=178)	93	1.47	6	-6.86	79	6.25		n/a
	Male (n=181)	68	-1.46	112	6.81	1	-6.19		n/a
All three CSA adoption	Female	428	3.30	45	-10.01	155	7.72		n/a
	Male	270	-3.45	297	10.48	6	-8.08		n/a
Children expenses	Female (n=469)	324	0.76	96	-2.81	44	3.52	5	0.23
	Male (n=467)	296	-0.76	159	2.82	8	-3.52	4	-0.23
Food expenses	Female (n=474)	164	1.58	38	0.31	270	-1.11	2	-1.00
	Male (n=471)	125	-1.59	34	-0.31	306	1.12	6	1.01
Major household purchases	Female (n=259)	152	1.03	87	-1.45	12	-0.25	8	1.59
	Male (n=304)	152	-0.95	134	1.34	16	0.23	2	-1.46
All consumption decisions	Female	640	1.78	221	-2.96	326	0.19	15	0.47
	Male	573	-1.75	327	2.91	330	-0.18	12	-0.46

Source: Own calculations based on author's survey.

Table 4.3. Decision-making perceptions on adoption of agricultural practices and consumption decisions between spouses

	Spousal agreement on DM in CSA adoption			Spousal disagreement on DM in CSA adoption							
CSA practice	Husband alone	Wife alone	Joint decision couple	M: Husband alone F: Joint couple	M: Husband alone F: Wife alone	M: Joint couple F: Husband alone	M: Joint couple F: Wife alone	M: Wife alone F: Joint couple	M: Wife alone F: Husband alone	Others forms of disagree-ment	Total
Intercropping (n=160)	2.50%	1.30%	40.60%	35.60%	9.40%	3.80%	6.90%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Fallow (n=99)	8.10%	0.00%	38.40%	33.30%	9.10%	4.00%	7.10%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Seed selection (n=88)	3.40%	0.00%	23.90%	30.70%	29.50%	0.00%	12.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Mean	4.33%	0.60%	35.74%	33.70%	14.41%	2.89%	8.38%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%
	Spousal agreement on DM in consumption decisions			Spousal disagreement on DM in consumption decisions							
Consumption cecisions	Husband alone	Wife alone	Joint decision couple	M: Husband alone F: Joint couple	M: Husband alone F: Wife alone	M: Joint couple F: Husband alone	M: Joint couple F: Wife alone	M: Wife alone F: Joint couple	M: Wife alone F: Husband alone	Others forms of disagree-ment	Total
Children Expenses (n=465)	9.25%	0.00%	45.16%	21.29%	3.01%	11.18%	6.45%	1.72%	0.00%	1.94%	100.00%
Major household purchases (n=201)	14.93%	0.00%	33.33%	27.36%	3.48%	14.93%	1.00%	2.99%	0.50%	1.49%	100.00%
Food expenses (n=471)	0.85%	38.22%	10.19%	2.34%	4.03%	2.55%	13.80%	22.08%	4.25%	1.70%	100.00%
Mean	6.77%	15.83%	28.58%	14.51%	3.52%	8.27%	8.53%	10.38%	1.85%	1.76%	100%

Source: Own calculations, based on authors' survey. (M = male spouse respondent; F = female spouse respondent).

4.5.2 In-depth study: examining gendered perceptions of joint decision making

4.5.2.1 "Joint decision making" as the most frequently reported decision-making pattern by men and women

During the FGDs joint decision making was the most frequent response to most of the intra-household decisions discussed in both groups. Comparing women's and men's perception of joint decision making (Table 4.4), the decisions on "when to harvest", "to hire labor" and "to start a new agricultural practice" were perceived more frequently as

Table 4.4. Perception of Joint Decision making from the Focus Group Discussion Card Exercise

Type of decision Male group: n=17 Female group: n=16	Husband alone		Wife alone		Joint couple	
	Male group	Female group	Male group	Female group	Male group	Female group
To buy a cow	1	4	0	0	15	13
To sell a cow	4	4	0	0	12	13
To use own bulls for ox-ploughing	16	17	0	0	0	0
What and where to plant	10	3	1	1	5	13
When to clear the land	1	4	0	3	15	10
How will the land will be cleared	1	4	0	0	15	13
When to start planting	4	0	0	2	12	15
When to weed*	2	0	12	14	1	3
When to harvest*	4	0	0	13	11	4
To hire labor	3	10	0	2	13	5
To leave land fallow	10	2	1	6	5	9
How much, where and when to sell crops	4	0	0	1	12	16
How to spend income from crops or livestock	6	1	0	0	10	16
To start a new agricultural practice*	0	9	0	0	15	8
To start growing a new crop	4	1	0	0	12	16
To get a loan	2	0	0	1	14	16
To sell land	11	14	0	0	5	3
Who will inherit the land	4	0	0	0	12	17
Usage of money from savings group	2	0	0	0	14	17
To use harvest income for personal use	4	0	0	0	12	17
To use harvest income for major expenditures	1	0	0	0	15	17
To use harvest income for school fees and children necessities	2	0	0	1	14	16
What to cook	0	0	13	17	3	0
Average	25.7%	18.7%	7.6%	15.6%	66.8%	68.3%

Source: Focus Group Discussions; * indicates n=15 in male group, one participant left temporarily the group to attend phone calls.

joint by men than by women. Women explained that since they were more often in the field, they knew when harvest was ready and thus starting to harvest was a decision they could take individually. In contrast, hiring labor was perceived as a decision taken individually by their male spouses: "*it is men who normally keep our money and savings, so he sees what we have and decides*". Similarly for the adoption of new practices, women explained that men were normally more mobile and had opportunities to identify new technologies so they were the ones that decided to implement them.

In contrast, decisions regarding "what and where to plant" and "to sell land" were more frequently perceived as joint by women than by men. Elaborating why the decision of what to plant was perceived as joint, one woman explained: "*men always dictate, when you come up with your idea, they don't normally accept it if it does not side with theirs*". This perception of a joint decision implied that a female spouse was able to raise her opinions, although the male spouse was the ultimate decision maker. For the same type of decision, what to plant, the men explained that since it was their land, they decided: "*the woman does not know my land, it's me to plan and she should just plant where I show her*". In this case, we see that while men consider that it is their decision because they tell their wives where to plant, many women perceived this as a joint decision as there is an interaction between spouses in the same physical location.

Finally, Table 4.4 also reveals that women were perceived mostly as decision makers conjointly with their spouses (66.8%) but rarely individually (7.6%), as observed by their partners. This confirms the results obtained through the survey (Table 4.3). Male spouses perceived women having sole decision-making power only for responsibilities of which women are traditionally in charge, namely cooking and weeding. This contrasts with women's perceptions of their own decision-making authority. Women saw themselves more often (15.6%) as having sole decision-making authority in particular for some crop production and land management decisions (e.g. clearing the land, leaving land fallow, start planting, hiring labor). These gender differences in perceptions were particularly strong with regard to the decision over when to harvest, with 13 out of 16 women associating it as their own decision and none of the men perceiving women as sole decision makers.

4.5.2.2 Perceived joint decision making might not involve a conversation between spouses

During the decision-making game, the majority of couples established some type of interactions in deciding which variety of maize and beans to take (Table 4.5). In most of the cases, the male spouse, who was the final decision maker, largely dominated the discussion regarding the variety of maize to choose. In the case of beans, it was largely

Table 4.5. Interactions between couples for seed selection (direct observations)

Couple interactions during seed selection (n=16)	Maize	Beans
Did not discuss	4	3
Discussed		
Man dominated the discussion	8	3
Woman suggested the variety, husband approves (final decision-maker)	2	10
Equal say during discussions, man preferred variety chosen	1	0
Instant agreement (both partners wanted the same variety)	1	0

Source: Own calculations, based on experimental game.

the female spouse who would suggest the variety to take while the male spouse, as final decision maker, would approve her choice. We suggest that these differences can be explained by gendered patterns of division of labor in Nwoya: beans are largely cultivated as a crop for home consumption and thus fall into women's domain, while maize is seen as a cash crop and therefore falls under the men's domain. However, for both crops the final decision remained largely with the male spouse.

In 4 out of 16 maize cases and 3 out of 16 beans cases, no conversation was established between the couple when selecting the variety of seed (Table 4.5). However, when the male and female spouses were separately asked ten days later whether they had felt part of the decision, all gave an affirmative answer with the exception of one female spouse. That means that with one exception, spouses still reported that they felt part of the decision-making process even when no actual conversation among the couple had been observed. It remains an open question whether this reflects a social desirability effect or a genuine sense of involvement.

4.5.2.3 Reported joint decision-making processes are largely dominated by male spouses

We decide everything together

Over the three weeks of participant observation, joint decision-making processes were frequently referred to when general discussions about farm and household decisions came up in day-to-day conversations. Both spouses would frequently use variations of the statement, "*Whatever we do, there must be agreement between me and my spouse*", when asked generally how they took farming and domestic decisions at home. In households 1 and 3, the male spouse repeatedly emphasized the importance of listening to their wives' ideas for the wellbeing of their households, even at the risk, they explained, of other men in the community thinking that their wives "overpower" them. Finding this

reasoning in two households could suggest that decision-making authority is customarily associated with male domination in the case study region or that social norms dictate that men should publicly appear to dominate decisions even if in the intimacy of the household decision-making processes are more equal.

The apparent prevalence of joint decision making was frequently met with conflicting statements. While generally both spouses would report joint decision making, this would be frequently contradicted by the male spouse's accounts of his authoritative decision-making power in the household, when not asked directly about how decisions were taken. For example, the spouses of Household 2 would almost exclusively assert joint decision-making processes when asked directly. However, observations of their actions found a different story. In one episode, while we were in a specific plot inquiring about the future plans for next seasons' crops, the female spouse asserted that they had not yet made plans for the crops to be planted there. However, the male spouse immediately followed up on her statement by saying, "*I will be planting cabbages, eggplants and okra here*". This was not an isolated incidence. When the male spouse was not directly queried, he would almost always use the first person singular pronoun ("An") rather than first person plural ("Wan") for explaining decisions and activities made in the household and farmland. However, when directly queried he would normally attest that decisions in the house were jointly made.

We encountered similar patterns in the other two households. In Household 1, the male spouse regularly made statements that directly opposed an egalitarian decision-making couple, for example:

> *A wife has no right to decide how many children to have, but her acceptance is a blessing to me. I decide on major things for the house, she has to obey me if she wants to stay in my house.*

Similar statements were obtained from the male spouse in Household 3, who had largely reported joint decision making processes in all the agricultural and domestic activities between the spouses:

> *I decide on when to sell the crops and livestock. Women have no rights on any livestock. I also decide when my wife can go visit her family. Normally I let her go once per year. She cannot decide that, if she does, she has broken my rules and I cannot accept that.*

The constant contradictions in perceived decision making encountered, in which an apparent dominance of reported joint decision making was frequently undermined

by male spouses' authoritative statements, made us suspect that either reporting joint decision making within couples could at times constitute the "socially correct answer" that people by default gave in the area to outsiders, or that joint decision making could be perceived in a different manner by the local Acholi people compared to researchers or development workers. Additionally, the fact that responses and interactions often occurred when spouses were together might have affected the type of response given by female and male spouses in each situation. That joint decision-making processes could be perceived as the "socially desirable" behavior transpired also during the field observations. In one instance, we witnessed the female spouse of Household 2 telling her (male) neighbor, who was working alone in the field, that if we saw that he was never working peacefully in the field with his wife, we would not include their household in our "program".

What does joint decision making mean?

"Wabedo wani dako na piny ki awace tama ki en oyee tam ma mega"

The Acholi statement above, "I sat her down, told her my ideas and she accepted", was frequently used by male spouses to describe how a process of taking a joint decision would normally take place. Correspondingly, all female spouses regularly reported to feel part of a decision when the husband informed them about what would be done.

In Table 4.6, we present a selection of quotes that capture different perceptions of joint decision making. Overall, they show that "joint decision making" typically involved an actual conversation between the spouses. A perceived joint decision would normally take place when the husband initiates a conversation and informs the female spouse about his decision, a process through which she would feel part of the decision at hand, even if she had not shared her opinion (e.g. Table 4.6, Household 3, female spouse). We also encountered several instances when the male spouse would listen to the woman's ideas and sometimes take them into consideration in a spousal discussion even though the opinion of the male spouse ultimately prevailed (e.g. Household 3, male spouse). Less frequently, a woman would bring a proposition to her spouse and wait for his approval in order to proceed (e.g. Household 2, female spouse). The spousal dialogue of Household 1 (Table 4.6) depicts a process of negotiation during which the female spouse needs to be convinced why her partner's ideas are better while the pressure on the woman to accept his ideas is a sign of respect for him as the head of the household. Far from being an isolated case, this limited level of decision-making power of the female spouses was rather frequent. Overall, in the majority of the decisions that we witnessed and inquired about, the male spouses initiated the deliberations with a suggestion and had the final

Table 4.6. Selection of quotes on what constitutes joint decision making

Household 1	Household 2		Household 3	
Couple	Male spouse	Female spouse	Male spouse	Female spouse
What crops to plant - *(Wife) In case we disagree on what to plant in the field, we sit and discuss together* - *(Husband) I will explain the reasons why I want to plant these crops in this field. After she has understood why it's a better option then she will agree.* - *(Wife) But only when I have understood.* - *(Husband) When I want to do something (take a decision) I explain to her and as the wife who respects her husband she will accept as I'm the head of the household*	**Budgeting for money** *"I tell my wife to sit down so that we plan on how to use the money. We together plan on how much to spend on school fees, savings, farming and other necessities."*	**What crops to plant** *"He normally decides what to plant. But last season it was my idea to plant beans on this field, I told him my idea and he allowed it."*	**What crops to plant** *"Most of the ideas are given by me but she can also sometimes give her ideas and I can accept to use her ideas sometimes. So, it's a joint decision when she gives an idea about it even if it is used or not. But at the end, as the household head, I make the final decision."*	**Budgeting for money** *"We plan together for the money after crop sales. I feel we make the decision together when he informs me about it even if he uses the money the way he wants it. If he does not inform me, then it means he has made the decision alone. If he at least asks me, then I would feel part of the decision even if he makes the final decision."*

Source: Author's own participant observation.

say. These observations display a much higher power of men in joint decision-making processes compared to their female spouses.

4.5.3 What do women understand by joint decision making?

Examining what women in Lodi considered as a joint decision is fundamental for understanding whether and to what extent promoting joint decision making in policies and NGO programs could indeed lead to women's empowerment in this local context. During women's interventions in the workshop, the decision-making game and throughout the three weeks of participant observation, we were able to identify an array of situations in which women felt that a decision was jointly made. We grouped these in four distinct categories (Table 4.7). We realized that a perceived joint decision could occur with (section A) or without (section B) an actual conversation between spouses. When a conversation did not take place, the female spouse could feel part of the decision by the fact that the husband had informed her, either before (Table 4.7, row A.2) or after the decision had already taken place (row A.1). When a conversation between spouses took place, women felt part of the decision, whether they voiced their opinion (row B.2) or not (row B.1).

Table 4.7. Typologies of perceived joint decision making by women

Types of joint decision		Illustrative quote
A. No conversation between the couple	A.1: Male spouse "informs" the woman about the decision after the fact	*"Even after my husband has already done something and tells me (after the fact), I feel part of the decision because he has informed me"*
	A.2: Male spouse "informs" the woman about the decision before the fact	*"A man will always inform me even if the final decision is made by him, sometimes I keep quiet and when I keep quiet it means that I have accepted his proposal and participated in the decision"*
B. Conversation between the couple	B.1: Male spouse "informs" the woman about the decision before the fact. Female spouse's ideas are neither given nor considered	*"The decision on how to spend the income from crops and livestock is made jointly. In most cases he informs me, and by the fact that he has informed me I feel that I have participated in the decision"*
	B.2: Female spouses' ideas are considered, but man has the final say	*"Anyone can come up with the idea to discuss, we discuss it but it is the man who has the final say. He can either accept or refuse your idea"*

Source: Authors' observations during experimental game, focus group discussions and participant observation.

In most of the perceived "joint decision" stories told by women, female spouses had no say in the discussion (A.1, A.2, B.1). The perception of participating in the decision

came through being present in the same physical space with their husband in which he communicated to her, either before or after the fact, about the decision. It was the fact that the man shared the decision with his female spouse that was perceived by her as having participated in the decision. In other instances, the female spouse's views and opinions were raised during the spousal discussions (B.2) but the male spouse ultimately took the decision. In none of the cases women had an equal say with their male counterparts.

4.6 Discussion

In this study we used a mixed methods approach to assess intra-household decision-making patterns in rural Uganda and to examine the interpretations of "joint decision making" applied to a variety of household and agricultural decisions in a local context. Similar to other studies (Ambler et al., 2017; Anderson et al., 2017; Deere & Twyman, 2012; Ghuman et al., 2006), the survey found that a large percentage of couples reported differing perceptions on consumption decisions (48.8% of households) and decisions on adoption of CSA practices (59.3% of households). Except for decisions on food expenses, men tended to report lower levels of women's participation in decision making (either individually or joint) compared to women's reports, a pattern that has been also found in other regions (Alwang et al., 2017; Ambler et al., 2017; Twyman et al., 2015). The qualitative findings from this study appear to support the previously posed hypothesis that these differences may derive from discrepant understands of what constitutes being part of a decision (see for example: Ambler et al., 2017; Ghuman et al., 2006). Male spouses, for example, might have reported sole decision making in situations where they had the final say in the decision even though their spouse might have had some degree of involvement in the decision. Women in turn, might have considered this same situation as a decision that was taken jointly.

The in-depth study allowed us to unpack the concept of joint decision making and the different understandings of what it means to take part in a decision (see Table 4.7). The common denominator of these variations of joint decision making was the unquestioned role of the male spouse as the final decision maker. This emphasizes the need to complement questions regarding "who" took a specific decision with questions regarding "how" the decision was taken. The fact that we found no instances in which alleged joint decision making actually meant a decision in which both spouses had equal say and negotiated the final decision as equals, must raise serious doubts as to whether a focus on spousal joint decision making — without a prior in-depth knowledge of the context area — can constitute an adequate strategy for promoting women's empowerment.

In this sense, our findings raise questions about the reliability of data collected solely by surveys (especially those collecting data from only one spouse and without an in-depth investigation of the local context), as there might be gendered sources of response bias that amplify or reduce any underlying differences in perceptions. For example, in this study, if the research had stopped at the survey level, we could have arrived at the conclusion that women were active participants in decision-making processes and thus had a significant level of agency. Similarly, couples in which both spouses agreed that the decision had been jointly made could have been classified as a "cooperative spousal relation". With this, however, we do not want to disregard promising survey-based work investigating relationships between different types of perceived decision making with autonomous motivation (Seymour & Peterman, 2018); the work resulting from implementing Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), which includes more nuanced questions on decision making and qualitative modules in some of its variations; and the positive correlations found between spousal agreement of decision-making processes and improved development outcomes (Ambler et al., 2017). Rather, we want to emphasize the potential that combining quantitative with qualitative methods, particularly an interpretive approach, has in advancing our understanding of decision-making perceptions, especially in those circumstances where spouses hold differing understandings.

Finally, the fact that joint decision-making processes are being emphasized in policy and development programs in Uganda, including the district of Nwoya, without an assessment of what type of spousal collaboration is sought and what degree of women's empowerment this entails is problematic. The semantic flexibility resulting from this ambiguity in the conceptualization of decision making leaves room for the beneficiaries of development projects to interpret the concept in ways that fit their lived realities. The ambiguous connotation of "joint decision making" thus enables multiple interpretations to co-exist, including those that imply minimal change to a patriarchal status quo.

4.7 Conclusions

This paper has unpacked the multiple meanings that are attached to the concept of "joint decision making" as a strategy for empowering women within spousal households. Contrary to the implicit understanding of national and sub-national development programs and policy discourses on women's empowerment in Uganda, the perceptions of joint decision making of women in Lodi did not amount to decisions in which both spouses had an equal say in the discussion and in the final decision.

While no generalizations beyond the community of Lodi can be made, the results obtained through this case study provided interesting considerations as to why certain assumptions in policy and academic literature might be problematic in terms of measurement of women's empowerment in specific locations. (1) Conceptually, this research has highlighted the relevance of unpacking the different understandings of the concept of joint decision making and the need to reject the assumption that spouses always have an equal say in these processes, at least in the local context of Lodi. If bargaining power is conceptualized as the ability of one person to exert influence over another in a negotiation process (Doss, 1996; Kabeer, 1999), and the decision-making power of women is used as an indicator, the consequence should be a consideration on what types of perceived joint decision making actually reflect women's bargaining power. Clearly, when women report joint decision making when the actual processes did not involve a conversation with their spouse, such answers do not constitute a suitable indicator of bargaining power and women's empowerment since in these cases the ability of women to "exert influence" on the decision at hand is extremely limited if not null. (2) Politically, if joint decision making processes are used in policy and development programs with the assumption that both spouses collaborate equally in decisions, there is a risk to create a "dialogue of the deaf". In this sense, policy-makers, development practitioners and local villagers could make reference to the same concept but with profound conceptual differences and implications for the degree in which a spousal joint decision reflects women's empowerment. Understanding these differing interpretations is necessary to make the introduction of these development notions truly gender-transformative, as interpretations that do not improve women's empowerment within their households undermine any transformative ambition. (3) Methodologically, our research has emphasized the added value of supplementing survey-based studies with qualitative in-depth examinations into the processes of decision making and their differential understanding by spouses. Research on intra-household decision making could benefit from including both "Who" and "How" lines of inquiry, and from unpacking interpretation of each spouse's participation in a joint decision. We argue that survey questions that only inquire which members in the household were part of a decision but fail to capture the specific contribution of each member can easily lead to flawed conclusions. Future research using household surveys would in this sense benefit from questions that also target the process through which a decision was taken. Examples of such questions could be: Who had the final say? Did you participate in a conversation about this decision? Were you informed before the decision was taken? Were you informed after? Could you influence this decision if you wanted to? The latter, already in use in the WEAI, acknowledges for example preferences for decision making, rather

than assuming that increased decision making is always desirable, and in turn aims at promoting equal decision making authority in those decisions where women would want to contribute.

While this research has raised questions about the reliability of the term "joint" according to which spouse is interviewed and in which country or context, and how the term is currently being interpreted and analyzed, we consider that reported joint decision making is still more desirable than women not participating in decision. In this sense, even if reported joint decision making, especially by women in the case of Lodi, might not entail an equal say in the discussion it does denote a certain level of perceived agency. Furthermore, we join Seymour and Peterman (2018) in asserting that researchers should put at the forefront of their efforts examinations towards women's preferences in decision making, and acknowledge that joint decision making might not necessarily always be preferred. Notwithstanding this, our research has shown how adding an interpretive inquiry to quantitative studies investigating decision-making authority of women can help to unpack the different meanings and degrees of joint decision making that exist in a specific context. An ensuing step would be to assess the extent to which each of these degrees of spousal participation in decisions relates to women's empowerment. This, coupled with more clearly stated goals and strategies by which development programs and policies aim at changing intra-household decision-making patterns, is a prerequisite for more transformative practice towards gender equality.

Chapter 5

The Promise of Localization: Examining the Potential of "The Local" for Improving Gender Equality in Agriculture and Climate Change

This chapter is based on a submission for publication in Third World Quarterly as: Acosta, M., Wessel, M. van, Bommel, S. van & Feindt, P. (under review). The promise of localization: examining the potential of "the local" for improving gender equality in agriculture and climate change adaptation.

Abstract

Building on the conceptualization of "the local" in gender and development discourse, we explore how national and sub-national policy actors in Uganda perceive gender equality policy in the context of agriculture and climate change to assess the potential of localized solutions to achieve gender equality. Using data from national and sub-national policy actors in Uganda (37 semi-structured interviews, 78 questionnaires), the study found that policy actors largely adhered to global gender discourses in proposing context-specific solutions to gender inequality. Our results show that although local actors identified local norms and culture as major barriers to gender equality, their proposed solutions did not address local gender norms, focused on formal policy and did little to address underlying causes of gender inequalities. Based on the findings we suggest that "the local" should be reconstructed as a deliberative space where a wide variety of actors, including local feminist organizations, critically engage, assess, and address local gender inequality patterns in agriculture and climate change adaptation processes.

5.1 Introduction

In climate change discourse for the agricultural sector, the global and the local are inevitable intertwined, often framed as cause and consequence, correspondingly (Faiyetole & Adesina, 2017). Appropriate local innovations and solutions to local problems are seen as necessary for successful adaptation and mitigation (UNDP, 2019). Emphasizing "the local" is also considered important in addressing gender issues because gender relations are highly contextual, socially defined, and ever-changing (Manicom, 2001). In climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, both context-specific gender inequalities and localized solutions are framed as key. For example, in climate change innovation and technology in agriculture, valuing local knowledge is seen as fundamental to avoid developing technologies that are inappropriate for the context or that might reproduce gender inequalities (Gonda, 2016; Huyer, 2016).

However, in international development, transnational and largely top-down approaches to gender equality have often failed to fully capitalize on locally formulated and prioritized gender strategies (Brouwers, 2013). This is problematic because the institutions and people in charge of implementing gender-equality strategies at national and sub-national levels are also gendered entities operating within certain normative and cultural environments, which inevitably affects implementation (Alston, 2014; Walby, 2005). Improved knowledge of local understandings and practices of "doing gender" could shed light on inherent tensions that may hamper the transformational potential of global strategies (Wittman, 2010).

Globalized norms for gender equality, which are internationally agreed standards that guide the general direction of gender equality discourse and actions around the globe[5], are also often seen as largely incapable of touching upon and influencing deep-seated local power relations (Alston, 2014; Smyth, 2010; Wittman, 2010), for which localized approaches are perceived as a better suit (Ün, 2019). Designing more effective gender-equality strategies may require closely examining local gender normative positions and engaging with practices proposed by policy actors working in these contexts (Østebø, 2015; Ün, 2019). This promise of localization relies thus on the idea that local approaches to tackle gender inequality will ease the normative tensions that exist between local and global approaches to gender by proposing context-specific and locally suited strategies that will be more effective and targeted to the particularities of a specific location.

[5] "Gender mainstreaming" is a key example of globalized gender norms. Following the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, this strategy has been adopted by many governments, development agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and private sector actors. Gender mainstreaming involves assessing the implications of any legislation, program, project, or policy for men and women.

In this study, we engage with this promise of localization, examining gender-equality strategies originating from local policy actors to assess the potential of "the local" in designing more effective and transformative gender policy. How do local policy actors problematize gender inequality in agriculture and climate change adaptation, and what localized solutions do these actors propose? How do these problematizations and solutions differ from those found in international spheres?

We explore these issues by examining the meanings attached to gender inequality and its translation into local policy and projects by national and sub-national policy actors in the agricultural sector in Uganda in the context of a changing climate. We interrogate perceived causes of gender inequalities and proposed local prescriptions for translating these into policy, and we examine the extent to which different global and local norms are mobilized in their understandings of gender equality. Uganda presents an interesting case to investigate these issues because the apparent dominance of gender equality in agriculture and climate change policy documents, largely informed by global discourses, is often met with policy inaction (Acosta, Wessel, et al., 2019; Ampaire et al., 2019). In such contexts, would considering locally proposed solutions help to identify more effective strategies?

5.2 The rise of "the local" in international development

The rise of "the local", which we refer to as the emergence and establishment of the normative appreciation of local knowledge, ownership, and solutions in development took place largely in the mid-1990s as a response to the failure of traditional "top-down" approaches to development. Bräuchler and Naucke (2017, p. 426) define "the local" as a "concrete context of practical appropriation, interpretation and transformation of socio-cultural discourses, ideas and practices that have their roots in global, regional and local interests, traditions and actors." "The local" is often framed in terms of space (Escobar, 2001) and as a concept that is constantly evolving and continually influenced by both local and global factors (Bräuchler & Naucke, 2017; Zimmermann, 2014).

Here, we consider "the global" the context where international and national organizations debate and establish understandings or discourses to guide development and security actions worldwide. The United Nations plays a fundamental role in this endeavor, seeking to "harmonize the actions of nations" to achieve development (United Nations, 1945). For example, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set common standards and goals among private businesses, development agencies, donors, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) globally.

United Nations agencies, donors, and international organizations generally emphasize "the local" in their discourse, presenting it as crucial for effective development (Kyamusugulwa, 2013). This is often framed as the need to empower local actors to design their own collective responses to development challenges—enabling "bottom-up" policies (Crescenzi & Rodríguez-Pose, 2011). Paradoxically, globalized approaches to development have shifted the focus of local development policy toward addressing the demands of donors and international NGOs, at the expense of project communities' priorities (Groves, 2013; Hellmüller, 2012; Lie, 2019; Richmond, 2012). Marsden (2013, p. 106) asserted that such globalized approaches to development, "far from being mechanisms for embracing the voices of the poor, […] have used a form of communication that has excluded the very people whom they claim to serve."

These observations are especially relevant because the reluctance of local actors to engage with approaches that might be considered "divisive, threatening, or burdensome" is a major reported cause of development initiatives failing (Reed et al., 2019). Unsurprisingly, diffusion strategies for global norms that consider local sensitivities and act through local actors are thought to be more effective than those without these considerations (Acharya, 2004). Flint and Natrup (2019, p. 208) argued that development aid delivery could be greatly improved through a stronger focus on "locally rooted, user-driven development solutions that originate from the beneficiaries themselves." Approaches focusing on local knowledge and solutions and increasing local ownership of development projects are seen as an alternative to global development approaches (Crescenzi & Rodríguez-Pose, 2011). Prioritizing "the local" aims to reduce international influence in development matters by giving more weight to local perspectives and less to development donors' policies and priorities (Arensman et al., 2017; Lie, 2019).

Within gender and development discourses, global strategies for gender equality such as gender mainstreaming are often perceived as high-level policy constructions being enforced in different contexts without much consideration of contextual particularities (Brouwers, 2013; Spivak, 1996; Ün, 2019).

Bridging the gap between local normative stances, where gender inequality is often naturalized, and global processes of gender equality is especially important in contexts like Uganda, characterized by frequent conflict between multiple normative environments where gender equality and gender relations are constructed — e.g., customary practices of inheritance vs. formal regulatory frameworks and global gender policy — (Acosta, van Bommel, et al., 2019; Acosta, Wessel, et al., 2019). Brouwers (2013, p. 32) has emphasized the importance of context, arguing that "locally formulated priorities" and

the "involvement of and ownership by partner countries" are fundamental for effective gender policy in development initiatives.

The localization of gender norms often entails meaning molding (Lombardo et al., 2009a), where terminologies and discourses are adjusted to fit local understandings and conditions. For example, in a study on the localization of gender norms, Ün (2019) showed how a conservative women's organization in Turkey advanced the local norm of "gender justice," built on the notion of gender equivalence, as an alternative to gender equality and contested the moral validity of global gender-equality norms, which did not align well with local beliefs and practices. Similarly, Petersen (2018) showed how Islamic Relief Services expanded gender-focused projects to include all women-sensitive projects, resonating with local audiences who did not support global gender norms, and used new interpretations of Qur'anic verses to advance gender justice and nonviolence.

The present study aimed to contribute to discussions on norm localization and its promised potential to advance gender equality. Using the case of agricultural policies on climate change in Uganda, this study explored gender norm formation and localization by investigating the extent to which inherent tensions between naturalized local discourses and global gender-equality strategies could be bridged through locally proposed solutions to gender inequality.

We begin with a summary of the study methods and then introduce the findings, elaborating on the local meanings of gender inequality in agriculture and climate change and on the extent to which "the local" and "the global" are mobilized in addressing these inequalities. Finally, we contextualize and interpret the findings and explore their policy and practice implications.

5.3 Methodology

We used a discourse analytical perspective (Feindt & Oels, 2005; Wagenaar, 2015) to explore policy actors' perceptions of current challenges to gender equality and proposed solutions for the rural and agricultural sector in Uganda, in the context of a changing climate. Here, we understand discourses and meanings to both reflect and mold policy actors' positions on policy matters (Wagenaar, 2015); actors can simultaneously influence and be influenced by discourse. We conducted 37 semi-structured interviews and administered 78 questionnaires among policy actors in Uganda's capital, Kampala, and in the districts of Nwoya (northwest), Luwero (central), Rakai (southwest), and Mbale (east). Table 5.1 provides an overview of the interviews and questionnaires.

Table 5.1. Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires completed by location

	Kampala	Nwoya	Luwero	Rakai	Mbale	Total
Semi-structured interviews	10	8	6	6	7	37
Questionnaires	39	17	10	--	12	78

From October 2017 to January 2018, self-administered questionnaires were completed during national and sub-national multi-stakeholder platform discussions, most of which were organized by Learning Alliances on Agriculture and Climate Change—multi-stakeholder forums for policy actors to discuss context-specific climate change adaptation strategies for the agricultural sector. Our participation in these Learning Alliances from their inception provided a unique research opportunity. Questionnaire respondents included government actors (from local governments, ministries, and the Ugandan Parliament) and non-government actors (including NGOs, research institutes, and civil society organizations). The questionnaires included both open- and closed-ended questions.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in November and December 2017 with policy actors working in formal national government structures (six interviews: the Ministries of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries; Water and Environment; Finance; and Gender, Labour and Social Development; the Equal Opportunity Commission; and the Ugandan Parliament), district government (14 interviews), and sub-county government (nine interviews). We also conducted interviews with representatives from a development agency (German Society for International Cooperation), non-profit organizations operating at district and national levels (e.g., Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung, Association of Uganda Professional Women in Agriculture and Environment), and Makerere University faculty (eight interviews in total). We visited the interviewees in their offices, asking about challenges to addressing gender inequalities in Ugandan agriculture, within a context of a changing climate, and about potential solutions that their offices could use to advance gender equality locally. Interview questions were open-ended and broad, encouraging the free sharing and elaboration of opinions and experiences. With the respondents' permission, the interviews were recorded and fully transcribed.

The open-ended questions in the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews asked policy actors to propose, in their own organizational context, locally appropriate solutions to gender inequality in agriculture and climate change. This allowed us to examine, through the respondents' discourses, how gender policy meanings were locally constructed, consolidated, and/or challenged. The first author spent 36 months

in Uganda in close interaction with many of these policy actors, which helped with the context-specific interpretation of their discourses.

We analyzed the interview transcripts and questionnaire responses using an inductive codes-to-theory model (Saldaña, 2013). First, we categorized the challenges to gender equality and the solutions envisioned to address them. In a second round of coding, we examined the extent to which these challenges and perceived solutions directly addressed changing local patriarchal gender norms; how they were translated into local policy; and whether these translations and attached meanings resonated with or provided alternative understandings for global gender strategies. The analysis involved iteratively exploring several questions: How are local problematizations of gender in climate change portrayed? What localizations are constructed? How are global norms and actors presented in the discourse?

5.4 Results

5.4.1 Setting the scene

Uganda's legal and policy framework provides a substantial basis for promoting gender equality. Uganda's Constitution (The Republic of Uganda, 1995) grants equal status to all citizens, promotes affirmative-action policies, and protects women's rights against patriarchal practices. The Uganda Gender Policy 2007, the Uganda Vision 2040, the Second National Development Plan 2015/16–2019/20 (The Republic of Uganda, 2007, 2013b, 2015b), and several parliamentary acts[6] also promote equality and equity. Moreover, the Public Finance Management Act 2015 (The Republic of Uganda, 2015a) requires ministries, local governments, and national agencies to address gender issues in their activities. The National Climate Change Policy (The Republic of Uganda, 2015d) prioritizes mainstreaming gender issues in climate change adaptation and mitigation and highlights the importance of gender-sensitive indicators. Similarly, in the National Guidelines for the Integration of Climate Change in Sector Plans and Budgets (The Republic of Uganda & MWE, 2014), "gender sensitiveness" is a key criterion in adaptation, while the Uganda Climate-Smart Agriculture Country Program 2015–2025 (MAAIF & MWE, 2015) proposes increasing agriculture through gender-sensitive practices. Uganda is also a signatory to regional and international mandates advocating gender equality (e.g., the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [1948], the Convention on Elimination of All Forms

[6] *The Equal Opportunities Commission Act, 2007*; *The Local Governments Act, Cap. 243*; *The National Women's Council Act, Cap. 318*; *The Land Act, Cap. 227*; *The Public Finance Management Act, 2015*; and *The Local Government Act* (1996).

of Discrimination against Women [1979], the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action [1995], the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa [2003], the Sustainable Development Goals [2015], and the East Africa Community Gender Equality and Development Act [2017]).

5.4.2 Perceived importance of "the local" for gender equality in agriculture and climate change policy-making

Gender equality is central in Uganda's legal and policy frameworks, and it was similarly prominent in local policy actors' discourse. All participating policy actors actively engaged on the topic of gender equality in agriculture and climate change, demonstrating that the discourse had permeated all governance levels. The interviews showed that gender inequality was considered an important issue to address in agricultural and rural development. As one NGO actor remarked, "*Gender is very relevant […]. We put gender into every development work that we do; we see that it puts a barrier for development.*" Similarly, a government official from Luwero claimed, "*For us, it is very important that those gender considerations are integrated in all projects and programs.*" Generally, policy actors at both national and sub-national levels framed addressing "gender issues" as fundamental for improving household- and national-level wellbeing:

> *Gender becomes very important because our mandate is to see that farmer's household improve and livelihood in terms of food security and income. So, in that regard, the man and the woman have to work together complementing one another so that they achieve that. (NGO representative, Nwoya District)*

The questionnaire responses also showed this prioritization of gender issues in agriculture and climate change adaptation. Examining policy actors' perceptions of their offices' prioritization of gender issues, most respondents agreed (neutral agree to strongly agree) that closing the gender gap, considering gender in programs, and overcoming challenges to gender policy implementation caused by social norms were all high priorities (Figure 5.1).

Although gender-equality discourse seemed well-established in Uganda, many interviewees saw this as foreign, with some framing gender-equality work as resulting from external influences:

> *A challenge we have in this country is, right from the time when gender was introduced in the 1980s when the programs started for women empowerment, people misunderstood the whole concept. They looked at it as if it is coming*

to put women above the men. Gender equality was misconceived. People still have that in their minds that when you talk about gender you are going to put women above the men and that women are going to become more radical. (NGO representative, Kampala)

Considering this perception of the gender-equality discourse in climate change and agriculture as an external influence, we now explore local actors' conceptualizations of gender problems and gender implementation gaps in these fields.

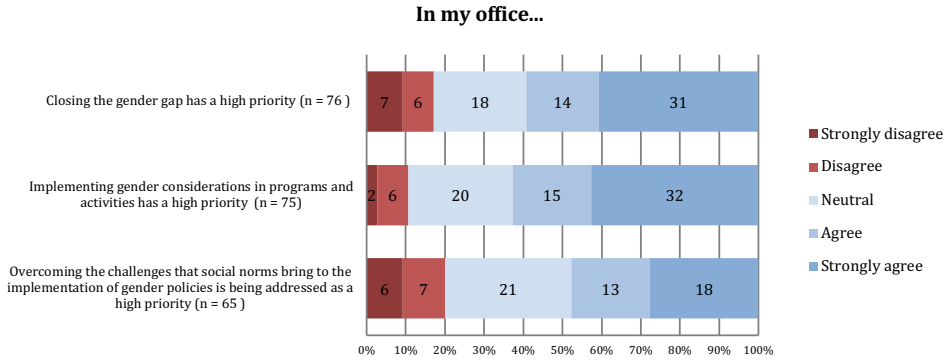

Figure 5.1. Policy actors' perceptions of their offices' prioritization of gender-related activities in Uganda. Source: Author's tabulation of questionnaire responses.

5.4.3 Local perceptions of gender problems and policy implementation gaps in agriculture and climate change

Local (national and sub-national) policy actors largely constructed gender inequality in agriculture and climate change as an important policy issue to address in Uganda.

After categorizing the answers to the open-ended questionnaire item on perceived priorities in addressing the causes of gender inequality, 1) changing negative mindsets and social norms and 2) improving gender responsiveness in policy were the most common responses (18 of 78 respondents), followed by 3) improving policy-makers' and the general public's understanding of gender (14 of 78 respondents). Together, these three categories accounted for around two-thirds of the suggested priorities for addressing gender inequality in Uganda (Table 5.2).

The influence of local cultural norms in perpetuating gender inequality in agriculture and climate change also frequently emerged during the interviews. The policy actors often saw local cultural norms as hindering gender equality in rural areas. An NGO official, discussing challenges in a project aiming to empower rural women that clashed

Table 5.2. Perception of priorities for addressing the causes of gender inequality

The problem with gender inequality will not be completely addressed in Uganda until there is…	Women	Men	Total
Change in mindsets and social norms	5	13	18
Improved gender responsiveness in policy	10	8	18
Improved understanding of gender	5	9	14
Involvement of men in gender equality	2	4	6
Improved resource ownership, access, and control	1	4	5
Abolishment of corruption, more transparency	0	3	3
Realization of equality between men and women	1	2	3
Inclusion of women in policy-making and activities	2	1	3
Joint planning and decision making among couples	1	2	3
Adoption of a multi-stakeholder approach	1	2	3
Other	3	3	6

Source: Authors' categorization of responses to an open-ended questionnaire item. Respondents were permitted to identify as many priorities as they wished.

with local understandings of appropriate gender roles, described the influence of local cultural norms as "a social, cultural tension... a tension that is rather complex and sensitive." Another respondent asserted,

> *Until people change their mindsets, some people still dwell on the cultural norms and the cultural mindsets. Unless the mindset is changed, the [gender] inequality will still be there. (Alero sub-county officer, Nwoya District)*

Influencing local cultural norms was thus constructed as a prerequisite for gender equality. Clashes between formal policy and local norms and culture were frequently mentioned in the interviews. For example, an NGO officer working in Rakai noted, "*The policy documents may articulate the [gender] issues, but the documents may find a resistance from the culture itself, from the local community*." These clashes were partly explained by the nature of formal national policy, which was disconnected from local women's realities in different Ugandan regions. There was a perceived need to further localize understandings of gender:

> *Uganda is a multiethnic country, and each ethnic group has different gender issues. The policy gives a general perspective, and it is upon the implementer to try to link what is in the policy to the reality on the ground. When the implementer fails to connect the policy, that is where you hear the complaint coming. (officer, Nwoya District local government)*

The distance between local norms and formal national policies largely adhering to international standards and global discourses on gender equality was central in the local policy actors' discourse. There was an implicit assumption that formal gender-equality policy was dissociated from practice:

> *It is like policy versus culture. The policy says "equality, gender, this and that," but culture is different […] The gender implementation gap is partly created by the culture. You cannot change culture overnight. It has to be gradual. You see, our culture puts the man above the woman. Culture is deeply rooted almost throughout the country, and to uproot it will need time. Even the people who are at ministry level at national level, they are all Ugandans and they are all attached to the same cultural beliefs. (officer, Nwoya District local government)*

Indeed, in the interviews, policy actors often acknowledged the existence of two layers of policy. One layer was the formal gender policy and discourse to which the policy actors ostensibly adhered, but there was also an underlying layer heavily influenced by local norms, which was seen as obstructing the effective implementation of the formal policy:

> *It is the people who are involved in policy-making who are the problem. Most of the policy-makers are men, and they still believe in that male dominance. So they still carry that perception; they are still the same men who have been brought up in their culture. Gender does not come from their heart. They mention gender because they have to because it is their job, but most of them are not really willing to let go; they don't want to lose their power. It is a power struggle. (NGO representative, Kampala)*

Another respondent also acknowledged the existence of this double layer of policy (formal/global vs. informal/local):

> *There is a gap, I must admit, in the implementation. Even though the documents may be well aligned, the implementation is not according to what is written. Why? Because of our cultural inclinations, that we don't want gender, we are opposed to gender inclusiveness […]. In this budget, as in the previous budget, you will find listed "gender mainstreaming"; we just do it year after year, year after year. We are like priests giving a sermon. (officer, Rakai District local government)*

For the policy-makers tasked with implementing gender mandates, "the global" (formal gender-equality policies for agricultural development) interacted with "the local" (cultural norms and beliefs): These actors used the formal gender-equality lingo that resonated

with global discourses but did not translate this into their local realities. Generally, the interviews and questionnaire responses lacked a specific and localized discourse on gender issues in agriculture and climate change. The gender gap in climate change adaptation was also problematized in the interviews in relation to insufficient translation of formal national policies for specific locations:

> *The policy just gives a general view of what should be done in particular to address gender, but the implementers now should handle the nitty-gritties; they should customize that in their locality. The implementers, some of them have failed to conceptualize and customize to their own needs. To ensure that perhaps climate change resilience adoption increases in our community or to see the gender issues related to the adoption of practices, I would have to first of all understand the needs, the needs of the men and women in the area. What do they need? Then, my programming and mainstreaming of climate change adaptation and mitigation measures should reflect those needs. Once it reflects those needs, I don't think we shall fail to implement the policy. (officer, Nwoya District local government)*

This statement highlights how policy localization may not materialize, with some policy-makers failing to translate global ideas on gender equality into local policy. Local actors thus acknowledged a clash between generalized gender-equality discourses and local contexts, but efforts to bridge these tensions through local policy approaches were limited.

Gender inequality in agriculture and climate change was also often framed in terms of insufficient knowledge on gender issues (Table 5.2). This also emerged during the interviews. For example this respondent attributed the reticence of some colleagues to implement or legislate gender issues to insufficient knowledge:

> *Gender and climate change in the agricultural sector of rural areas has not been a priority. It is a new field. You hear people say, "Is it necessary?" "Do we really need to consider those issues?" I think there is a challenge of understanding how to integrate issues of gender and climate change in agriculture, in rural development. (Member of the Ugandan Parliament)*

Inadequate implementation of existing policy was the most frequently cited factor perceived to influence the insufficient impact of formal gender policies in agriculture and climate change in Uganda (Table 5.3). The second most frequently cited factor was patriarchal mindsets and negative cultural norms preventing effective implementation.

Interviewees explained that the insufficient implementation of gender policy in agriculture and climate change was partly linked to inadequate funding. As one local officer from Purongo sub-county (Nwoya District) put it, "*These [gender] policies require financial support to be fully implemented, so if there is that gap, the implementation becomes somehow difficult.*" A Luwero District policy officer also linked the gender implementation gap to financial constraints:

> *There is a big implementation gap. We want to reach communities, but we are unable to do that because of the environment we operate in. In a full financial year, you may not have any budget for gender.*

Table 5.3. Perceptions of causes driving insufficient impact of gender policies in agriculture and climate change

	Women	Men	Total
Insufficient policy implementation	8	10	18
Patriarchal mindset, negative cultural norms	6	10	16
Insufficient funds	8	8	16
Insufficient understanding of gender issues	5	10	15
Insufficient dissemination of policies to beneficiaries	6	6	12
Lack of prioritization of gender	1	11	12
Poor involvement of communities in policy design	4	3	7
Insufficient coordination of policy actors	0	2	2
Other	2	1	3

Source: Authors' categorization of responses to an open-ended questionnaire item. Respondents were permitted to identify as many causes as they wished.

Contextualizing gender inequality in terms of insufficient knowledge on gender issues and inadequate funds for implementation partly reflected a depoliticization of gender issues in the discourse, wherein local causes of gender inequality were disregarded or backgrounded. Nevertheless, policy actors remarked on the fundamental role of local norms and culture in achieving gender equality. Thus, although gender inequality in agriculture and climate change was constructed as a fundamental issue to be resolved through formal policy (see Table 5.2 and Table 5.3), the normative distance between formal policy and local realities was considered a major barrier to effective policy implementation. In the next section, we interrogate local gender-equality strategies to assess the potential of "the local" in designing more effective gender strategies in agriculture and climate change.

5.4.4 How are gender concerns transformed into policy prescriptions within "the local"?

Overall, proposed local solutions to gender inequality in the agricultural sector in the context of a changing climate were formulated in very general terms and were largely expected to work through formal policy. Table 5.4 shows the proposed actions for respondents' institutions to take to address gender inequalities in their rural and agricultural development activities. The proposed actions were wide-ranging, but most were concentrated in four areas: including women in policy-making and interventions (affirmative action), improving people's understanding of gender, including gender in work plans and policy documents, and carrying out gender campaigns and advocacy.

Table 5.4. Proposed actions to address gender inequalities in agriculture and climate change

Taking into account the current context, what concrete, realizable actions could your office do to address gender inequalities?	Women	Men	Total
Including women in policy-making and interventions	6	10	16
Improving understanding of gender	5	8	13
Including gender in work plans and policy documents	5	7	12
Carrying out gender campaigns, advocacy	5	3	8
Adopting a multi-stakeholder approach	1	3	4
No improvements are needed	0	3	3
Engaging in joint planning, decision making	1	2	3
Holding meetings specifically on gender	0	2	2
Involving men in gender equality	0	2	2
Other	2	5	7

Source: Authors' categorization of responses to an open-ended questionnaire item. Respondents were permitted to identify as many proposed actions as they wished.

Although our questionnaire asked about potential solutions to gender inequality in a very localized context ("your office"), the proposed actions were ambiguous, vague, and not directly linked to the context. For example, under the category of "including women in policy-making and interventions" (Table 5.4), there were answers such as "*Encouraging women and girls to get involved in most activities actively*"; "*Engage participation planning at various levels*"; and "*Engaging both sexes actively in government programs.*" The proposed solutions were brief, generalized statements that were not rooted or contextualized in the respondents' local settings. Thus, rather than bringing innovative local priorities to efforts to solve specific, contextualized gender inequalities, "the local" was very much embedded in globalized gender-equality approaches.

Respondents' descriptions of concrete actions their institutions could take to address the gender policy implementation gap were also wide-ranging, with six main suggestions accounting for around half of the proposed actions: including gender laws and gender mainstreaming in work plans, improving the budget for gender, popularizing policies, improving awareness and understanding of gender, carrying out gender campaigns and advocacy, and empowering women (Table 5.5). These proposed actions were generally written in very generic gender lingo. For example, the category of including gender laws and gender mainstreaming in work plans (Table 5.5) included general statements such as "*All projects have to integrate gender into their activities before they are approved*"; "*Always consider elements of gender before any activity is done*"; and "*Development of gender laws and ordinances.*"

Table 5.5. Proposed actions to address the gender policy implementation gap

Taking into account the current context, What concrete, realizable actions could your office do to address the gender policy implementation gap?	Women	Men	Total
Including gender laws and gender mainstreaming in work plans	3	4	7
Improving the budget for gender	1	6	7
Popularizing policies (improving dissemination to local populations)	2	4	6
Improving awareness and understanding of gender	3	3	6
Carrying out gender campaigns and advocacy	1	1	5
Empowering women	2	3	5
Improving monitoring and evaluation systems for gender	0	4	4
Improving gender capacity of officers and policy-makers	3	1	4
Using affirmative action	2	2	4
Improving the political will, prioritizing gender	0	3	3
Improving the engagement of communities	0	3	3
Encouraging joint planning and decision making among couples	0	3	3
Adopting a multi-stakeholder approach	0	3	3
Improving operationalization	1	1	2
Rewarding officers who implement gender	0	2	2
Other	3	6	9

Source: Authors' categorization of responses to an open-ended questionnaire item. Respondents were permitted to identify as many actions as they wished.

Table 5.4 and Table 5.5 show that the respondents' felt that addressing gender inequality in agriculture and climate change requires improving gender knowledge, policy design, and implementation. Culture and local norms were central to the problematization of gender inequality (see Section 5.4.3), but the proposed solutions did not emphasize

addressing patriarchal cultural practices or local gender equality norms. This emerged clearly around land ownership. In Uganda, women do not generally inherit land or have property rights over their husband's land. These patriarchal norms were acknowledged as a major issue limiting women's decision making in agriculture. However, the policy actors' proposed solutions naturalized these practices rather than challenging them:

> *In most cases, it's the men marrying the women. If a man in a particular home brings a woman, then he has an upper hand in the family, more than the woman who has just come [from outside]. That's where the scenario is. A woman, whether married or not, should try to own her own property as a woman. It is very good to try to make a positive mindset in the girls, to tell them, "Try to work hard. Try to make sure that in your lifetime you own property as a woman. Your property. Even if your husband is aware about it." (officer, Rakai District local government)*

The discourse thus naturalized unequal local land ownership norms, making women responsible for working hard to "earn" land that they were not entitled to inherit or own through marriage. The patriarchal cultural practices, which the respondents acknowledged as the root cause of gender inequalities in agriculture, were not challenged or even mentioned in the proposed solutions. Similarly, a policy actor from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development proposed replacing the term "gender" with a word that would support traditional men's and women's roles to avoid rejection by local communities:

> *I think we need to simplify gender, and we should even stop calling it gender when we are talking to local people. We should talk about how we can support women, men, boys, and girls to play their roles effectively and sustain their livelihoods. When you talk about gender, they think "women," and they become defensive. It is the patriarchal mindset. We need to package the gender message in a way that is palatable to communities. To deliver the message without diluting it but using a language that is encompassing.*

This type of localization — adhering to a generalized gender discourse but refraining from challenging local patterns of gender inequality — also appeared when respondents were asked what actions could be promoted in their offices to address challenges to gender equality created by strict social norms (Table 5.6). Around half of the proposed actions were in four areas: improving awareness and knowledge of gender among officers and the general public, improving the budget for gender, including gender mainstreaming in work plans, and providing equal opportunities to men and women. The other 16 types of solutions/interventions were mostly proposed by only one respondent and framed

very generally. Especially considering that the questionnaire items were designed to elicit specific, concrete, and context-specific solutions, the general responses may point to attempts to de-contextualize and generalize gender issues. The questionnaire format may also have contributed, asking policy actors to capture the essence of their proposed actions in writing and in a limited amount of space, but such generalized gender statements were also frequently made in the interviews, suggesting that the questionnaire format had little or no effect.

Table 5.6. Proposed actions to address challenges to gender equality from rigid social norms

Taking into account the current context, what concrete, realizable actions could your office do to address the challenges to gender equality regarding rigid social norms?	Women	Men	Total
Improving awareness and knowledge of gender	8	7	15
Improving the budget for gender	3	3	6
Including gender mainstreaming in work plans	1	4	5
Providing equal opportunities to men and women	3	2	5
Improving engagement of communities for enhanced implementation	0	4	4
Involving the church, cultural leaders	3	1	4
Empowering women	3	1	4
Prioritizing gender	1	2	3
Adopting a multi-stakeholder approach	2	1	3
Changing negative gender stereotypes from the early stages of childhood	0	2	2
Budgeting for gender-transformative actions	0	1	1
Slowly changing negative cultural aspects	0	1	1
Adapting gender activities to the local context	1	0	1
Using affirmative action	0	1	1
Conducting gender and climate change courses and programs	1	0	1
Carrying out gender campaigns, advocacy	0	1	1
Improving ownership, access, and control of resources	0	1	1
Improving the political will	1	0	1
Improving monitoring and evaluation systems for gender	1	0	1
Holding regular gender meetings	0	1	1

Source: Authors' categorization of responses to an open-ended questionnaire item. Respondents were permitted to identify as many proposed actions as they wished.

Overall, the policy actors perceived patriarchal mindsets and negative cultural norms as fundamental challenges to advancing gender equality and effectively implementing gender policy in the agricultural sector (Table 5.2 and Table 5.3). However, when questioned about potential local solutions for gender inequality (Table 5.4), the gender policy implementation gap (Table 5.5), and challenges from rigid social norms in Uganda

(Table 5.6), they did not generally propose activities that would contest negative local social norms. This exposed a gap between perceptions of the importance of changing social norms and proposed activities to address gender inequality without attempting to challenge local norms and patterns of gender inequality. These discourses depoliticized gender inequality by presenting it as an issue that cannot be challenged and naturalized it by not addressing local patterns of gender inequality through local policy solutions challenging patriarchal gender norms and practices.

A similar tendency was observed in the interviews. Awareness creation, capacity building, and sensitization on gender issues were frequently presented as a fundamental first step in advancing gender equality in agriculture and climate change by influencing local traditional culture. As an NGO representative from Nwoya District asserted, "*The capacity building and gender equality awareness should increase to break that traditional culture perception towards women.*" However, some actors' awareness-creation strategies did not clearly challenge local norms or patriarchal cultural practices. For example, an official from Luwero District encouraged women to remain submissive: "*For me, when I talk to the rural women, I tell them, 'You people be submissive to your husband, you listen to him. Gender just means working together, in harmony.'*" Another official from Luwero District explained how the district government advocated for awareness creation on gender issues without challenging local norms:

> *At first when you are just introducing the concept of gender, it is not received positively, especially by the men, but as they get awareness, it gets better. When you talk of gender, especially here in Uganda, people think that you want women to be higher than men, [that] you want women to leave their domestic responsibilities or that they share the domestic responsibilities with men. But once you tell them it is not like that, that we are not telling women to leave their domestic responsibilities, that they can integrate their culture, and that they can leave their culture intact, the positive one, then they understand.*

This suggests that, when gender is introduced in the community as something that will not challenge established patriarchal norms, local people "understand" and do not oppose the concept.

Although proposed solutions directly tackling the structural and cultural causes of gender inequality were rare, some were mentioned. These largely involved using cultural and political leaders to spearhead changes in cultural practices seen as detrimental to gender equality. A policy actor from the Ministry of Finance explained how cultural leaders could be key in changing gender relations:

> *Most of the time, gender is actually clashing with the cultural beliefs and practices. We are looking at how can we use cultural institutions to actually improve relationships between men and women. We want to focus on how to use cultural and religious institutions, those two, for them to understand what gender is all about. And then actually work with them to see how things can be done differently. Otherwise, without them there is no way we can win.*

In a similar fashion, a Member of Parliament described convincing cultural leaders as the first step toward gender equality:

> *We need to use the cultural and religious leaders to get people's buy in. We have a lot of the religious leaders [who] still have a lot of influence on their followers. Once they understand the concept and inform others about it, it is very easy to convince them.*

However, although this type of discourse highlighted the potential of local leaders to effect gender-transformative change, how these leaders would be convinced to change their views remained unclear, especially considering that they are normally men and might not be inclined toward gender-equality mandates that often imply profound changes in local norms and culture. A few interviewees referred to the potential of using local media to increase awareness of gender issues. A policy officer from Nwoya, for example, supported this approach, although the discourse remained vague regarding the extent to which local gender relations could be influenced:

> *Considering the limited resources at the district level, a way of disseminating information would be through radio programs. We could disseminate from meteorological information for men and women, where to report cases of gender-based violence […]*

Overall, Tables 5.4–5.6 and the interview results demonstrate that the proposed solutions to gender equality in agriculture and climate change were formulated in very general terms and did not aim for normative change to current gender activities in rural and agricultural development projects in Uganda. Local actors generally addressed gender issues in terms of policy, highlighting the need to improve gender in official policy, although formal policy was acknowledged to have a very limited effect on local norms and culture (see Section 5.4.3). Further, the proposed local prescriptions to address gender inequality at the local level did not challenge patriarchal norms. Thus, "the local" showed limited capacity to transform pervasive gender inequality patterns.

5.5 Discussion and conclusion

This study started from the assumption that global gender strategies' limited effectiveness is partly explained by their failure to fully examine local understandings and preferred practices of the actors responsible for implementation in specific contexts (Wittman, 2010). A focus on "the local" was expected to shed light on the potential for a more bottom-up, localized approach to gender equality. However, we found that local policy actors in Uganda, when devising potential context-specific solutions to gender inequality in agriculture and climate change, tended to adhere to global discourses on gender equality, with limited efforts to address local gender inequality patterns. In general, few actors attempted to translate policy for the local context, with both questionnaire and interview results showing local policy actors' lack of engagement with local norms and gender inequality. "The local" thus did not contest local patterns of gender inequality or aim to disrupt local gender power relations, but rather naturalized gender inequality in agriculture and climate change in Uganda.

Global discourses on gender equality in agriculture and climate change are based on the premise that unequal power relations between men and women are detrimental to advancing rural women's status and to improving development outcomes and egalitarian climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies (UN Women, 2015a; World Bank et al., 2015). Aiming to transform unequal gender power relations, these global discourses challenge local patterns of gender inequality and also highlight the importance of "localization" — devising local solutions for specific contexts (UNDP, 2019). However, when the local solutions fail to challenge patriarchal gender norms, the promise of localization becomes limited.

The apparent adherence of local actors in this study to global discourses on gender equality supports previous research portraying "the local" and "the global" as being in constant interaction (Anderl, 2016; Maags & Trifu, 2019) and describing a strong influence of "the global" on gender discussions in development contexts (Cold-Ravnkilde et al., 2018). Advancing knowledge of this local–global interaction in Uganda, our findings identify the use of a largely depoliticized global discourse on gender equality, allowing local policy actors to adopt global discourses with very limited implications for local gender relations. We thus found the promise of localization to be limited, with local policy actors adhering to the global gender-equality discourse and recognizing the normative tensions between global norms and local culture, while simultaneously presenting local gender relations as an uncontestable cultural aspect. "The local" thus seemed to use "the global" to appear to fulfill gender policy, while often depoliticizing and naturalizing local

patterns of gender inequalities. Although gender inequality in agriculture and climate change was problematized, proposed local solutions remained very general and vague. This resonates with Ruiz and Vallejo's (2019) work in Colombia, where gender discourse was prominent but proposed gender policies, actions, and strategies lacked content and specificity.

Our study also exposed an inherent tension between the stated importance of "the local" in development (Crescenzi & Rodríguez-Pose, 2011) and the global discourse on challenging patriarchal forms of gender discrimination through gender-transformative approaches (Deering, 2019; Ketting, 2017; Wong et al., 2019). We found this inherent tension to be prominent in the highly patriarchal study context when asking local actors about transformative solutions for gender inequality that would challenge well-established local power relations. We found that "the local" framed patriarchal social-cultural norms as a hindrance to gender equality in agricultural and climate change development, but these norms were largely backgrounded in proposed "local" solutions. The locally proposed solutions' failure to address the root causes of gender inequality raises questions about the potential of "the local" to transform patterns of gender inequality. By constructing gender inequality as a policy problem resulting from an insufficient understanding of gender concepts or lacking gender integration in policy, local policy actors shifted the focus away from the root causes of gender inequality, depoliticizing gender issues.

The present study thus revealed serious limitations of "the local" as a major force for locally rooted gender change, unless a strong feminist approach, where women's interests and rights take center stage, is included. In this sense, the role of local feminist movements and Southern feminisms[7] in gender and norm localization might be central to advancing a transformative gender-equality agenda, as they position themselves as able to formulate alternative, more contextualized solutions to gender equality (see, for example, Sen & Grown, 1987). However, this requires local feminist movements to be connected and able to influence political authorities and policy-making actors (Ün, 2019). Because our study focused primarily on policy actors working in formal government structures, there was minimal representation of local feminist organizations. This may have limited our ability to examine the role and impact of such local actors in addressing local patterns of gender inequality. However, local feminist discourses did not seem to have significantly penetrated or influenced the discourses of policy actors working in formal government structures. This possible discursive disconnection between local feminist movements and

[7] Here, "Southern feminisms" are understood as a "distinct sets of feminist ideas that derive from their own indigenous, local, regional or historical contexts" (Narayanaswamy, 2016, pp. 2156–2157).

mainstream national politics is problematic in that local pockets of feminist discourse and bottom-up, localized knowledge are unable to significantly impact change toward gender equality.

Our study raises questions regarding what constitutes "the local" for gender equality in contexts where local policy actors adhere to global development discourses but are simultaneously embedded in a patriarchal system that they do not challenge. The local actors in this study proposed an agenda where the concept of gender equality largely avoided confronting local inequalities in the power relations between men and women and was presented instead as men and women being helped to fulfill their traditional roles. We argue that there is a need to reconstruct "the local" as a discursive space where multiple actors — ideally, spearheaded by local feminist movements and including international and local NGOs, international development agencies, and national and sub-national government officials — critically engage with, assess, and address local patterns of gender inequality. Future studies on the potential of "the local" to close the gender gap could then investigate the potential of reflexive acts of collective argumentation and discussion in addressing local patterns of gender inequality.

Chapter 6

General Discussion and Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The main research aim of this thesis was to examine how the gender policy implementation gap in agricultural and climate change policy is reproduced through local acts of meaning making, and to examine if alternative strategies of meaning making could prove promising for a more effective exercise of gender mainstreaming in Uganda. To fulfill this research aim, the different empirical chapters have contributed to address the overarching research question: *How does local meaning making shape policy and practice on gender equality in agricultural and climate change policy in Uganda?*

In this general discussion and conclusion chapter I start by providing a summary of the main findings resulting from the four empirical chapters, which answered the four proposed sub-questions. After addressing each of these sub-questions, I present an overview of the main cross-cutting themes and insights that are important for the examination of the role of local meaning making in gender equality policy and practice in Uganda. I then continue with a reflection on the different theoretical contributions of this dissertation, with an emphasis on the role of interpretation in processes of norm translation, before reflecting on the study's limitations and proposing avenues for future research. I continue by detailing the implications of this research for policy and practice and finally, in a concluding section, I offer some closing remarks and answer the main research question.

6.2 Main findings: conclusions from the empirical chapters

This thesis contributes to the literature on discursive policy-making of gender equality by providing empirical evidence on how local acts of meaning making affect gender policy in Uganda, and by examining the role of interpretation in processes of norm translation. Specifically, the thesis uncovers sites of discursive power and resistance to gender equality in local policy narratives (Chapter 2); stresses the dilution of the transformational ambition of gender equality strategies in processes of norm domestication and translation (Chapter 3); uncovers differences in associated meanings of gender equality constructs using the case of joint decision-making (Chapter 4); and questions the transformational potential of some "local" solutions to tackle gender inequality (Chapter 5). Together, the four empirical chapters demonstrate the crucial role of local meaning in processes of norm translation for the transformational potential of gender policies in agriculture and climate change in Uganda. In the following sub-sections I proceed to summarize the key messages from each of the empirical chapters.

6.2.1 Narratives as discursive sites of resistance to gender equality

The first study answered the sub-question: What are the main narratives on gender, agriculture and climate change adaptation among policy-makers in Uganda and what are their effects? The analysis shows that the ways in which policy actors engage with issues of gender equality in agriculture and climate change are of relevance for the effectiveness of gender equality policies. Narratives are powerful conveyors of meaning (Yanow, 2000) through which policy actors share their views of reality, persuade others of appropriate social positions and practices, and criticize alternative meanings or positions (Hajer, 1993). As such, a focus on narratives helped in understanding how local meanings and understandings on gender issues were being narrated and communicated in formal settings (i.e. interviews, policy meetings). The stories that national policy actors used to relate to issues of gender mainstreaming largely fitted a gender equality narrative, where women are perceived to be a disadvantaged group in Uganda and where there is need to develop special policy provisions for them. However, despite this dominance, stories fitting the gender equality narrative were often interspersed with stories that followed a different narrative logic. These shifts in the narration conveyed a discursive engagement with gender equality that was accompanied by concurrent resistance, deconstruction and revocation, uncovering different power effects. In particular, they showed immediate discursive effects in questioning responsibilities (blame shift), legitimizing policy inaction on gender issues, foregrounding and naturalizing patriarchy, and promoting the diversion of resources. Overall, the main discursive effect resulting from the use of these competing narratives was an implicit disempowerment of the gender equality narrative.

6.2.2 Effects of norm domestication on the transformational potential of gender equality strategies

Understanding how global gender equality norms were being translated into formal local policies at different governance levels (national, district, sub-county) was also central in examining the impacts of local meaning making in gender policy in the country. Using the case of "gender mainstreaming" as a global norm for gender equality, chapter 3 analyzed the role of national governments and decentralized administrations in translating internationally agreed gender norms. The research addressed the sub-question: *How do processes of international norm translation into domestic policies in Uganda affect the transformative ambition of gender mainstreaming?* The analysis showed different processes through which gender norms were translated in a way that simultaneously resonated with international discourses but also left room for adjustments to domestic norms and logics. These local adjustments involved in particular the following five

processes: neglecting parts of the gender and climate change discourse in sub-national level policy; the perpetuation of gender stereotypes; the oversimplification of the gender discourse in agriculture and climate change; the persistent acts of symbolic politics with stale reproduction of text; and the abstract nature of the gender activities proposed in budgets and their restricted economic allocations. Together, these processes of norm domestication enacted, naturalized or favored patriarchal representations of reality over others, reducing the potential for transformation of the international norm on gender mainstreaming. The results of this chapter suggest that the formulation of internationally agreed norms on gender equality as such makes little contribution to significantly challenge and transform structural causes of gender inequality in highly patriarchal societies.

6.2.3 Implications of differing meanings of key equality concepts: the case of joint decision-making

Chapter 4 addressed the third sub-question of this thesis: What are the differentiated meanings that male and female farmers attach to specific gender equality policy constructs and how do they differ from those found in policy and development programs? The chapter focused specifically on the concept of "joint-decision making", which was chosen for being one key gender constructs regularly used in district and national policy, and in many development programs of aid agencies and NGOs. The study shows how the concept is often used rather vaguely in national and sub-national gender equality policy discourses as a metric for women's empowerment. However, the associated meaning found in formal policy discourse — in which an equal say of both spouses in the decision is implicit — differs widely from the understandings that women associate with the concept. The case study of the village of Lodi in Northern Uganda showed that women tended to report joint-decision making processes more often than men, and had a variety of understandings of what the concept meant for them in practice. These understandings ranged from no conversation among partners at all to conversations where the female spouse's ideas were considered but the man had the final say. Strikingly, as perceived by the women, the concept of joint-decision making never amounted to decisions where both spouses had an equal say in the discussion. This study thus highlighted the importance of understanding how the people that are supposed to benefit from gender policies relate to gender equality and concepts of women's empowerment. In the case of "joint decision making", the ambiguous connotation in which the concept was used in policy and development projects in Uganda allowed for multiple interpretations to co-exist, including some that implied at best minimal change, to the patriarchal status quo.

6.2.4 Constraints to the transformational potential of "local" solutions to tackle gender inequality

In order to examine the potential of "local solutions" to bridge the normative distance between transnational conceptualizations on gender and local realities, Chapter 5 addressed the sub-question: *What are the potentials and advantages of locally formulated solutions to gender inequality in agricultural and climate change policy as compared to those found in international discourse?* The chapter engaged with the idea that a focus on the local can bring more effective strategies for gender equality that are better suited to the local context (Østebø, 2015; Ün, 2019). However, the analysis shows how local policy actors largely mobilized global discourses on gender when asked about context-specific solutions to gender inequality. Furthermore, while local norms and culture had been identified as one of the main barriers for gender inequality, these were not directly tackled in the local solutions being proposed. In the study "the local" acted as an entity that used highly depoliticized global discourses on gender equality, often naturalizing gender inequalities, without any implications for gender relations in their contexts. In this way, the expectation that local policy actors would automatically and intrinsically address local patterns of gender inequality was not met. However, this does not necessarily need to be always the case. The chapter highlights the key role that local feminist movements and Southern feminisms could have in bringing gender-transformative localization.

6.3 Main findings: discussion of crosscutting themes

Taken together, the four empirical chapters have identified a set of common themes that are important to the examination of the role of local meaning making in the efficiency of gender equality strategies in Uganda. As I will explain in this section, these themes relate specifically to the influence of global gender equality discourses in local policy; the tokenistic salience of gender equality; the navigation of multiple realities of local actors; the notable mismatch between problematizations and prescriptions in local discourse; and finally the inherent potential for different local meaning making.

6.3.1 Presence of global gender equality discourses

Overall, this thesis has exposed a pervasive presence of global gender equality discourses in Uganda. The national, district and sub-national policy documents reviewed made regular reference to their alignment with global norms and treaties on gender equality, highlighting the key role and disadvantaged position of women in the agricultural sector, and their increased vulnerability in the face of climate change (Chapter3). National policy

actors working within the realms of rural development, agriculture and climate change adaptation followed the same pattern, and showed a common use of gender equality narratives that greatly resonated with international norms advocating for equal rights for men and women (Chapter 2). Furthermore, when national and sub-national policy actors were asked about key constraints to gender equality and proposed local solutions to address gender inequality, there was recurrent reference to the importance of considering the needs and challenges of men and women in any agricultural development or climate adaptation strategy in Uganda (Chapter 5). Gender mainstreaming, and more generally gender equality, was in this way pervasive to policy discourse in the setting of this thesis.

The pervasive presence of global gender equality discourse in development policy is rather common, and not exclusive to Uganda. Gender equality discourses in agriculture and climate change development policy are for example largely present in Nepal (Paudyal et al., 2019), Latin America (Gumucio & Tafur Rueda, 2015), and Eastern and Southern Africa (Ampaire et al., 2019; Nhamo, 2014). In an increasingly connected and globalized world, states have a vested interest in adhering to international gender discourses to gain and maintain international reputation and credibility (Krook & True, 2012; Ssewakiryanga, 2002). Furthermore, international aid agencies often exert a normative pressure on governments and local NGOs in the Global South to follow gender equality principles in their policies, programs and operations, often conditioning their funding to the adherence of these gender discourses (Arora-Jonsson, 2014; Miers, 2011; Samarasinghe, 2014). There is thus a collective interest in engaging with gender equality discourses. In this way, the adherence to global gender discourse seems to respond at least partly to processes of "strategic social construction", where policy actors and governments strategize to reshape their "preferences, identities or social context" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 888).

6.3.2 Tokenistic salience of gender equality

Even though the empirical cases of this thesis showed a clear salience of discourses that resonate with international standards and treaties advocating for equal opportunity of rights and responsibilities, they also revealed that this salience is often rather tokenistic. Chapter 2 showed how despite the presence of gender equality narratives, local policy actors often questioned the feasibility and desirability of gender mainstreaming in their agriculture and climate change policy actions, betraying a tension between an apparent superficial acceptance of gender equality mandates and more skeptical understandings. Similarly, Chapter 3 showed how despite the salience of gender equality discourses in policy documents, proposed gender actions were often phrased

in very general terms with no clear pathways for how gender inequalities would to be transformed. Furthermore, it also demonstrated how gender discourses and proposed actions in district and sub-counties were recycled from one 5-year development plan to the following one, and also often copy-pasted from other sub-counties and districts. This, together with the extremely limited and vague budget allocations for gender equality pointed towards a tokenistic use of gender equality discourses in agriculture and climate change policy that did not extend to concrete policy action in the country. This finding was further corroborated in Chapter 5, where local policy actors asserted that global ideas on gender equality were not always being translated into local policy, acknowledging the coexistence of globalized discourses on gender equality and more conservative local understandings. While the empirical findings are limited to agricultural development and climate change policy in Uganda, they resonate with experiences in other development areas in the country. For example, in examining BRAC's microfinance program in Uganda, Jones (2020) showed how gender equality was central to the public image of the program, but was largely missing on their everyday office work and on their activities on the ground, making gender normative agendas central in discourse and public image of BRAC but sidelined in practice. Similarly, in a study of NGOs in Malawi, Tiessen (2004) found that gender mainstreaming had helped in creating visibility for gender equality issues, but it was not clear whether gender-mainstreaming practices were actually translating into tangible change within the organizations. Overall, this disconnect between gender discourse and practice, and the related tokenistic use of gender mainstreaming, is well recognized in the development discourse literature (Eerdewijk, 2016; Smyth, 2010).

Together, the empirical chapters of this thesis show a top-down discourse falling in line with global normative stands codified in international agreements and with the donor's conditionality of aid that shape the formulation of development programs and policies, and how policy actors publicly talk about them. Concurrently, there are also local discourses that continuously mold the meaning of gender mainstreaming and gender equality in practice, limiting the transformational potential of these strategies. Overall, the salience of gender equality in Uganda seems to stop largely at formal discursive level while in practice this discourse is not fully incorporated into everyday policy and action.

6.3.3 Navigating multiple social realities

As explained above, the study of the gender equality discourse in agriculture and climate change policy in Uganda revealed strong interactions between global discourses, international development efforts, and local policy discourses and action. Local policy

actors therefore have to navigate multiple co-existing normative environments so that they can satisfy different "audiences" (Cook et al., 2020; Goffman, 1959). These interactions were for example clearly visible in chapter 2, where policy actors would regularly make reference to the importance of gender equality in agriculture and climate change in their discourses but at the same time would often defend or safeguard cultural norms that restricted women's rights, for instance with regards to ownership of matrimonial land. In this way, policy actors often navigated multiple social realities and adopted gender norms in a way that simultaneously resonated with international discourses but also allowed for adjustments to local norms and logics. This was especially true in cases where international norms on gender equality clashed with local norms and cultural beliefs (Barnett, 2018; Petersen, 2018; Smyth, 2010).

These processes of norm navigation between different normative environments often imply that international norms are not fully adopted in local contexts, or not implemented as they were meant by their drafters. In fact, a frequently reported cause for the failure of development initiatives is the hesitancy of local actors to engage with language constructions and approaches that they view as threatening or divisive (Reed et al., 2019). In other cases, the gendered development language is introduced in local development policy and programs, but with little implication in practice. For example, this is the case with the use of women empowerment concepts in agricultural development and climate change policies that resonate with international and global discourses, but that mean very different things to different actors on the ground. Using the case of joint-decision making, chapter 4 showed for example how the use of development concepts with very different meanings for different actors might bring very limited change for women on the ground. The ambiguous usage of "joint decision making" enabled multiple interpretations to co-exist, including some that inferred minimal change to women's status. Furthermore, chapter 3 showed how exercises of gender mainstreaming existed side-by-side with a discourse that resorted to the use of certain gender stereotypes (e.g. "women as naturally weak"; "women inferiority complex") to justify the low development achievements of the region and the low agricultural productivity of households. Through these discourses, exercises of gender mainstreaming co-existed with frequent reproduction of patriarchal interpretations and patterns of behavior, constituting a clear manifestation of the multiple normative realities that exist at the local level. The transformational potential of gender norms is in this way affected by the cultural, patriarchal, economic and political dynamics at the local level. Unless these dynamics in processes of norm translation are fully addressed, more effective and transformative gender strategies will not be possible.

6.3.4 Mismatch between problematizations and prescriptions

In discussing the main barriers to gender equality in agriculture and climate change adaptation, this thesis has shown how policies and policy actors put a strong emphasis on the unequal ownership and access to productive resources and assets. In the political discourse, women were presented as the main workforce for the agricultural sector, and as highly vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change. Despite their key role in agriculture, the discourse also emphasized that Uganda's patrilineal line of inheritance and associated cultural norms were key structural causes of gender inequality, which meant that women remained with limited ownership and control of the land and other productive assets. This brought with it an associated lower decision-making power for women and a restrictive access to the credit market due to their lack of collateral assets (Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5). Together, this results in a state of overall subordination of women to men in productive and domestic spheres.

Even though the vulnerable position of women in the agricultural sector was central to the gender discourse, the proposed prescriptions in policy documents (Chapter 3), policy narratives (Chapter 2), and proposed localized solutions (Chapter 5) did not tackle these directly. In policy documents, proposed solutions largely centered around the area of education, specifically the need to increase the understandings of gender issues in the sector through capacity building and sensitization activities (Chapter 3). Similarly, as shown in Chapter 5, the proposed local solutions also had an emphasis on improving understanding on gender and on advocacy. This was coupled with a call for improving the inclusion of women in policy-making and in activities (affirmative action), and on improving the gender inclusion in work plans and policy documents. All these prescriptions offered in policy documents and the discourse of policy actors has in common that the problem of detrimental cultural norms and gender inequalities in ownership of resources was largely backgrounded, with the proposed solutions implicitly assuming to trigger attitude change within the community. How such an attitude and norm change would happen was never fully elaborated in the discourse, denoting a clear disjunction between gender problematizations and prescriptions. Similarly to the findings presented here, Eerdewijk (2014) found a clear disjunction between diagnosis and prognosis in different gender assessments and gender targets of Dutch development agencies, where prognosis largely pointed to problems in structural terms while the prescriptions were based on assumptions of policy-makers acting or willing to act to address gender inequality.

This thesis shows thus an apparent gap between the perception of the role of patriarchal social norms as the root causes of gender inequalities, and the proposed activities to

tackle these inequalities, which did not attempt to contest local norms. The fact that structural causes of gender inequalities were backgrounded in the proposed prescriptions implied that these were kept out of the policy debate, depoliticizing these issues and implicitly presenting them as given, and thus impossible to challenge.

6.3.5 Potential for different meaning making

While examining the role of local meaning making in gender equality policy in agriculture and climate change in Uganda, the different chapters of this thesis also pointed at the potential of local forms of meaning making for enhanced transformation. As this thesis shows, processes of local meaning making are fundamental to the effectiveness of gender equality norms, and thus should be given a central role in the design of more transformative strategies for gender equality. However, the potential of localization for improved implementation of gender equality strategies are also inevitably linked to the extent to which these locally-crafted strategies are able to thrive and support the (re) politization of gender issues. As shown in chapter 5, proposed local solutions for gender equality in agriculture and climate change do not necessarily imply a (re)politization of gender issues, and often perpetuate gender inequalities and do not aim at challenging root causes of gender inequality. Southern forms of feminism and women's right movements are especially well positioned to spearhead this change (Tripp & Kwesiga, 2002), provided they are linked to mainstream local politics and are able to meaningfully influence policy-making processes (Chapter 5). It seems fundamental to also capitalize on practices that are already proving successful at shaping gender relations at local levels in different contexts (Njuki et al., 2016) and to provide the necessary normative space and independence to allow new local strategies for gender equality to emerge and be tested.

6.4 Theoretical contributions to the politics of gender equality and interpretive policy analysis

In this section I highlight the main theoretical insights and contributions deriving from this thesis. All these contributions emerge within an interpretive policy analysis perspective (Wagenaar, 2015; Yanow, 2000), which is the understanding that social reality is shaped by diverse situated meanings and interpretations, and embedded within context-specific social settings. For this thesis, the interpretive lens entails that gender equality issues discussed within the realms of agriculture and climate change policy-making in Uganda have different meanings to different actors and in different contexts. It is only by examining these contextualized interpretations that we can start

to understand the impacts and processes of local meaning in the effectiveness of gender equality in the country.

This thesis draws particular attention to the role of interpretation in processes of norm translation. Concepts such as "policy transfer", and "policy diffusion" have been frequently used to study the travel of ideas in policy. However, implicit in both of those concepts is the understanding that the transfer or diffusion of the policy idea happens more or less flawlessly, without major permutations to the idea being transferred or diffused (Clarke et al., 2015; Mukhtarov, 2014). The level of agency of the actors involved in such processes of policy transfer and diffusion, and the power of the ideas and meanings that these actors use and reproduce in processes of norm translation are thus largely downplayed. Overcoming some of these drawbacks, the concept of "policy translation" (i.e. practices through which policy ideas are negotiated and adapted to different contexts) exposes and examines the processes of negotiation, re-ordering, displacement, dislocation, and transformation that are involved in the travel of policy ideas (Clarke et al., 2015; Draude, 2017).

The concept of policy translation thereby helps us understand the transformation of policy ideas and the creation of new meanings when policy ideas travel (Mukhtarov, 2014). As policy ideas or norms travel from one context to another, they will be subjected to different processes of interpretation and adjustment to adapt the "foreign" idea or norm in such a way that "speaks" to the realities of the people in the different contexts (Gal et al., 2015; Zwingel, 2012). It is to be expected that norms or policy ideas that are perceived largely as alien to the local normative context will be subjected to more intense processes of interpretation and adaptation than in cases were the new concept already resonates with local realities. This appears to be the case with regard to gender equality norms in agricultural and climate change policy in Uganda, where intense processes of interpretation, transformation and adaptation have diluted — if not neutralized — the transformational potential of these policy ideas. In other words, I show how processes of interpretation in policy translation can bring associated new meanings or usages that may consciously or unconsciously bring a dilution or neutralization of the potential for change of the original policy idea or norm. In the case of the travel of gender equality norms examined in this thesis, the dilution and neutralization of gender equality came through questioning responsibilities, legitimizing gender policy inaction, foregrounding and naturalizing patriarchy, promoting the diversion of resources, neglecting parts of the discourse, perpetuating of gender stereotypes; oversimplifying the gender discourse; through acts of symbolic politics; and by restricting gender in budgets.

Examining the processes through which such neutralization or dilution occur can help improving our understanding of norm and policy translation processes. In this regard, one of the main theoretical contribution that this thesis makes is the study of policy narratives in interaction, through the concept of "discursive shifts", to help uncover sites of discursive power in action. The analysis of narratives in policy allows the examination of how certain understandings are constructed, consolidated or resisted in policy settings by reconstructing policy stories and their narrative logic (Fischer & Fischer, 2003; Roe, 1994; Wagenaar, 2015). In many narrative policy studies, a few main narratives dominate the policy discourse and policy actors adhere or support one of these, often arguing against or backgrounding the others (M. Jones & McBeth, 2010; Roe, 1994). In this thesis, rather than finding a set of competing narratives, I show how policy actors largely and superficially adhered to one dominant policy narrative, but also often shifted to other narratives that apparently followed a very different logic and which denoted skepticism and resistance towards the dominant narrative. I conceptualized these instances as "narrative shifts", this is, shifts in the narration that come demarcated by a change in the tenet of the story being told. The concept of "narrative shift", and the study of narratives in interaction, allows for an examination of the ways in which policy-makers negotiate and navigate different policy understandings. Further, it provides the researcher or policy analyst with a lens through which to observe discursive power "at work", and examine the strategic use of narratives.

Continuing with the examination of sites of discursive power and resistance, chapter 3 extended the definition of Kjær and Pedersen (2001), and proposed a two-step discursive approach to norm translation: (1) studying the translation of the discourse, where international norms are translated to domestic norms through processes of interpretation; and (2) examining the translation of these domestic norm interpretations into policy instruments and action. This two-step conceptualization allows examining the ways in which processes of meaning molding arise in the domestication of international norms, and examining the extent to which these translations transcend the discursive level and are also found in policy instruments.

Together, the concept of discursive shifts (Chapter 2), and the two-step analysis of norm translation (Chapter 3), can help uncover processes of local meaning molding, resistance and revocation of external policy ideas. These two concepts can prove especially useful in cases where policy-makers are compelled to adhere to widely, or even globally, accepted discourses but where these do not necessarily align with local beliefs and norms (i.e. remain largely locally-contested policy topics). This is the case for example of policy actors having to adhere to global gender equality mandates while operating in highly

patriarchal contexts. In this sense, the two concepts open a window for understanding how local policy actors navigate non-coherent normative environments and complex discursive landscapes, helping in this way to discover and uncover sites of discursive power and resistance. Furthermore, this thesis also emphasized the importance of examining the meanings that male and female farmers might give to certain gender equality constructs, and the importance of comparing them to the meanings that are enshrined in formal policy. Conceptually, it reflected on the relevance of unpacking core concepts that organize practice and evaluation of gender equality policies, using the example of "joint decision making". The concept is widely understood to denote the degree of influence that spouses have in processes of intra-household decision making, but presupposes a clear understanding what types of perceived joint decision making actually reflect women's empowerment. The decision making power of women is often used as an indicator of women's empowerment and of bargaining power. The latter is defined as the ability of one person to exert influence over another in a negotiation process (Doss, 1996; Kabeer, 1999). This thesis argues that cases where women report joint decision-making processes, but where such process did not involve a conversation with their spouse, women have minimal, if any, ability to "exert influence" on the decision, and thus should not constitute a suitable indicator of bargaining power and women's empowerment.

Finally, in examining the potential for transformation of norm localization processes, chapter 5 argues for the need to contextualize "the local" as a space that provides room for discursive contestation (Walby, 2009). A space where assumptions and naturalized normative stances are critically interrogated and where different views and ideas are critically debated and confronted from a variety of angles and through a variety of global, national, and sub-national actors. It is only through these acts of discursive contestation that more effective local solutions can be envisioned. For the case of gender equality, this conceptualization can help bridge the gap between local normative stances, local feminists movements and global processes of gender equality. The chapter contributes in this way to the literature on localization and norm localization (Bräuchler & Naucke, 2017; Escobar, 2001; Zimmermann, 2014) by arguing for a need to re-construct "the local" as a discursive space were different groups of actors can constructively and critically engage with contested policy issues. This might call for a reflexive approach that reflects on the tensions between the multiple normative contexts (see for example Feindt & Weiland, 2018 on reflexive governance).

The overall conceptual contribution of this thesis surrounds thus issues of meaning making and interpretation in processes of norm translation, giving a central role to dilution

and neutralization effects, and highlighting the need to study these interpretations at different governance levels and from different policy and development actors.

6.5 Limitations and avenues for future research

As with any research, this study has faced different limitations, which constitute at the same time, interesting avenues for future research. First, I acknowledge that gender is throughout this thesis treated almost exclusively from a binary and heteronormative perspective. This is largely influenced by the way policy actors and policy documents discussed about gender issues through the development of this research. In Uganda, homosexuality is a taboo and there is widespread prejudice against sexual minorities. The large majority of Ugandans believe that homosexuality is morally unacceptable, and several LGTB+ activists have been murdered throughout the years. In 2014 the Parliament of Uganda passed the "Anti-gay law", which was later nullified by the Uganda's Constitutional Court. In 2019 there were parliamentary discussions to retable the bill, with several Members of Parliament pushing to expand sentencing to include the death penalty. Under such circumstances it is of no surprise that throughout the research gender was always discussed from a heteronormative perspective. Future research could study how the travel of global policy ideas on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity are translated (or not) to local discourse, and how processes of neutralization occur in these translations.

Second, this research has solely focused on the nonprofit and public sectors working in agriculture and climate change issues in Uganda, largely excluding the private sector. However, the private sector might have an important role to play in improving the effectiveness of gender equality strategies (Jaquette, 2017; Keenan et al., 2016). Future research could examine for example the potential of the private sector to work more freely towards new locally appropriate and transformative gender strategies, given for example their lower reliance on international donor requirements. Another interesting avenue for research could then examine the extent to which successful private sector gender strategies were translated or influenced other nonprofit or public endeavors in the country.

The final limitation too related to this study's focus on the public and nonprofit sector, specifically working within the agricultural development and climate change adaptation domains, is that these organizations might not necessarily label themselves as feminist, or have gender equality as one of their main goals. Yet, the role of feminist organizations and

women's movements in the realization of women's rights is paramount (Sweetman, 2015). Future research in Uganda could examine how these organizations and movements perceive global understandings on gender equality, their translation strategies, discursive shifts, and navigation of multiple normative contexts.

6.6 Policy recommendations and implications for practice

As this thesis and other studies have shown, gender mainstreaming has had limited success in addressing gender inequality, when compared to the widespread adoption and institutionalization of the norm (Alston, 2014; Brouwers, 2013; Eerdewijk, 2016; Jaquette, 2017; Mukhopadhyay, 2014). Nevertheless, it is undeniable that gender mainstreaming has succeeded in establishing gender discussions at the center of development policy-making, as exemplified by the ubiquity of gender discourse in agriculture and climate change policy in Uganda. This, on its own, can be considered a partial success, in that it provides grounds for holding institutions and government accountable for their commitments to gender equality (P. Brown, 2011; Hemmati & Röhr, 2009) and facilitates communication and dialogue between policy-makers and women's movements (Jaquette, 2017).

However, this thesis highlights the need to put into question the apparent salience of gender equality discourse in agriculture and climate change adaptation development policy in Uganda. I argue that the incorporation of gender considerations into agricultural development and climate change adaptation discourses in Uganda should only be considered a first step. Effective and tangible change in gender relations will not automatically or necessarily ensue from exercises of mainstreaming gender in the policy discourse. This research has shown how the multiple lived realities and normative stances of local policy and development actors are a key factor when trying to understand the disjuncture between a well-founded establishment of the gender equality discourse and the limited tangible effects in terms of reducing gender inequalities.

From this it follows that an increased attention to the dynamics, power imbalances and gendered relations of institutions working on gender issues in agriculture and climate change could help understand how certain gender concepts are understood and translated by different institutions. It is thus recommended that the managers of such institutions, together with scholars, feminist organizations, and climate change movements critically review and challenge such concepts or practices (e.g. gender mainstreaming as purely technocratic procedure) and examine the micro-processes

of resistance against gender equality that might be constraining the transformational potential of gender strategies. Similarly, policy development processes should take into account the meanings that male and female farmers attach to concepts related to gender equality and women's empowerment in agriculture. These then need to be compared to those assumed by researchers, policy-makers, and local development actors. Mapping and understanding these local meanings will give insight into the transformational potential or even relevance of using these terms on the ground. This can be achieved through participatory techniques, multi-stakeholder platforms, and capacity building exercises that can help to collectively promote context-specific adaptations of gender equality and women's empowerment concepts or ideas to make these notions work more effectively in their specific localities.

Furthermore, as shown in this thesis, agriculture and climate change policy already clearly identifies and problematizes the main sources of gender inequality. However, the policy solutions currently proposed and implemented do not directly address these issues. Policy solutions and development practice should thus place more emphasis on defining, confronting and transforming power imbalances between men and women and addressing the gender norms creating such imbalances (e.g. patrilineal lines of inheritance that prevent women to own matrimonial land). For this, there should be a continued engagement with global gender norms and a monitoring system with strong levels of accountability to governments and development institutions.

Overall, improving the effectiveness of gender equality norms will, on the one hand, need a critical assessment of whether the gender activities proposed in policy and implemented on the ground are reproducing (or not) gender inequality and what might be the direct and indirect effects of these activities for male and female farmers. On the other hand, designing locally rooted gender equality strategies that speak to and make sense in specific contexts could also prove essential in ensuring that gender interventions work. For both of these ends, and to ensure that a more effective gender agenda is sought, I believe local feminist movements, women's rights organizations, and other local gender justice defenders have a fundamental role to play. They are also particularly well situated to do so, considering their knowledge of the local realities of rural women, their years of experience of trying to situate women's rights at the forefront of the policy agenda, and the ensuing experience of having to navigate multiple normative orders in ways that suit — and allow them to achieve — their gender equality goals. In order to ensure a more effective gender agenda, these local feminist movements, women's rights organizations, and other gender justice defenders will need to join efforts with key agents for change already working in national and sub-national government structures

to construct a strong bottom-up movement. Capacity building and empowering these local actors through awareness raising, confidence building, networking, and increased funding for their activities will be also key to ensure a more effective gender agenda.

Ultimately, and considering the multi-level governance system regulating gender equality in Uganda, transformative change will necessitate a joined-up approach across levels — an approach that combines transnational norm building with capacity building to empower decentral actors who promote change in gender relations. Such a joint approach would enable the design of transformative action plans that can circumvent the traditional and patriarchal normative elites that prevent the advancement of gender equality. It would be an approach that exposes and counteracts current processes of dilution and neutralization of gender equality norms and that fosters a repolitization of gender equality issues.

6.7 Concluding remarks

Local acts of meaning making contribute to gender policy inaction in agriculture and climate change in Uganda. Even though gender inequality in agriculture is largely problematized by policy actors in the country, local acts of meaning making often also naturalize women's disadvantaged position in society and local policy discourse reinforces their expected roles in agriculture and domestic spaces. Prescriptions proposed in policy and by policy-makers do not address structural causes of gender inequality, limiting in this way their transformative ambition. Either unintentionally or intentionally, the discursive shifts, translations and localization processes that this thesis has uncovered naturalize and favor patriarchal local realities over global norms for gender equality, with the overall effect of limiting the effectiveness of the proposed gender actions, and ultimately depoliticizing gender.

This thesis has therefore shown that gaining insight into the reasons why global gender equality norms such as gender mainstreaming do not have the desired effects requires an in-depth interrogation of acts of meaning-making processes in the places where these norms are implemented. Making gender policy more effective will necessitate a full examination and acknowledgement of local discursive processes — and the related micro-processes of resistance to gender equality. Furthermore, the development of more effective gender policies will require capacity building and support for home-grown feminist organizations and local policy actors that, together with the backing of transnational gender norms and donors, can engage with the specifics of each context

in order to achieve the desired transformation. Such capacity building should also include the capacity to generate reflexivity in the multi-level policy system that governs gender equality, where local normative stances that continue to disadvantage women in agriculture and in climate change adaptation are collectively interrogated and reflected upon. This could create an opening to collectively find strategies to navigate these multiple normative contexts and realities in ways that could advance gender equality while also being mindful of local norms and traditions.

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Summaries

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Summary

Women constitute a key part of the workforce for agricultural production in the Global South and are also an important pillar for food systems across the globe (Malapit et al., 2020). However, compared to men, women face fundamental constraints and barriers with regards to, inter alia, ownership and access to land, access to improved agricultural inputs, decision-making power in production and domestic activities, access to extension services, access to financial credit, and division of labor (Quisumbing et al., 2014). Climate change is expected to further widen these gender inequalities in agriculture (Nyasimi & Huyer, 2017), potentially putting rural women at a disadvantage in their ability to respond to, and cope with, climate shocks and changing weather patterns (Jost et al., 2016; Kristjanson et al., 2017).

Considering these gender inequalities in agriculture and the gendered effects of climate change, governments, development agencies, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations have over the last few decades gradually adopted sector-specific approaches in the context of global gender-equality strategies (Ampaire et al., 2019; Gumucio & Tafur Rueda, 2015; Mukhopadhyay, 2014; Nhamo, 2014; Paudyal et al., 2019; Razavi, 2009). However, despite high levels of attention to gender issues in policy-making and the influence of the gender equality norms in development policy agenda setting, reductions of gender inequality and changes to the underlying social factors that disadvantage women have been limited (Alston, 2014; Roggeband, 2014).

The transnational origin of gender equality norms, such as gender mainstreaming, and the ensuing lack of resonance and multiple interpretations that these norms might have in local contexts have been identified as central factors constraining effective policy implementation (Alston, 2014; Krook & True, 2012; Mukhopadhyay, 2014; Wittman, 2010). However, there have been few empirical studies into the processes that dilute the transformational ambition of gender equality policies and norms in specific local contexts. Taking Uganda as a case study, this thesis addresses this knowledge gap and analyses how attempts to reduce gender inequality in agriculture and climate policy are constrained by everyday practices of meaning making at all level of policy-making.

Using a discursive approach to policy analysis (Feindt & Oels, 2015; Leipold et al., 2019; Wagenaar, 2015) this thesis explores the apparent disconnect between the firm dominance of gender equality discourse in agricultural and climate change adaptation policy, and the limited visible effects in reducing gender inequalities. The thesis draws particular attention to the role of interpretation in processes of norm translation, i.e. the practices through which policy ideas are negotiated and adapted to different contexts (Clarke et al., 2015; Gal et

al., 2015; Mukhtarov, 2014; Zwingel, 2012). It places interpretive translation processes as fundamental in understanding why global norms often do not yield the expected results when adopted in different contexts. In particular, the thesis shows the strategic importance of local meaning making processes for the performance of gender equality strategies. Uganda presents a critical case given its sharp contrast between a firm establishment of formal gender equality policy procedures and eminently patriarchal processes of policy-making which has been reported as seriously hindering and constraining efforts to enhance gender equality in the country (Benedetti et al., 2012; Cooper, 2010; Moncrieffe, 2004).

The four empirical chapters of this thesis contribute to address the overarching research question: How does local meaning making shape policy and practice on gender equality in agricultural and climate change policy in Uganda?

The first study draws attention to the role of narratives in micro-processes of policy-making that support, perpetuate or create resistance against the concept of gender mainstreaming, or against policy change more broadly. It re-constructs stories and narratives that policy-makers use when describing issues of gender equality in agriculture in the context of a changing climate, and shows how, despite a clear dominance of a gender equality narrative, other narratives emerge in their verbal accounts. The paper describes how the shifts from the gender equality to other narratives reveal a discursive engagement with gender equality that is accompanied by simultaneous resistance, deconstruction and revocation. These narrative shifts exercise four distinct power effects: They (1) shift blame for ineffective gender implementation; (2) legitimize policy inaction; (3) foreground and naturalize patriarchy; and (4) promote the diversion of resources. Overall, the study shows how the discursive effect of the narrative shifts constitutes a widespread, and rather subtle, disempowerment of the equality discourse.

The second study takes a discourse-analytical perspective on gender policy and budgeting, with a focus on the translation of the international norm of "gender mainstreaming" into domestic norms and policies. Through an in-depth, inductive analysis of policy documents in Uganda, the study examines how the gender-mainstreaming norm has been translated at three administrative levels: national, district and sub-county. The analysis finds five processes that reduce the norm's transformational potential: neglecting gender discourse, gender inertia, shrinking gender norms, embracing discursive hybridity and minimizing budgets. Overall, the study finds that gender mainstreaming largely stopped at the discursive level, and often paradoxically depoliticized gender issues.

The third study focuses on the concept of "joint decision making", which is widely used as an indicator to assess the level of women's empowerment in agriculture. It explores

how the concept is usually understood and used in Ugandan agricultural policy, where it suggests an equal say of both spouses in a specific decision. This official meaning is compared to how the concept is used and understood by women and men on the ground. Using the District of Nwoya in Northern Uganda as a case study, the analysis shows how women report joint decision making more often than men, who present themselves more as sole decision makers. Reconstructing the meanings that women attached to joint decision making, I show how reported joint decision making included a range of practices from no conversation among partners at all to conversations where female spouse's ideas were considered but the man had the final say. The findings suggest that local interpretations of joint decision making differ widely from the official understanding currently used in Ugandan policy, indicating that local interpretations of joint decision making can limit its potential for assessing women's empowerment.

The fourth study examines the potential of locally crafted solutions for more effective strategies for gender equality in agriculture and climate change. It deploys a discursive analytical perspective to contribute to discussions on gender and norm localization, and builds on the conceptualization of "the local" in gender and development discourse. The study shows how policy actors largely adhere to global discourses on gender when asked about context-specific solutions to gender inequality. However, even though local norms and culture were largely identified as one of the main barriers for gender equality, the proposed solutions did not directly challenge local patterns of gender inequality. The study concludes that a focus on "the local" does not necessarily entail improved gender strategies, unless local patterns of gender inequality are thoroughly addressed.

Together, these different empirical studies contribute and expand the literature on norm translation (Clarke et al., 2015; Gal et al., 2015; Mukhtarov, 2014; Zwingel, 2012) by showing how contextual processes of interpretation can create meanings and usages of a norm that dilute or neutralize its potential for change. By examining processes of interpretation at different governance levels (national, district, sub-county, village), the thesis identifies the different discursive mechanisms through which dilution or neutralization of gender equality norms can occur (i.e. through questioning responsibilities, legitimizing gender policy inaction, foregrounding and naturalizing patriarchy, promoting the diversion of resources, neglecting parts of the discourse, perpetuating of gender stereotypes; oversimplifying the gender discourse; through acts of symbolic politics; and by restricting gender in budgets).

Overall, through the different empirical studies, the thesis uncovers significant tensions between generalized discourses on gender equality in agricultural development policy

and practice, and local meaning making processes that often naturalize inequality and depolitize gender equality in Uganda. By uncovering these discursive tensions, the thesis shows how gender mainstreaming and other global gender equality strategies might be helpful but not sufficient for advancing gender equality in local contexts. Efforts at influencing and changing local social norms that perpetuate gender inequality will thus have to come hand in hand with an improved understanding of these local discursive processes, and with an examination of the associated micro-processes of resistance to gender equality. Furthermore, these efforts will need to capitalize and learn from approaches that are already successful in shaping gender relations in local contexts, and increase the influence and capacity of decentral feminist movements in local policy-making processes that could hold government and other policy actors accountable.

Overall, findings from this thesis are expected to be useful in contexts where the compliance with gender equality discourses is often assumed as given and frequently eludes critical reflection. Particularly, it will assist policy actors, development practitioners, and feminist organizations, in recognizing, confronting or preventing some of the discursive mechanisms by which the ambition of gender equality norms can become diluted or neutralized. Ultimately, the thesis will contribute towards creating an enabling environment capable of promoting more effective policy and development programs for gender equality in agriculture and climate change adaptation.

Resum

Les dones constitueixen una part fonamental de la força de treball per a la producció agrícola als països de Sud i són també un pilar important per als sistemes alimentaris arreu del món (Malapit et al., 2020). No obstant això, en comparació amb els homes, les dones s'enfronten a limitacions i barreres fonamentals en relació amb, entre altres coses, la propietat i l'accés a la terra, l'accés a millors productes agrícoles, el poder de decisió en la producció i les activitats domèstiques, l'accés als serveis d'extensió agrícola, l'accés al crèdit financer i la divisió de la feina (Quisumbing et al., 2014). S'espera que el canvi climàtic ampliï encara més aquestes desigualtats de gènere en l'agricultura (Nyasimi & Huyer, 2017), el que podria posar a les dones rurals en una situació de desavantatge en la seva capacitat de respondre i fer front a les catàstrofes climàtiques i als canvis en els patrons meteorològics (Jost et al., 2016; Kristjanson et al., 2017).

Tenint en compte aquestes desigualtats de gènere en l'agricultura i els efectes del canvi climàtic en funció del gènere, en les últimes dècades els governs, els organismes de desenvolupament, el sector privat i les organitzacions no governamentals han adoptat gradualment enfocaments sectorials específics en el context global per a la igualtat de gènere (Ampaire et al., 2019; Gumucio & Tafur Roda, 2015; Mukhopadhyay, 2014; Nhamo, 2014; Paudyal et al., 2019; Razavi, 2009). No obstant això, tot i la gran atenció que es presta a les qüestions de gènere en la formulació de polítiques i la influència de les normes d'igualtat de gènere en l'establiment dels programes de polítiques de desenvolupament, les reduccions de la desigualtat de gènere i els canvis en els factors socials subjacents que posen en desavantatge a la dona han estat limitats (Alston, 2014; Roggeband, 2014).

L'origen transnacional de les normes d'igualtat de gènere, com la transversalització de gènere, i la consegüent manca de ressonància i les múltiples interpretacions que aquestes normes podrien tenir en els contextos locals s'han identificat com a factors centrals que limiten la implementació efectiva d'aquestes polítiques (Alston, 2014; Krook & True, 2012; Mukhopadhyay, 2014; Wittman, 2010). No obstant això, hi ha pocs estudis empírics sobre els processos que dilueixen l'ambició transformadora de les polítiques i normes d'igualtat de gènere en contextos locals específics. Prenent a Uganda com a estudi de cas, aquesta tesi aborda aquesta bretxa de coneixement i analitza com els intents de reduir la desigualtat de gènere en l'agricultura i les polítiques climàtiques es veuen limitades per les pràctiques quotidianes de construcció de significat en tots els nivells de la formulació de polítiques.

Utilitzant una anàlisi del discurs de polítiques (Feindt & Oels, 2015; Leipold et al., 2019; Wagenaar, 2015) aquesta tesi explora l'aparent desconnexió entre la ferma hegemonia

del discurs d'igualtat de gènere en les polítiques agrícoles i d'adaptació al canvi climàtic, i els limitats efectes visibles en la reducció de les desigualtats de gènere. La tesi presta especial atenció al paper de la interpretació en els processos de traducció de normes, és a dir, les pràctiques mitjançant les quals es negocien i s'adapten les idees polítiques a diferents contextos (Clarke et al., 2015; Gal et al., 2015 ; Mukhtarov, 2014; Zwingel, 2012). La tesi situa els processos de traducció interpretativa com un element fonamental per a comprendre per què les normes globals no solen donar els resultats esperats quan s'adopten en diferents contextos. En particular, la tesi mostra la importància estratègica dels processos locals de creació de significat per a l'exercici de les estratègies d'igualtat de gènere. Uganda presenta un cas crític, donat el seu marcat contrast entre el ferm establiment de procediments formals de polítiques d'igualtat de gènere i els processos eminentment patriarcals de formulació de polítiques que obstaculitzen i limiten greument els esforços per millorar la igualtat de gènere al país (Benedetti et al., 2012; Cooper, 2010; Moncrieffe, 2004).

Els quatre capítols empírics d'aquesta tesi contribueixen a abordar la pregunta d'investigació: De quina manera influeix la creació de significat a nivell local en les polítiques i les pràctiques en matèria d'igualtat de gènere en les polítiques agrícoles i de canvi climàtic a Uganda?

El primer estudi examina el paper de les narratives en els micro-processos de formulació de polítiques que donen suport, perpetuen o creen resistència contra el concepte de la incorporació de la perspectiva de gènere, o contra el canvi de polítiques en general. L'estudi reconstrueix les històries i les narratives que els encarregats de la formulació de polítiques utilitzen quan descriuen qüestions d'igualtat de gènere en l'agricultura en el context d'un clima canviant, i mostra com, malgrat el clar predomini d'una narrativa sobre la igualtat de gènere, sorgeixen altres narratives en els seus relats verbals. En l'estudi es descriu com els girs discursius des de la narrativa d'igualtat de gènere cap a altres narratives revelen un compromís discursiu amb la igualtat de gènere que a el mateix temps va acompanyat de resistència, de-construcció i revocació. Aquests girs en les narratives exerceixen quatre efectes de poder diferents: 1) traslladen la responsabilitat per l'aplicació ineficaç de les polítiques de gènere; 2) legitimen la inacció política; 3) posen en primer pla i naturalitzen el patriarcat; i 4) promouen la desviació dels recursos. En general, l'estudi mostra com l'efecte discursiu dels girs en les narratives constitueixen un despoderament generalitzat, i bastant subtil, del discurs de la igualtat de gènere.

El segon estudi adopta una perspectiva d'anàlisi del discurs sobre la política i l'elaboració de pressupostos en matèria de gènere, centrant-se en la traducció de la norma

internacional de "transversalització de gènere" a les normes i polítiques nacionals. Mitjançant una anàlisi a fons i inductiu dels documents de política a Uganda, l'estudi examina com s'ha traduït la norma de transversalització de gènere en tres nivells administratius: nacional, de districte i de sub-comtat. L'anàlisi troba cinc processos que redueixen el potencial transformador de la norma: la desatenció del discurs de gènere, l'apatia per la perspectiva de gènere, la inèrcia i inactivitat de la transversalització de gènere, l'adopció d'un discurs híbrid i els pressupostos mínims de gènere. En general, l'estudi constata que la incorporació de la perspectiva de gènere s'atura en gran mesura a nivell de discurs, i sovint despolititza paradoxalment les qüestions de gènere.

El tercer estudi es centra en el concepte de "presa de decisions conjunta", concepte que s'utilitza freqüentment com un indicador per avaluar el nivell d'apoderament de la dona en l'agricultura. L'estudi examina la manera amb la que es sol entendre i utilitzar el concepte de "presa de decisions conjunta" a la polítiques agrícoles d'Uganda, en la qual es suggereix que tots dos cònjuges tenen el mateix poder de decisió al prendre decisions conjuntes. L'estudi compara aquest significat oficial amb la forma en què el concepte és utilitzat i comprès per les dones i els homes a nivell local. Utilitzant el districte de Nwoya, al nord d'Uganda, com a cas d'estudi, l'anàlisi mostra com les dones informen sobre la presa de decisions conjuntes amb més freqüència que els homes, que es presenten amb major freqüència com els únics responsables de les preses de decisions. Reconstruint els significats que les dones atribueixen a la presa de decisions conjuntes, l'estudi mostra com aquests significats inclouen una gamma de pràctiques que van des de la no conversa entre els cònjuges fins converses en què l'espòs considera les idees de la dona però ell té l'última paraula. Les conclusions suggereixen que les interpretacions locals de la presa conjunta de decisions difereixen àmpliament de la interpretació oficial que s'utilitza actualment a les polítiques d'Uganda, el que indica que les interpretacions locals de presa conjunta de decisions poden limitar el seu potencial per avaluar l'apoderament de la dona.

En el quart estudi s'examina el potencial de les solucions elaborades a nivell local per aconseguir estratègies més eficaces en matèria d'igualtat de gènere en l'agricultura i el canvi climàtic. L'estudi fa servir una perspectiva analítica discursiva per contribuir als debats sobre el gènere i la localització de normes, i es desenvolupa la conceptualització del "local" en el discurs sobre el gènere i el desenvolupament. L'estudi mostra com els agents de política s'adhereixen en gran mesura als discursos internacionals sobre el gènere quan se'ls pregunta per solucions específiques per a cada context en relació amb la desigualtat de gènere. No obstant això, encara que les normes socials i la cultura local es van identificar en gran mesura com uns dels principals obstacles per a la igualtat de

gènere, les solucions proposades no van posar directament en dubte aquestes pautes locals de desigualtat de gènere. En l'estudi s'arriba a la conclusió que centrar-se en solucions "locals" no implica necessàriament millorar les estratègies de gènere, llevat que s'aborden d'arrel les pautes locals que produeixen aquestes desigualtat de gènere.

En conjunt, els diferents estudis empírics contribueixen i amplien la bibliografia sobre la traducció de normes (Clarke et al., 2015; Gal et al., 2015; Mukhtarov, 2014; Zwingel, 2012) al mostrar com els processos contextuals d'interpretació poden crear significats i usos d'una norma que dilueixen o neutralitzen el seu potencial de canvi. A l'examinar els processos d'interpretació en els diferents nivells de governança (nacional, districte, sub-comtat i de poble), la tesi identifica els diferents mecanismes discursius a través dels quals pot produir-se l'atenuació o neutralització de les normes d'igualtat de gènere (és a dir, mitjançant el qüestionament de les responsabilitats, la legitimació de la inacció en matèria de polítiques de gènere, la naturalització del patriarcat, la promoció de la desviació dels recursos, la negligència de parts del discurs, la perpetuació dels estereotips de gènere, la simplificació excessiva del discurs de gènere, els actes de política simbòlica i la restricció del gènere en els pressupostos).

En general, a través dels diferents estudis empírics, la tesi exposa importants tensions entre els discursos generalitzats sobre la igualtat de gènere en les polítiques i les pràctiques del desenvolupament agrícola, i en els processos locals de creació de significat que sovint naturalitzen la desigualtat i despolititzen la igualtat de gènere a Uganda. A l'exposar aquestes tensions discursives, la tesi mostra com la incorporació de la perspectiva de gènere i altres estratègies internacionals d'igualtat de gènere poden ser útils però no suficients per a promoure la igualtat de gènere en els contextos locals. Així doncs, els esforços per influir i modificar les normes socials locals que perpetuen la desigualtat de gènere hauran d'anar acompanyats d'una millor comprensió d'aquests processos discursius locals i d'un examen dels micro-processos de resistència a la igualtat de gènere. A més, aquests esforços hauran de capitalitzar i aprendre dels enfocaments i estratègies que ja han aconseguit de manera satisfactòria influir en les relacions locals de gènere en els contextos locals i hauran així mateix de reforçar la influència i la capacitat dels moviments feministes descentralitzats en els processos locals de formulació de polítiques que podrien exigir la rendició de comptes al govern i a altres agents de política.

En general, s'espera que les conclusions d'aquesta tesi siguin útils en contextos en què el compliment del discurs sobre la igualtat de gènere es dóna per fet però que sovint eludeix la reflexió crítica. En particular, ajudarà els agents de política, els professionals del desenvolupament i les organitzacions feministes a reconèixer, enfrontar o prevenir

alguns dels mecanismes discursius pels que l'ambició de les normes d'igualtat de gènere es dilueix o neutralitza. Finalment, la tesi contribuirà a crear un entorn propici capaç de promoure polítiques i programes de desenvolupament més eficaços per a la igualtat de gènere en l'agricultura i en l'adaptació al canvi climàtic.

Resumen

Las mujeres constituyen una parte fundamental de la fuerza de trabajo para la producción agrícola en los países del Sur y son también un pilar importante para los sistemas alimentarios en todo el mundo (Malapit et al., 2020). Sin embargo, en comparación con los hombres, las mujeres se enfrentan a limitaciones y barreras fundamentales en relación con, entre otras cosas, la propiedad y el acceso a la tierra, el acceso a mejores insumos agrícolas, el poder de decisión en la producción y las actividades domésticas, el acceso a los servicios de extensión agrícola, el acceso al crédito financiero y la división del trabajo (Quisumbing et al., 2014). Se espera que el cambio climático amplíe aún más estas desigualdades de género en la agricultura (Nyasimi & Huyer, 2017), lo que podría poner a las mujeres rurales en desventaja en su capacidad de responder y hacer frente a las catástrofes climáticas y a los cambios en los patrones meteorológicos (Jost et al., 2016; Kristjanson et al., 2017).

Teniendo en cuenta estas desigualdades de género en la agricultura y los efectos del cambio climático en función del género, en las últimas décadas los gobiernos, los organismos de desarrollo, el sector privado y las organizaciones no gubernamentales han adoptado gradualmente enfoques sectoriales específicos en el contexto global para la igualdad de género (Ampaire et al., 2019; Gumucio & Tafur Rueda, 2015; Mukhopadhyay, 2014; Nhamo, 2014; Paudyal et al., 2019; Razavi, 2009). Sin embargo, a pesar de la gran atención que se presta a las cuestiones de género en la formulación de políticas y la influencia de las normas de igualdad de género en el establecimiento de los programas de políticas de desarrollo, las reducciones de la desigualdad de género y los cambios en los factores sociales subyacentes que ponen en desventaja a la mujer han sido limitados (Alston, 2014; Roggeband, 2014).

El origen transnacional de las normas de igualdad de género, como la transversalización de género, y la consiguiente falta de resonancia y las múltiples interpretaciones que esas normas pueden tener en los contextos locales se han identificado como factores centrales que limitan la implementación efectiva de estas políticas (Alston, 2014; Krook & True, 2012; Mukhopadhyay, 2014; Wittman, 2010). Sin embargo, existen pocos estudios empíricos sobre los procesos que diluyen la ambición transformadora de las políticas y normas de igualdad de género en contextos locales específicos. Tomando a Uganda como estudio de caso, esta tesis aborda esta brecha de conocimiento y analiza cómo los intentos de reducir la desigualdad de género en la agricultura y las políticas climáticas se ven limitadas por las prácticas cotidianas de construcción de significado en todos los niveles de la formulación de políticas.

Utilizando un análisis del discurso de políticas (Feindt & Oels, 2015; Leipold et al., 2019; Wagenaar, 2015) esta tesis explora la aparente desconexión entre la firme hegemonía del discurso de igualdad de género en las políticas agrícolas y de adaptación al cambio climático, y los limitados efectos visibles en la reducción de las desigualdades de género. La tesis presta especial atención al papel de la interpretación en los procesos de traducción de normas, es decir, las prácticas mediante las cuales se negocian y adaptan las ideas políticas a diferentes contextos (Clarke et al., 2015; Gal et al., 2015; Mukhtarov, 2014; Zwingel, 2012). La tesis sitúa a los procesos de traducción interpretativa como un elemento fundamental para comprender por qué las normas globales no suelen dar los resultados esperados cuando se adoptan en diferentes contextos. En particular, la tesis muestra la importancia estratégica de los procesos locales de creación de significado para el desempeño de las estrategias de igualdad de género. Uganda presenta un caso crítico, dado su marcado contraste entre el firme establecimiento de procedimientos formales de políticas de igualdad de género y los procesos eminentemente patriarcales de formulación de políticas que obstaculizan y limitan gravemente los esfuerzos por mejorar la igualdad de género en el país (Benedetti et al., 2012; Cooper, 2010; Moncrieffe, 2004).

Los cuatro capítulos empíricos de esta tesis contribuyen a abordar la pregunta de investigación: ¿De qué manera influye la creación de significado a nivel local en las políticas y las prácticas en materia de igualdad de género en las políticas agrícolas y de cambio climático en Uganda?

El primer estudio presta atención al papel de las narrativas en los micro-procesos de formulación de políticas que apoyan, perpetúan o crean resistencia contra el concepto de la incorporación de la perspectiva de género, o contra el cambio de políticas en general. El estudio reconstruye las historias y las narrativas que los encargados de la formulación de políticas utilizan cuando describen cuestiones de igualdad de género en la agricultura en el contexto de un clima cambiante, y muestra cómo, a pesar del claro predominio de una narrativa sobre la igualdad de género, surgen otras narrativas en sus relatos verbales. En el estudio se describe cómo los giros discursivos desde la narrativa de igualdad de género hacia otras narrativas revelan un compromiso discursivo con la igualdad de género que al mismo tiempo va acompañado de resistencia, de-construcción y revocación. Estos giros en las narrativas ejercen cuatro efectos de poder distintos: 1) trasladan la responsabilidad por la aplicación ineficaz de las políticas de género; 2) legitiman la inacción política; 3) ponen en primer plano y naturalizan el patriarcado; y 4) promueven la desviación de los recursos. En general, el estudio muestra cómo el efecto discursivo de los giros en las narrativas constituyen un desempoderamiento generalizado, y bastante sutil, del discurso de la igualdad de género.

El segundo estudio adopta una perspectiva de análisis del discurso sobre la política y la elaboración de presupuestos en materia de género, centrándose en la traducción de la norma internacional de "transversalización de género" a las normas y políticas nacionales. Mediante un análisis a fondo e inductivo de los documentos de política en Uganda, el estudio examina cómo se ha traducido la norma de transversalización de género en tres niveles administrativos: nacional, de distrito y de sub-condado. El análisis encuentra cinco procesos que reducen el potencial transformador de la norma: la desatención del discurso de género, la apatía por la perspectiva de género, la inercia e inactividad de la transversalización de género, la adopción de un discurso híbrido y la reducción al mínimo de los presupuestos de género. En general, el estudio constata que la incorporación de la perspectiva de género se detiene en gran medida a nivel de discurso, y a menudo despolitiza paradójicamente las cuestiones de género.

El tercer estudio se centra en el concepto de "toma conjunta de decisiones", usado frecuentemente como un indicador para evaluar el nivel de empoderamiento de la mujer en la agricultura. El estudio examina la forma en que se suele entender y utilizar el concepto de "toma conjunta de decisiones" en la políticas agrícolas de Uganda, en la que se sugiere que ambos cónyuges tienen el mismo poder de decisión al tomar decisiones conjuntas. Este significado oficial se compara con la forma en que el concepto es utilizado y comprendido por las mujeres y los hombres a nivel local. Utilizando el distrito de Nwoya, en el norte de Uganda, como caso de estudio, el análisis muestra cómo las mujeres informan sobre la toma de decisiones conjuntas con mayor frecuencia que los hombres, que se presentan con mayor frecuencia como los únicos responsables de las tomas de decisiones. Reconstruyendo los significados que las mujeres atribuyen a la toma de decisiones conjuntas, el estudio muestra como estos significados incluyen una gama de prácticas que van desde la no conversación entre los cónyuges hasta conversaciones en las que el esposo considera las ideas de la mujer pero él tiene la última palabra. Las conclusiones sugieren que las interpretaciones locales de la toma conjunta de decisiones difieren ampliamente de la interpretación oficial que se utiliza actualmente en las políticas de Uganda, lo que indica que las interpretaciones locales de toma conjunta de decisiones pueden limitar su potencial para evaluar el empoderamiento de la mujer.

En el cuarto estudio se examina el potencial de las soluciones elaboradas a nivel local para lograr estrategias más eficaces en materia de igualdad de género en la agricultura y el cambio climático. En él se emplea una perspectiva analítica discursiva para contribuir a los debates sobre el género y la localización de normas, y se desarrolla la conceptualización de "lo local" en el discurso sobre el género y el desarrollo. El estudio muestra cómo los agentes de política se adhieren en gran medida a los discursos internacionales sobre el

género cuando se les pregunta por soluciones específicas para cada contexto en relación con la desigualdad de género. Sin embargo, aunque las normas sociales y la cultura local se identificaron en gran medida como uno de los principales obstáculos para la igualdad de género, las soluciones propuestas no pusieron directamente en tela de juicio estas pautas locales de desigualdad de género. En el estudio se llega a la conclusión de que centrarse en "lo local" no implica necesariamente mejorar las estrategias de género, a menos que se aborden de raíz las pautas locales que producen estas desigualdad de género.

En conjunto, los diferentes estudios empíricos contribuyen y amplían la bibliografía sobre la traducción de normas (Clarke et al., 2015; Gal et al., 2015; Mukhtarov, 2014; Zwingel, 2012) al mostrar cómo los procesos contextuales de interpretación pueden crear significados y usos de una norma que diluyen o neutralizan su potencial de cambio. Al examinar los procesos de interpretación en los diferentes niveles de gobernanza (nacional, de distrito, sub-condado y de aldea), la tesis identifica los diferentes mecanismos discursivos a través de los cuales puede producirse la atenuación o neutralización de las normas de igualdad de género (es decir, mediante el cuestionamiento de las responsabilidades, la legitimación de la inacción en materia de políticas de género, la naturalización del patriarcado, la promoción de la desviación de los recursos, el descuido de partes del discurso, la perpetuación de los estereotipos de género, la simplificación excesiva del discurso de género, los actos de política simbólica y la restricción del género en los presupuestos).

En general, a través de los diferentes estudios empíricos, la tesis expone importantes tensiones entre los discursos generalizados sobre la igualdad de género en las políticas y las prácticas del desarrollo agrícola, y en los procesos locales de creación de significado que a menudo naturalizan la desigualdad y despolitizan la igualdad de género en Uganda. Al exponer estas tensiones discursivas, la tesis muestra cómo la incorporación de la perspectiva de género y otras estrategias internacionales de igualdad de género pueden ser útiles pero no suficientes para promover la igualdad de género en los contextos locales. Así pues, los esfuerzos por influir y modificar las normas sociales locales que perpetúan la desigualdad de género tendrán que ir acompañados de una mejor comprensión de esos procesos discursivos locales y de un examen de los micro-procesos de resistencia a la igualdad de género. Además, esos esfuerzos tendrán que capitalizar y aprender de los enfoques y estrategias que ya han logrado de manera satisfactoria influir en las relaciones locales de género en los contextos locales y tendrán que así mismo reforzar la influencia y la capacidad de los movimientos feministas descentralizados en los procesos locales de formulación de políticas que podrían exigir la rendición de cuentas al gobierno y a otros agentes de política.

En general, se espera que las conclusiones de esta tesis sean útiles en contextos en los que el cumplimiento de los discursos sobre la igualdad de género se da por sentado pero que con frecuencia elude la reflexión crítica. En particular, ayudará a los agentes de política, los profesionales del desarrollo y las organizaciones feministas a reconocer, enfrentar o prevenir algunos de los mecanismos discursivos por los que la ambición de las normas de igualdad de género se diluye o neutraliza. En última instancia, la tesis contribuirá a crear un entorno propicio capaz de promover políticas y programas de desarrollo más eficaces para la igualdad de género en la agricultura y en la adaptación al cambio climático.

About the author

Biographical note
Peer reviewed publications
Completed Training and
Supervision Plan

Biographical note

Mariola Acosta was born in Barcelona, Spain on October 7th, 1984. She is an Agricultural Engineer from the Polytechnic University of Valencia (Spain), MSc. in Sustainable Agricultural Development from the University of Copenhagen (Denmark), and MSc. in Agricultural and Rural Development from the University of Montpellier SupAgro (France). Her interest on gender issues grew largely during the fieldwork research for her master thesis, where she was confronted about the social norms and structural barriers to women's empowerment in the Cauca Department of Colombia. Since then, she has worked and conducted gender research on crop-livestock farming systems in Sri Lanka, Uganda, Tanzania, Honduras and Guatemala. Currently she works as an independent consultant and as a gender visiting researcher at the Alliance of Bioversity International-CIAT under the research program of the CGIAR Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS).

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Acosta, M., Wessel, M. van, Bommel, S. van, Ampaire, E. L., Twyman, J., Jassogne, L., & Feindt, P. H. (2020). What does it Mean to Make a 'Joint' Decision? Unpacking Intra-household Decision Making in Agriculture: Implications for Policy and Practice. *The Journal of Development Studies*, *56*(6), 1210–1229. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2019.1650169

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Completed Training and Supervision Plan

Mariola Acosta Francés
Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS)

Name of the learning activity	Department/Institute	Year	ECTS*
A) Project related competences			
Conceptual foundations of modern environmental governance	WASS	2014	1
Negotiating environmental limits	WASS	2014	1
Gender and natural resources, WRM-33806	WUR	2015	6
Writing PhD Proposal	WUR	2015	6
Field Research II: Issues in political, policy, and organizational ethnography and participant observation	ECPR Central European University	2016	2
B) General research related competences			
Introduction course for new PhD candidates	WASS	2014	1
Research methodology: from topic to proposal	WASS	2014	4
Qualitative data analysis with Atlas.ti – a hands on practical	WASS	2016	1
Capacity enhancement for IITA policy scientists in scientific writing and publishing in high quality journals	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture	2016	1.3
'Unraveling the Gendered Effects of Climate Change Policy Frameworks in Climate-Smart Agriculture in Nwoya, Uganda'	Conference: "Management of land use systems for enhanced food security, conflicts, controversies and resolutions", Berlin, Germany	2015	1
'Unraveling the gendered effects of climate change related policies in climate smart agriculture in Uganda and Tanzania'	Conference: Planting Seeds for the Future of Food. The agriculture, nutrition, and sustainability nexus, Lausanne, Switzerland	2015	1
'Gender in climate change and agri-food policies: a close look at East Africa'	IAFFE 25th Conference: International Association for Feminist Economics, Galway, Ireland	2016	1
'What does it mean to make a 'joint' decision? Unpacking intra-household decision-making in agriculture: implications for policy and practice'	2nd CGIAR Collaborative Platform for Gender Research Conference, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	2018	1
'Discursive translations of gender mainstreaming norms: the case of agricultural and climate change policies in Uganda'	ACIAR & CGIAR Collaborative Platform for Gender Research Conference: Seeds of Change, Canberra, Australia	2019	1
C) Career related competences/personal development			
Project and time management	WGS	2014	1.5
Scientific writing	WGS	2015	1.8
Presenting with Impact	WGS	2016	1
Brain training	WGS	2016	0.3
Reviewing a scientific paper	WGS	2018	0.1
Total			33.0

* One credit according to ECTS is on average equivalent to 28 hours of study load.

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