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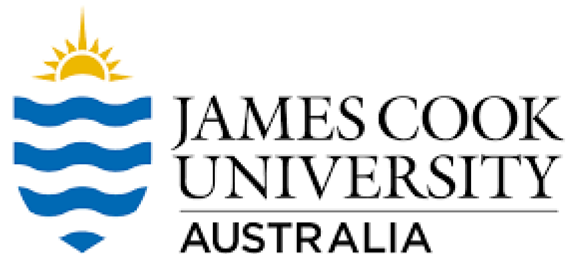
Gender equality in Pacific small-scale fisheries governance: Current progress and future prospects



Sarah M. Lawless

October 2021

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies
James Cook University

For Solli, created with you

Acknowledgements

Throughout my PhD, I have had the immense privilege to work with, and learn from, an incredible advisory panel. I express my deepest gratitude to my primary advisor Tiffany Morrison for offering up your expansive expertise, and by extension, sharpening my own. Thank you for helping me to carve out my own space in academia, and providing strategic guidance that I am sure will continue to serve me throughout my career. I appreciate how accommodating you have been to my circumstances, as well as the strategy and the calm you brought to each edit and every chat. I am ever grateful to Andrew Song for his intellectual guidance, enthusiastic engagement, patience, kindness and genuine interest in this research. Your advice has always been carefully thought out and judiciously articulated. I hope many more students have the fortune of your mentorship. Last, but not least, I express my earnest thanks to Philippa Cohen. Meeting you on a tiny Pacific island many years ago was a pivotal and defining event in my life journey. Not only did I find an exceptional mentor and advocate, but a life-long friend. Thank you for instilling the courage in me to embark on my PhD journey and always having my back.

I am indebted to the research participants who generously shared their time and experiences upon which this research draws. I thank the members of the three communities in the Solomon Islands, and the gender and fisheries experts from across the Pacific Islands region. It was a privilege to hear and capture your experiences. I am grateful for the in-country logistical and in-kind support provided by the WorldFish team in Solomon Islands, and the Wildlife Conservation Society in Fiji.

I would like to extend particular thanks to Dr Sangeeta Mangubhai. I am thankful that our paths collided over complementary research aspirations, and rapidly turned into a productive and continued research collaboration. I am grateful for your tenacity and ambitious interview goals, and the rich dataset generated as a result. I would also like to acknowledge a number of other individuals who have been inspiration sources, many of whom have been on the receiving end of my research chats and presentation practices - Dr Danika Kleiber, Dr Jacqueline Lau, Cindy Huchery, Dr Cynthia McDougall, Lucy McHugh, Marisa Mitchell and Roquelina de Sousa de Saboya.

I had a little one join me mid-way through this adventure. Solli, you have certainly made completing this thesis an extra challenge, but an even more enriching process. A special thanks to my parents for supporting my ambition whilst caring for Solli. Finally, my deepest and most heartfelt thanks go to Darty. Responsible for all the ‘heavy lifting’ behind the scenes, you have walked every step of this journey with me, and made plenty of your own sacrifices along the way. This is as much yours as it is mine.

Declaration of the contribution of others

This thesis was supervised by Prof. Tiffany Morrison, Dr. Andrew Song and Dr. Philippa Cohen. All supervisors contributed to the development of research ideas, provided guidance, intellectual input and editorial support. The specific contributions of supervisors and co-authors are listed at the start of each chapter. This research has been supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship and tuition fee offset.

Funding and awards

Research Training Program Scholarship | $108,800

Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies ‘Top up’ funding | $35,000

WorldFish (publication expenses) | $7,700

FISH Award (preliminary scoping and fieldwork) | $6,790

David Yellowlees Excellence in Research Award (fieldwork) | $1,900

Glenn Almany Memorial Prize (recognition of publication) | $1,500

Research support

Research assistance | Chapter Three: WorldFish Solomon Islands team - Grace Orirana, Faye Siota, Enly Saeni, Helen Teioli, Gregory Bennett, Ronnie Posala and Steven Sibiti

Chapters Four and Five: Dr Sangeeta Mangubhai

Logistical support | Wildlife Conservation Society Fiji – Dr. Sangeeta Mangubhai, Yashika Nand

Ethics and in-country approvals

All research activities associated with this thesis were completed in accordance with JCU’s Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number H7058), and research permits obtained for Fiji (permit number RA 50/18) and Solomon Islands (permit number 12/18).

Publications associated with this thesis

Lawless, S., Cohen, P. J., McDougall, C., Mangubhai, S., Song, A. M, & Morrison, T. H. (2022). Tinker, tailor or transform: Gender equality amidst social-ecological change. *Global Environmental Change, 72(102434).*

Lawless, S., Cohen, P. J., Mangubhai, S., Kleiber, D., & Morrison, T. H. (2021). Gender equality is diluted in commitments made to small-scale fisheries. *World Development, 140*(105348).

Lawless, S., Song, A. M., Cohen, P. J., & Morrison, T. H. (2020). Rights, equity and justice: A diagnostic for social meta-norm diffusion in environmental governance. *Earth System Governance, 6*(100052).

Lawless, S., Cohen, P., McDougall, C., Orirana, G., Siota, F., & Doyle, K. (2019). Gender norms and relations: implications for agency in coastal livelihoods. *Maritime Studies, 18*, 347–358.

Conference presentations associated with this thesis

Lawless, S. (2021) Diluting gender equality: The case of small-scale fisheries, CGIAR Cultivating Equality, Advancing gender research in agriculture and food systems, Virtual conference.

Lawless, S. (2019) Contesting gender: The translation of gender commitments into action in small-scale fisheries in the Pacific Islands, Seeds of Change Conference, Canberra, Australia.

Lawless, S. (2018) From Resistance to Internalization: The Spread of 'Gender Equality' in Small-scale Fisheries Governance, Gender and Fisheries 7 Conference, Bangkok, Thailand.

Lawless, S. (2018) Opportunities to realize social transformations in small-scale fisheries, 3rd World Small-scale Fisheries Congress, Chang Mai, Thailand.

Lawless, S. (2017) Bridging policy, research and practice: integrating gender considerations in small-scale fisheries investments, WorldFish Resilient Fisheries Symposium, Penang, Malaysia.

Other peer-reviewed publications during candidature

Lau, J., D., Kleiber, D., **Lawless, S.**, & Cohen, P. J. (2021). Gender equality in climate policy and practice hindered by assumptions. *Nature Climate Change, 11*(3), 186-192.

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Barclay, K., McClean, N., Foale, S., Sulu, R., & **Lawless, S.** (2018). Lagoon livelihoods: gender and shell money in Langalanga, Solomon Islands. *Maritime Studies, 17*(21), 199-211.

Briefings and outreach published during candidature

Lawless, S., Lau, J., Ruano-Chamorro, C., Corcoran, E., Cohen, P., McDougall, C. (2021) Advancing gender equality for equitable livelihoods in coral reef social-ecological systems: Policy brief, CARE International.

Lau, J., Ruano-Chamorro, C., **Lawless, S.**, McDougall, C. (2021) Gender transformative approaches for advancing gender equality in coral reef social-ecological systems: Good practice and technical brief, CARE International.

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Mangubhai, S. & **Lawless, S.** (2021). How is gender included in small-scale fisheries management and development? *SPC Women in Fisheries Information Bulletin* (29), 22-30

Lau, J., Cohen, P., **Lawless, S.** *4 assumptions about gender that distort how we think about climate change (and 3 ways to do better)*, published March 2021. The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/4-assumptions-about-gender-that-distort-how-we-think-about-climate-change-and-3-ways-to-do-better-156126

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Kleiber, D., Cohen, P., Teioli, H., Siota, F., Delisle, A., **Lawless, S.**, & et al. (2019). *Gender-inclusive facilitation for community-based marine resource management. An addendum to "Community-based marine resource management in Solomon Islands: A facilitators guide" and other guides for CBRM*. Penang: CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems. Program Brief: FISH-2019-08.

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Lawless, S., Doyle, K., Cohen, P., Eriksson, H., Schwarz, A. M., Teioli, H., Vavekaramui, A., Wickham, E., Masu, R., Panda, R., & McDougall, C. (2017). *Considering gender: Practical guidance for rural development initiatives in Solomon Islands*. Penang: WorldFish. Program Brief: 2017-22.

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Abstract

Addressing rising social inequality while maintaining the integrity of the Earth's environmental systems are the two most urgent and entwined challenges of this era. In navigating this challenge, gender equality is a critical guiding principle and goal, underpinned by the notion that when progress toward gender equality is made, *all* people are more able to benefit from and enhance environmental outcomes. Yet, little is known about whether and how the principle of gender equality is being advanced through environmental governance.

In this thesis I ask; *how does the governance principle of gender equality influence environmental policy and action?* I apply a multi-level (global-to-local) case-study approach to explore how gender equality commitments diffuse from policy to action, and assess their potential for impact. I examine the governance of small-scale fisheries, a complex social-ecological system, where concerns for socially equitable development has led to a proliferation of gender equality commitments and investments at all levels of governance. Gender equality commitments are reflected in instruments such as the global Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (FAO, 2015), and actions via regional and national small-scale fisheries investments and initiatives, presenting a rich case to examine the influence of gender equality in the sector. At the regional level, I focus on the Pacific Islands, a region where small-scale fisheries are a foundation for livelihoods, food and nutrition security, and are a cornerstone of cultural identity. At the national level, I concentrate on Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, three nations with arguably the highest density of fisheries-related investments and actors in the region. At the local level, I focus on three coastal dwelling communities in Solomon Islands, where small-scale fisheries are a mainstay for human wellbeing.

I first draw on, and extend, norm diffusion theory by developing a diagnostic to understand the drivers and responses influential in the global-to-local diffusion of gender equality as a global norm in environmental governance (Chapter Two). I identify eight influential drivers of diffusion ranging from prescriptive drivers at one end, which leave little space for norm negotiation, to discursive drivers at the other, which provide an enabling space for norm interpretation. I posit that these drivers intersect with a parallel spectrum of actor responses, ranging from complete resistance at one end, to complete internalization at the other. This diagnostic emphasizes the salience of discursive forces in the diffusion process, suggesting that global-to-local gender equality diffusion is nonlinear, dynamic and largely open to interpretation.

In Chapter Three I undertake a series of focus-group discussions (n=24) to understand how gender shapes social equity and environmental sustainability at the local level. My analysis of three communities in Solomon Islands reveals how gender norms and relations influence the agency of individuals to participate in, and benefit from environmental initiatives. I find gender influences agency across several domains, including divisions in labour, physical mobility, livelihood diversification, and capacity to exercise choice in communal and household decision-making spaces. The identification of these different domains offer insights into the types of gender differences and inequalities that multi-level environmental organizations need to consider and address to ensure both equitable and environmentally sustainable outcomes.

In Chapters Four and Five I review policy documents (n=76) and employ key informant interviews (n=80) to explore the gender discourses and actions of 34 organizations influential in regional and national small-scale fisheries governance. I find organizational gender commitments are common, but when actioned, tend to be diluted and rhetorical. In both policy and action, gender equality is predominately pursued instrumentally to achieve ecological goals and/or shallow project performance targets, rather than for its intrinsic qualities (i.e., to ensure fair and just outcomes). In terms of impact, my results point to a range of successes around women's inclusion in fisheries organizations, projects and activities. Yet, there is a tendency to focus on 'fixing' women, with very little attention to addressing the norms, structures and beliefs underpinning inequalities.

In Chapter Six, I draw my results together to show that as gender equality diffuses within small-scale fisheries governance, the meanings and priorities around gender equality are contested and negotiated, often to fit within pre-determined goals or priorities within the sector. Efforts to improve inclusion of women can and do promote more equitable small-scale fisheries practice and provide some important precursory steps toward deeper social change. However, in the Pacific Islands region, most approaches and impacts are modest relative to what the gender and development literature indicates to be possible and needed. I conclude by arguing that critical shifts in dominant gender equality narratives and better use of multi-level strategies present untapped, yet essential, opportunities for all environmental sectors to rise to current best practice and ensure both equitable and effective environmental governance outcomes.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Gender equality as an environmental governance principle

Addressing rising social inequality and supporting the integrity of the Earth's environmental system are two of the most urgent and entwined challenges of this era (Leach et al., 2018). Contemporary visions for sustainable development offer guidance toward an ecologically safe and socially just operating space where the Earth's biophysical thresholds can support the conditions for humanity to thrive (e.g., Raworth, 2017; Rockström et al., 2009). For example, prominent sustainability paradigms such as the 'Doughnut for the Anthropocene' (Raworth, 2017) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seek to confront the dual challenges of social equity and ecological sustainability. These visions stress the highly interdependent and mutually reinforcing nature of social and ecological systems. As such, the ethic that environmental systems need to be governed for ecological sustainability, but also ensure fair and just human development outcomes, has become mainstream (Leach et al., 2018; Raworth, 2017).

Achievement of socially fair and effective environmental outcomes is crucially shaped by governance. Governance refers to the formal and informal rules, rule-making systems, institutions and processes, as well as the range of actors and networks, involved in decision-making about different systems across global-to-local levels (Biermann et al., 2009a; Kooiman, 2003; Lemos & Agrawal, 2006; Morrison, 2007). Environmental governance focuses on shaping human use of, and interactions between, natural systems, for example, fisheries, forests or wetlands, including the habitats, climate, and natural resources within those systems (Biermann et al., 2009a). The actions of environmental governance actors such as governmental and non-governmental organizations, overseas development assistance, the private sector and civil society have the potential to shield the most vulnerable sectors of society from negative social and political trends. These actors can also foster conditions that ensure that the costs and benefits of environmental governance and change are equitably distributed (Bennett & Satterfield, 2018; Lemos & Agrawal, 2006).

In governing for environmental sustainability and social equity, gender equality is a critical guiding principle and a goal (Biermann et al., 2012; Leach et al., 2018; Raworth, 2017; United Nations, 2015). Gender equality is broadly defined as "the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls' and boys'" (UN Women, 2017). The fundamental premise of this principle is that when progress toward gender equality is made, *all* people are more able to benefit from, and enhance the outcomes of environmental governance efforts (Leach, 1992; Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2009; Rocheleau, 1995). Research shows there is a positive correlation between gender equality and environmental sustainability. For example, a study of forest governance within 176 countries identified a positive relationship between the presence of female parliamentarians and increased forest protection

(Salahodjaev & Jarilkapova, 2020). Other research demonstrates that gender balanced composition of governance groups can improve compliance with management measures and overall resource management outcomes (Agarwal, 2009; Leisher et al., 2016). In productive environmental sectors (such as agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture) addressing disparities between women's and men's access to resources (i.e., essential services, information, technology, land, time and markets) has been linked to increased dietary diversity, better nutrition and improved resilience of food systems overall (Njuki et al., 2021).

In contrast, ecological instability, biodiversity loss, resource scarcity, natural disasters or climate unpredictability can worsen gender inequalities. In situations where declines in ecosystem function have reduced the quantity and quality of food, the impacts of gender inequality are found to intensify (Rao et al., 2021; Rocheleau, 1995). Research from South Asia contends that in such cases, men are more likely than women to migrate to urban areas, meaning women who remain in the localities bear the brunt of food insecurity, livelihood instability, and the impacts of poverty (Rao et al., 2021). Other studies illustrate that natural disasters correspond with spikes in male perpetrated violence against women (Castañeda Camey et al., 2020; Rezwana & Pain, 2021). These impacts are more likely to occur in low-income developing countries, particularly Small Island Developing States, who face disproportionately higher risks of environmental and climatic related shocks due to differences in exposure and susceptibility to losses, and have fewer resources to cope and recover (Hay, 2013).

1.2 Recognition of gender equality in environmental policy and practice

The recognition that gender equality is an inherent determinant of human and environmental experiences is now reflected in environmental policy and practice. Commitments to gender equality, including those both binding and non-binding, appear within prominent global environmental conventions and frameworks such as the *Global Convention on Biological Diversity* (1992), which ascribe gender equality as a factor contributing to biodiversity objectives, goals and targets (CBD, 2020). Similarly, in 2019, a Gender Action Plan was developed by The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to advance gender-responsive climate associated response, adaptation and mitigation (see UNFCCC, 2019). These global conventions and frameworks emphasize the salience of gender equality as a principle of environmental best practice, and promote the integration of gender equality within policies and practice at regional and national levels. For instance, gender equality is now widely reflected within the objectives a range of environmental and development actors working at these levels, and in some cases, features as a major thematic program of work (e.g., Conservation International, 2019; GEF, 2017; IUCN, 2018). The Asian Development Bank, for example, have committed that a minimum of 75% of their supported programs will promote gender equality by 2030

(ADB, 2018). This level of commitment suggests that gender equality is becoming central to environmental and development sectors.

The increasing recognition of, and commitment to, the principle of gender equality within environmental governance is a positive signal for social justice more broadly. These commitments are assumed to enable shifts in action (i.e., via services, initiatives or investments) offered by regional agencies, national governments, NGOs, the private sector, and/or civil society, and subsequent outcomes, at multiple levels of governance (Alvarez & Lovera, 2016). However, there is a lack of convincing evidence suggesting environmental agendas are achieving gender equality outcomes (James et al., 2021; Mangubhai & Lawless, 2021; Stacey et al., 2019). Globally, gender inequality is rising. The Global Gender Gap Report suggests achieving gender equality will take 136 years at the current rate of change, with the COVID-19 pandemic setting progress further behind and exacerbating long-standing gender inequalities (World Economic Forum, 2021). Women's rights in particular are projected to be at the greatest risk of weakening globally in the next decade (ODNI, 2021). This is more acute in regions such as the Pacific Islands and Sub-Saharan Africa, where women are primary producers of food but lack access to, and rights over, land (Jolly et al., 2015), are significantly underrepresented in politics (Baker, 2019; Mlambo & Kapingura, 2019), or face declining domestic and sexual violence protections (ODNI, 2021).

In the light of persistent and rising gender inequality, the responsiveness and capacities of governance actors to curb these trends comes in to question. Specifically, there are concerns about extent gender equality commitments are translated into the design and actions of environmental initiatives (Acosta et al., 2019; Song et al., 2019). In fact, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) suggest that the share of aid targeted toward gender equality in the environment sector is the lowest across all OECD sectors, with approximately two-thirds of environmental investments considered to be gender blind (OECD, 2020). Gender blindness refers to the failure of governance actors, investments, policies, data and/or initiatives to account for the different roles, responsibilities, rights, needs, obligations and power relations associated with being female or male, and how these factors shape gender differentiated experiences, opportunities and outcomes (IGWG, 2017). Proceeding gender blindly risks perpetuating or even worsening inequalities (Chant & Sweetman, 2012), and undermining the effectiveness of environmental governance efforts (Nightingale, 2006).

Recent research has illuminated that even when gender is considered within development investments and initiatives, progress toward gender equality is not necessarily guaranteed. A review of over $6 billion dollars of gender equality investments, which included 72 projects across a range of sectors (i.e., environment, health, education and infrastructure), finds there to be a major gap between self-reported

progress toward gender equality (i.e., by those delivering a project), and 'high-quality' outcomes (i.e., observed by independent assessment). Alarmingly, none of the 72 projects were considered high-quality, and only two met the minimum criteria to be considered a gender equality project (Grabowski & Essick, 2020). This evidence raises serious concerns about the ability of governance actors to make progress toward gender equality, even where commitments and resources are seemingly present.

1.3 Research gaps

Evidence linking gender equality to effective and equitable environmental governance is mounting, and commitment to gender equality in multi-level environmental governance is rising. Yet, little is known about the mechanisms that shape the uptake (or lack thereof) of gender equality commitments in sub-global environmental policies and actions. In cases where commitments to gender equality are made (i.e., in policy or practice), how the principle is constructed, implemented, and has impact at regional and national levels of governance has largely been unscrutinized. Below, I outline each of these gaps, highlighting a combination of theoretical, empirical and methodological research opportunities that I address subsequently in Chapters Two, Three, Four and Five.

Theoretical gap. *The mechanisms that shape global-to-local diffusion of gender equality within environmental governance*

Commitment to gender equality within global environmental goals, policies and practice is now generally accepted as critical to equitable and sustainable governance outcomes (Biermann et al., 2009a; Raworth, 2017; United Nations, 2015). Yet, assessment of the uptake and impact of gender equality has proven difficult (Razavi, 2016). Consequently, there have been few attempts to understand the mechanisms by which gender equality diffuses (or not) in environmental governance. Scholarship on the spread of global norms (of which gender equality is one) into global, regional, national and locally relevant policies and practices is often explored through the theoretical lens of 'norm diffusion' (Krook & True, 2010; Roggeband et al., 2014; van der Vleuten et al., 2014). Norm diffusion scholarship investigates how norms emerge and travel across and between different levels of governance, and whether they achieve their intended outcomes (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Keck & Sikkink, 1998). There have been some advances in understanding the spread of gender equality in global governance regimes broadly (e.g., Engberg-Pedersen et al., 2019; Krook & True, 2010; Van Eerdewijk & Roggeband, 2014). These studies emphasize that the goal of gender equality is socially constructed, therefore, diffusion is taken as a largely interpretive exercise requiring reinvention of the concept at regional, national and local levels (Krook & True, 2010; Lombardo et al., 2010; Verloo & Lombardo, 2007). Yet, the role of discursivism, specifically norm interpretation and translation, in shaping how

gender equality norms diffuse has tended to be overshadowed by the emphasis on prescriptive drivers of norm diffusion, such as sanctions and regulations, as explanatory factors (Cortell & Davis, 2000). This illustrates there to be an opportunity to integrate understanding of both the prescriptive and discursive drivers shaping norm diffusion. The knowledge gap, and thus research opportunity, is particularly acute for gender equality as a poorly studied environmental governance principle. In Chapter Two, I address these gaps by synthesizing the range of mechanisms that shape gender equality norm diffusion. In doing so, I draw together the intangible and non-prescriptive nature of these mechanisms, and contextualize them within environmental governance.

Empirical gap. *The conceptualization, implementation, and impacts of gender equality commitments in environmental governance*

Despite increasing gender equality commitments, there have been few attempts to determine whether and how gender equality is conceptualized, implemented and, ultimately, realized within environmental governance. The way in which gender equality is conceptualized shapes the quality, depth and type of commitments in policy and practice (Acosta et al., 2019; Wiener & Puetter, 2009). Understanding how gender equality is conceptually articulated is fundamental to understanding the rationales, theories of change and approaches of specific initiatives and their alignment (or lack thereof) with gender best practice. Without developing these understandings, not only is the uptake and impact of gender equality difficult to assess and achieve, more significantly, there are risks that gender approaches are applied without substance or with dated or problematic change logic, limiting their potential (Wong et al., 2019). To explore this gap, as a first step, in Chapter Three I undertook a local level analysis to understand how gender influenced constraints and opportunities in natural resource dependent communities. This analysis illuminated the gender considerations needed for the design and delivery of community-based environmental initiatives (i.e., development projects or extension services) to bring about sustained and equitable outcomes. In Chapter Four I then examined how gender equality was constructed in environmental policy. Specifically I sought to understand how gender equality was conceptualized by governance actors, the gender issues targeted, and the range of gender approaches proposed to tackle gender equality ‘on the ground’. In Chapter Five, I expanded my examination to explore how gender equality commitments were actualized by environmental governance actors. Specifically, I assessed the extent gender approaches aligned with gender best practice, including the types of changes catalysed and the depth of impact.

Methodological gap. *Novel methodologies and assessment tools for gender analyses of environmental governance initiatives*

The ways in which environmental initiatives engage with gender tends to be via the collection of sex-disaggregated data on roles or livelihoods of women and men, or to ensure initiatives are designed and monitored to be sensitive to gender difference (e.g., de la Torre-Castro et al., 2017; Doss & Kieran, 2014; Stacey & Govan, 2021). However, there are few tools that governance actors can apply to critically reflect on, and subsequently enhance, how these initiatives engage with gender, including within the internal operations of environmental actors themselves. I address this gap in several ways. In Chapter Three, I adapted and applied the GENNOVATE methodology[1], a bottom-up research initiative developed by a global collaboration of gender experts affiliated with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. GENNOVATE is a package of tools able to generate data about values, norms, and relations that set the rules of play for different women, different men and their communities (Badstue et al., 2018; Petesch et al., 2018). This methodology is useful in illuminating the domains of gender difference that governance actors may need to consider and address when working with local communities. In Chapter Four, I developed a three stage analysis process to produce an understanding of how gender equality was represented, rationalized and strategized in written commitments that influence environmental governance. This tri-level analysis illuminated how gender was defined, including the nature of gender issues targeted; rationales for pursuing gender equality; and the type of gender approaches proposed in written commitments. This form of analysis serves as an opportunity to measure and then reflect upon the quality and depth of gender commitments both across and within different environmental governance sectors. In Chapter Five, I developed a 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' gender assessment typology to assess the gender equality priorities, intentions and impacts of environmental governance actors. The typology I develop offers an opportunity for governance actors to engage in self-reflexive processes related to their visions of gender equality and theories of change, as well as measure and assess their gender approaches against robust indicators for impact. Ultimately, these various analytical processes and tools provide an enhanced and accessible means with which to critically reflect on, adjust and improve the likelihood that environmental policy and practice will move away from rhetoric, and meaningfully progress gender equality.

1.4 Research question and thesis objectives

The overarching research question I seek to answer in this thesis is:

How does the governance principle of gender equality influence environmental policy and action?

To answer this question I have four research objectives:

[1] https://gennovate.org/

a) Synthesize the mechanisms shaping the spread of gender equality in environmental governance (Chapter Two)

b) Explore a locally-contextualized example of how gender shapes social equity and ecological sustainability, including the domains of gender difference that environmental initiatives need to consider (Chapter Three)

c) Analyse how and why gender equality is represented, rationalized and actioned within written environmental governance commitments (Chapter Four)

d) Critically examine the priorities, intentions and impacts of practical applications of gender equality commitments within environmental governance (Chapter Five)

And by extension:

e) Identify the deficiency of theoretical, empirical and methodological case studies and tools exploring gender equality commitments made within environmental governance, and opportunities for improvement

1.5 The case of gender equality in the governance of small-scale fisheries

To answer my research question and pursue my thesis objectives, I used small-scale fisheries, a productive environmental sub-sector, as my environmental governance case. Gender inequalities persist in small-scale fisheries, as they do in most marine and environmental sectors. Accounts from fisheries, marine and ocean studies indicate that men tend to hold greater influence in decisions related to access, use and management of productive assets (including, but not limited to, fishing grounds and stocks), and are more likely to capture and control a disproportionate share of the social and economic benefits (de la Torre-Castro et al., 2017; Harper et al., 2013; Lawless et al., 2019).

Typically, small-scale fisheries refer to the resources located in coastal seas, near-shore reefs, lagoons, mangroves, inter-tidal zones and inland waters (Béné et al., 2007; Smith & Basurto, 2019). Through engaging in subsistence, ceremonial and commercial fisheries, the small-scale fisheries sector is estimated to directly support the livelihoods of 116 million people around the globe, of which, 97% live in developing countries (World Bank et al., 2012). Small-scale fisheries have long served as a case to study dynamic environmental systems due to the complex and uncertain characteristics inherent in this system (Berkes, 2003; Jentoft & Chuenpagdee, 2009; Ostrom, 2009). Such complexity relates to variations in resource units (e.g., fish distribution, species, replacement rates and economic value), the different temporal and spatial scales in which they operate (e.g., transboundary and local ecological

knowledges), their governance systems (e.g., property-rights, actors and network structure) and users (e.g., number and location of fishers, dependence on fisheries resources, and multi-gear technology used) (Ostrom, 2009). The uncertainty within these systems relates to both the social and the environmental variations (i.e., climate fluctuation, fishing productivity and livelihood strategies) and the associated social-ecological consequences (i.e., food and nutrition security, and biodiversity protection) (Allison & Ellis, 2001). As such, small-scale fisheries are generally embraced as social-ecological system. This embracement is well illustrated by the global 'Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication' (FAO, 2015), which provide a rich engagement with both ecological and social principles and goals, including gender equality.

Small-scale fisheries have served as a case to examine the nature and relevance of gender equality for environmental governance more broadly (e.g., Cohen et al., 2016; de la Torre-Castro, 2019). While research has shown how the scope of small-scale fisheries governance can be expanded to better account for gender inequalities, including the influence of gender norms and power relations (e.g., Cohen et al., 2016; Kawarazuka et al., 2017; Locke et al., 2014), there have been few attempts to evaluate progress toward, and changes resultant of, gender equality commitments in the sector. This is of concern as women are estimated to comprise 47% of the total small-scale fisheries engagement (World Bank et al., 2012), and in the Pacific Islands region this number is reportedly even higher (56%) (Harper et al., 2013). However, women's contributions and gender dynamics within the sector tend to be overlooked, undervalued and underreported (World Bank et al., 2012).

1.5.1 Pacific Islands regional governance of small-scale fisheries and gender equality

I examined regional and national level gender equality commitments made to the small-scale fisheries sector in the Pacific Islands region, and in particular, the nations of Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. I also examined local constructions of gender in three coastal communities in Solomon Islands (expanded in 1.5.2). This case is useful to examine as there is a dense assemblage of fisheries governance actors making commitments to gender equality in small-scale fisheries policy and practice across the region (e.g., ACIAR, 2016; PEUMP, 2019; SPC, 2015). However, institutional research has highlighted the limited capacities of fisheries managers and practitioners, and the efficacy of gender and fisheries policies across the region, to adequately consider and respond to these gender issues (Lawless et al., 2021; Mangubhai & Lawless, 2021; Song et al., 2019). These capacity constraints coupled with the persistently slow progress in overturning gender inequalities in the fishing sector point to a need for a deeper examination into how implementing organizations are prioritizing gender and

what can be done to help achieve gender commitments. As such, this case presents rich opportunity to examine how gender equality is prioritized, what changes are sought and achieved.

The Pacific Islands are one of the most biologically and culturally diverse regions in the world (SPREP, 2020). The region is multi-geographic comprised by twenty-two large ocean states and territories, where the majority of people reside on a network of small landmasses united by the Pacific Ocean (Andrew et al., 2019). Small-scale fisheries are important for subsistence and small-scale livelihoods, crucial sources of food and nutrition and are a cornerstone of cultural identity (Kronen et al., 2010). A number of regional agencies support Pacific Island nations in the governance of small-scale fisheries (e.g., Pacific Community, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, South Pacific Regional Environmental Program, and the University of the South Pacific, among others). This support is mandated by the Pacific Islands national governments, and further strengthened by the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific, an inter-agency collaboration (Vince et al., 2017).

Increasing pressure on coastal resources linked to population growth, market expansion, and the impacts of climatic change and natural disasters, has rendered the sustainable management of small-scale fisheries one of the region's most pressing development challenges (SPC, 2015). These concerns have led to significant support and investment by a mosaic of regional, governmental, non-governmental and foreign agencies to facilitate both equitable and sustainable small-scale fisheries governance. Across the region there has been growing interest in measures that can reconcile efforts to protect coastal ecosystems, with objectives to reduce poverty, improve food security, and drive improvements to human wellbeing (Bell et al., 2017; Fabinyi et al., 2013; Sulu et al., 2015). This shift towards more human-centered approaches has seen gender equality incorporated as a principle of sustainable small-scale fisheries governance efforts (e.g., ACIAR, 2016; PEUMP, 2019; SPC, 2015). For instance, the regional strategy for the governance of coastal fisheries, *'A new song for coastal fisheries – pathways to change: The Noumea strategy'* outlines a range of gender priorities and indicators considered critical for sustainable management and governance (SPC, 2015). However, research indicates there is patchy commitment to, and engagement with, the principle by Pacific Island nations (Cohen et al., 2017; Song et al., 2019). While there have been some preliminary attempts to understand government capacities to integrate gender equality within the regions' small-scale fisheries sector (e.g., Mangubhai & Lawless, 2021; SPC, 2018), these results do not fully illuminate the conditions that enable or hinder the adoption of gender equality as a governance principle.

1.5.2 Small-scale fisheries in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu

In the three Melanesian nations of Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, rural lives and livelihoods are commonly tied to small-scale fisheries. The comparison of these three countries is useful as they have a diverse assemblage of fisheries governance actors (SPC, 2021), and a high level of investments to gender equality in small-scale fisheries (e.g., ACIAR, 2016; PEUMP, 2019; SPC, 2015). Collectively, national governments and non-governmental organizations within these countries have introduced, via independent and sometimes coordinated efforts, a range of locally and externally led initiatives in an attempt to manage and conserve coastal ecosystems (Vince et al., 2017). Management approaches have typically involved resource use controls, customary and traditional governance strategies and integrated island management (Baereleo et al., 2016; Cohen et al., 2015; Foale et al., 2011; Jupiter et al., 2017b). However, the governance and management of small-scale fisheries within these countries differs. The colonial history of these countries has shaped contemporary small-scale fisheries governance, which involves a combination of customary and central government authority (Rohe et al., 2018a). The governance system in Fiji is clearly defined, with customary tenure and boundaries documented in law, forming the basis for a network of locally managed marine areas throughout the country (Govan, 2009; Mangubhai et al., 2019). By contrast, in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu small-scale fisheries are managed informally, integrating aspects of both local and customary governance (Baereleo et al., 2016; Cohen & Steenbergen, 2015; Govan, 2009).

In these countries, the articulation of gender in small-scale fisheries activities both reflects, and reinforces the norms of local societies. Gendered divisions in labour, tempered by customary, colonial and contemporary cultural and social expectations, have shaped the important yet distinct roles of women and men in small-scale fisheries (Kronen & Vunisea, 2009; Vunisea, 2007). Women play prominent roles in securing food, especially small reef fish and invertebrates gleaned mainly by hand in areas such as mangroves, inshore reefs and lagoons accessed by foot (Kronen & Vunisea, 2009; Thomas et al., 2021). Women also tend to be responsible for the pre-harvest activities, including preparation and repair of fishing gears, and post-harvest processes, including preparation and processing of fish for consumption or sale, as well as the marketing of fish (Harper et al., 2013; Thomas et al., 2021). By contrast, men tend to be responsible for the capture of finfish, usually reef and pelagic species, caught using various gears including nets, hook-and-lines, fish traps, seine and gill nets, and spears (Dalzell et al., 1996). Men’s fishing generally occurs in offshore areas accessed via wooden dugout canoes or boats with outboard motors (Kronen & Vunisea, 2009). Understandings of these traditional and seemingly rigid gender divisions in labour provide important insights into roles and contributions of women and men within the sector (Kronen & Vunisea, 2009; Thomas et al., 2021). Yet, the focus on roles tends to be more prominent than analyses that seek to examine the more invisible gender dynamics, such as how gender norms and relations shape individual abilities to access and experience benefits from the sector (e.g., Barclay et al., 2021; Cohen et al., 2016). This level of analysis is offered in Chapter Three.

1.6 Methodology

This section provides an overview of my epistemological position, research design and methods. A detailed description of the individual methods, samples, sampling strategies and analyses applied in this thesis are detailed in the separate methods sections of Chapters Two, Three, Four and Five respectively.

1.6.1 Epistemological position

I understand 'gender' as a non-binary and intersectional form of identity that profoundly shapes human experiences, opportunities and outcomes. I view gender equality as an intrinsic goal. A goal that I value inherently as a means to its own end. Due to its fluid and socially constructed nature, I conceptualise the goal of gender equality as intangible and open to interpretation (see also Lombardo et al., 2010; Verloo & Lombardo, 2007).

In this thesis, I adopted a pragmatic-constructionist epistemology. This position supports my conception of knowledge being the application of socially constructed understandings of the world (Harris, 2006; Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020). Pragmatic-constructionism is useful to interrogate interpretations of what gender equality means and looks like in practice. Pragmatism is specifically concerned with the relationship between meaning making and the application of that understanding (i.e., how understandings of gender equality materialize) among different actors (i.e., organizations or individuals) (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020). From a pragmatic perspective, understanding processes of governance, and more specifically, the effectiveness and impact of policy and practice, requires attending to the factors influencing discursive meaning making processes (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020).

Similarly, a constructionist position assumes meaning comes into existence through our engagements with the world (Moon et al., 2021). People have diverse and possibly competing interpretations and perceptions about this engagement (Harris, 2003). Understanding how meanings of gender equality are created is useful to highlight the contextual factors that shape, and are shaped by, this interpretation (Lombardo et al., 2010). For example, there are a diversity of social-ecological narratives and environmental ideologies that shape conceptions of how the environment should be governed, and the relationship between humans and nature (Hutton et al., 2005; Mace, 2014; Morrison & Lane, 2006). Predisposition to different ideologies and social-ecological narratives can shape the normative fit of gender equality norms (Cortell & Davis, 2000), including the compatibility of gender equality with the values, interests and beliefs of governance actors (Checkel, 1999).

In recognizing the lack of empirical investigations into how governance principles (referred to as 'meta-norms' in Chapter Two) diffuse, and the ways gender equality materializes in small-scale fisheries policy and practice, the adoption of a pragmatic-constructivist perspective enabled an understanding of both context and structure (constructivism), alongside discursive meaning making (pragmatism). This position also encouraged examination of the multiple discursive frames offered by governance actors (i.e., organizations and individuals), and the wider social context in which they are embedded. For example, in Chapter Two I identified a range of diagnostic mechanisms, both discursive (internal and subjective) and prescriptive (external and fixed), that shape the spread of gender equality as a governance principle. In Chapter Three I explored local interpretations and experiences of gender in small-scale fisheries dependent contexts. In Chapter Four I examined how gender equality was interpreted in written policy, and in Chapter Five examined how the concept was applied in practice, and the different factors that shape these constructions.

1.6.2 Research design and methods

In this thesis I applied a multi-level case-study approach to gain different viewpoints on gender equality in small-scale fisheries governance. Multi-level case studies enable examination of social phenomenon thought to manifest in a variety of situations (Yin, 1981). In governance studies specifically, multi-level case analyses are used to explore the political activity between the different scales and levels of governance (Smith, 2007). In Chapter Two I used the concept of 'scale', the relational space between distinct levels of governance (i.e., global, regional, national and local), to probe the movement and translation of global gender equality norms in environmental discourses (Cash et al., 2006; Morrison, 2007). In Chapters Three, Four and Five, I used the concept of 'level', opposed to 'scale', to distinguish between the formal governmental hierarchies or levels (Cash et al., 2006). I ensured that all levels of governance (global-to-local) were represented in this research. For instance, in Chapter Three I provide a local level gender analysis to understand gender in a small-scale fisheries dependent context. In Chapters Four and Five I used a process of stratification to ensure actors operating at all levels of governance (global-to-local) were captured in the sample.

Researching pragmatically requires combining different research methods to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena, and to test the validity of data through the convergence of varied data sources (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020; Ritchie et al., 2013). I applied a qualitative mixed-methods approach, where I triangulated between multiple methods and data sources (consistent with Yin, 2013). I employed four research methods; literature review, focus-group discussions, policy document review, and key informant interviews (Table 1-1). I ensured I captured data from multiple data sources in application of these methods. For example, in undertaking my literature review I synthesized insights

from diverse disciplines (i.e., law, education, health and humanities) to bring insights to environmental governance as an understudied area of scholarship. My focus-group discussions were conducted separately with women, men, female and male youth across three different locales to gain the perspectives of groups. Documents sampled in my policy document review included a range of instruments spanning formal policies, organizational strategies, research reports and promotional materials. My key informant interviews were conducted with small-scale fisheries experts occupying a range of positions, including executives, fisheries officers and field staff.

Analysis of these data required a combination of qualitative data analysis techniques including content analysis for the literature review, interpretive analysis of the focus-group discussions and key informant interviews, and discourse analysis of the policy document review. In Chapters Three, Four and Five, these analyses were triangulated using a combination of theory driven, data driven and attributional coding (consistent with Saldaña, 2009). I also triangulated my findings within, and across, each chapter (consistent with Olsen, 2004), for example, I drew on my diffusion diagnostic developed in Chapter Two to empirically verify evidence of the different diagnostic elements in Chapters Three, Four and Five (see 6.3 of Chapter 6).

Table 1-1. Overview of research questions, level of governance focus, methods and analysis applied in Chapters Two-to-Five.

Chapter focus	**Research question(s)**	**Level of governance focus**	**Method(s)**	**Analysis**
2. Diagnostic mechanisms of norm diffusion	What are the drivers and responses through which social meta-norms diffuse in environmental governance?	Multi-level (global-to-local)	Literature review	Content analysis
3. Gender equality in small-scale fisheries dependent contexts	How do gender norms and relations influence the expressions of agency of women, men, and youth in their livelihoods?	Local	Focus-group discussions	Interpretive analysis
4. Written gender equality commitments made to small-scale fisheries	How is the concept of gender, and the principle of gender equality, represented in policy instruments that govern small-scale fisheries? What implicit and explicit rationale are used to pursue the principle of gender equality? What are the approaches proposed to address gender inequalities?	Regional and national	Policy document review	Discourse analysis
5. Gender equality in small-scale fisheries practice	What social-ecological narratives are pursued by small-scale fisheries actors? What rationale are provided for prioritizing gender equality in their work? What are the changes that they aspire to bring about? What is the perceivable impact of these gender strategies?	Regional and national	Policy document review and key informant interviews	Discourse and interpretive analysis

1.7 Thesis outline and contributions

I answer my overarching research question - *How does gender equality influence environmental policy and action?* - in four data-based chapters (Figure 1-1). All four of these chapters have been published as peer-reviewed publications.

In Chapter Two, I developed a diagnostic to explore the diffusion of gender equality in environmental governance. Due to limited explorations of the multi-scale diffusion of gender equality in environmental governance, I synthesized theoretical and empirical knowledge about the diffusion of social meta-norms (i.e., global governance principles) including justice, equity and human rights. In this Chapter I highlighted a spectrum of drivers (ranging from prescriptive to non-prescriptive) and responses (ranging from resistance to internalization) through which social meta-norms diffuse in environmental governance. Through my synthesis of theoretical and empirical knowledge about norm diffusion, the main contribution of this chapter was the development of the diagnostic to generate a more complete picture of the norm diffusion process. Most significantly, I highlighted the influence of discursive factors, which have been conventionally under-valued and overlooked, especially in environmental governance. The theoretical insights developed in this chapter have the potential to support future explorations of the spread of gender equality in environmental governance contexts. For example, in Chapter Five, I use this diagnostic to verify empirical evidence from Chapters Three, Four and Five of the different drivers and responses shaping the diffusion of gender equality norms in the context of small-scale fisheries governance in the Pacific Islands region.

In Chapter Three, I provided a local level gender analysis to understand how gender shapes equitable and effective governance in three coastal dwelling communities of Solomon Islands. Using the concept of 'agency' as an indicator of gender equality, I explore how gender norms and relations influence expressions of agency among women, men, and youth. To do so, I adapt and apply the GENNOVATE methodology, a global research initiative to explore the conditions in which gender equality can be advanced through environmental innovation (Badstue et al., 2018; Petesch et al., 2018). I illustrate how gender norms and relations can shape how individuals experience the costs and benefits of new or altered coastal livelihood initiatives. I highlight the dangers of external initiatives proceeding as 'gender blind', and emphasize that way these initiatives are designed and implemented have the potential to amplify, maintain or transform gender inequalities. The main contribution of this chapter is the provision of insights into the domains of gender difference environmental governance actors working with local communities need to consider and address. For research and practice, these insights are necessary in order to shift focus away from merely understanding the different roles of women and men (i.e., via sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis), to attending to how gender differences are

shaped by social expectations, norms and power relations. My findings support the notion that initiatives are more likely to achieve equitable and effective outcomes if they are designed, delivered and monitored with gender considerations in mind (Stacey & Govan, 2021).

Having demonstrated how gender equality is critical for both effective and equitable development outcomes, in Chapter Four I explore written gender equality commitments made to small-scale fisheries in the Pacific Islands region. Specifically, I examine how gender equality is conceptualized, rationalized and proposed to be actioned, in order to understand the extent, depth and likelihood of progress toward gender equality. I find that despite a proliferation of written commitments to gender equality, the nature and depth of these commitments are largely diluted, tokenistic and aspirational. The main contribution of this chapter is the recognition that urgent shifts in the dominant narratives and objectives for gender equality are critical to support fisheries governance and development agendas to meet current best practice, and make meaningful (opposed to rhetorical) progress toward gender equality. These shifts require moving away from gender being a one dimensional focus on women, and striking a greater balance between instrumental and intrinsic goals for gender equality. I argue these processes may require renegotiation of the social-ecological priorities within the sector, and more specifically, organizational normative ideals about the gender-environment relationship.

Building on my analysis of written gender equality commitments, in Chapter Five, I examine how commitments to gender equality materialize in practice. I acknowledge that the inclusion of gender equality is considered a prerequisite for, and determinant of, social-ecological sustainability. Specifically, I explore the proposition that differences in social-ecological narratives influence the prioritization, intentions and impacts of gender equality by governance actors. The main contribution of this chapter is the revelation that despite the dominant ambition for socially equitable development among governance actors, gender equality commitments become diluted and reorientated as they are operationalized. In other words, when actioned, efforts to advance gender equality are having minimal impact. I provide three interrelated recommendations to for the small-scale fisheries sector to enhance the gender approaches in use. Specifically, to reorient theory of change logic, capture more robust and multiple dimensions of gender equality (i.e., those that go beyond reaching greater numbers of women), and for governance actors interrogate their own positions to unsettle habituated ways of thinking and acting.

In Chapter Six, I conclude by arguing that the process of gender equality norm diffusion in environmental governance is nonlinear, dynamic and open to interpretation. Evidence from across my chapters suggests this process is largely shaped by norm contestation, whereby governance actors negotiate the meaning and content of gender equality. I discuss how the operationalization of gender equality commitments were largely rhetorical rather than promoting genuine and committed shifts. I

indicate the instances where my results pointed to explanations for this rhetorical adoption, including how the instrumental framing of gender equality can promote a dilution of the principle. I conclude by highlighting a range of opportunities to enhance current engagement with gender equality, including the need to capture more robust and multiple dimensions of gender equality, and suggest areas for future research.

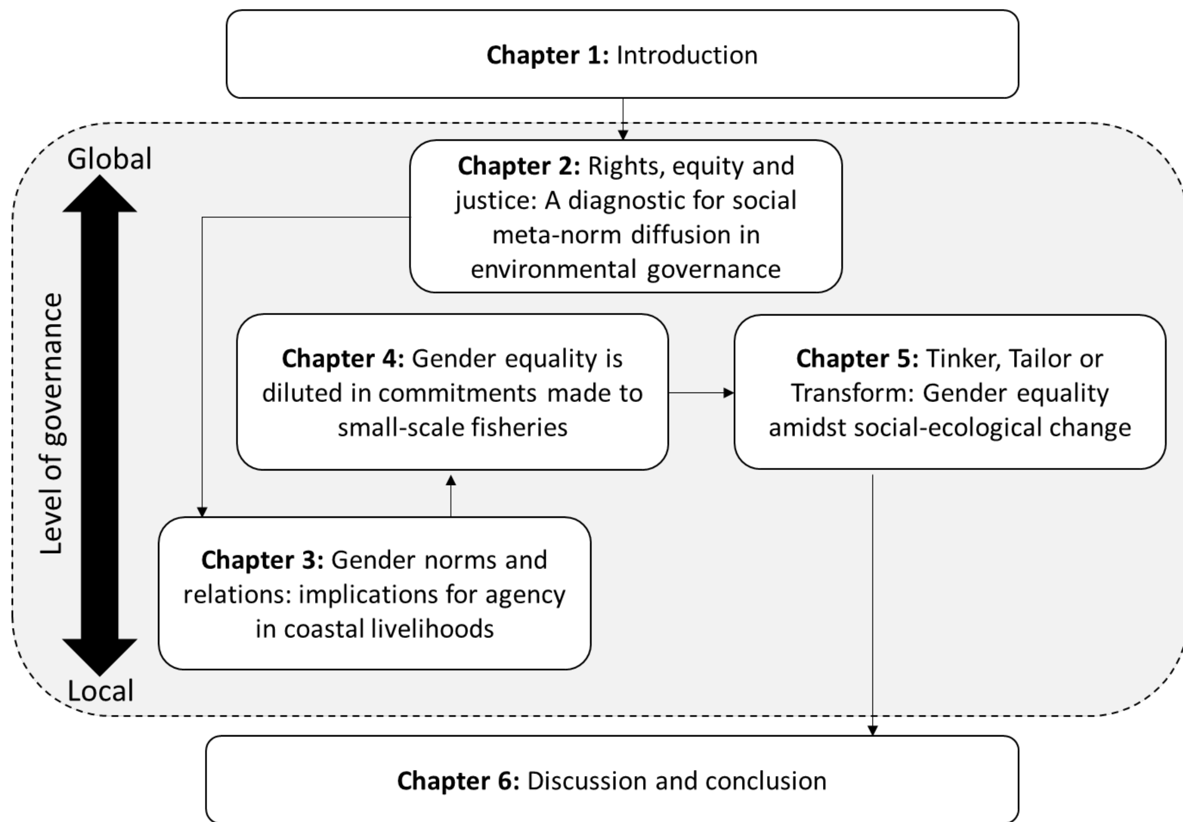

Figure 1-1. Overview of thesis structure. Data chapters are those contained within the grey area and organized according to the level of governance analysed in each chapter.

2 Rights, equity and justice: A diagnostic for social meta-norm diffusion in environmental governance

Published as **Lawless, S.**, Song, A. M., Cohen, P. J., & Morrison, T. H. (2020). Rights, equity and justice: A diagnostic for social meta-norm diffusion in environmental governance. *Earth System Governance, 6*(100052).

Contribution: I developed the research question for this chapter, identified and analysed the articles for review, and wrote the chapter. AMS, PJC and THM were consulted on the research aims, provided validation of the analysis findings, and assisted with structuring and editing the published manuscript.

Abstract

Social meta-norms, including human rights, gender equality, equity and environmental justice, are mainstream principles of good environmental governance. The permeation of social meta-norms through global environmental goals, policies and agreements (e.g., the Sustainable Development Goals) is now generally accepted to be critical to the integrity of the Earth's system and to social dignity and opportunities for humanity. Yet, little is known about how globally articulated social meta-norms lead to shifts in action at other scales of governance. Specifically, analysis of the discursive and dynamic nature of social meta-norm diffusion is lacking. To build a better understanding of what shapes the diffusion of social meta-norms across different scales of environmental governance, I provide a synthesis that bridges political and sociological theory and underscores the critical role of agency in the diffusion process. I identify eight drivers of diffusion along a spectrum that ranges from prescriptive drivers, which leave little space for norm negotiation, to discursive drivers, which provide enabling space for norm interpretation and negotiation. I hypothesize these drivers intersect with a parallel spectrum of actor responses, ranging from complete resistance to social meta-norms at one end, to complete internalization of social meta-norms at the other. My diagnostic of integrated drivers and responses is aimed at advancing conventional norm diffusion theory by providing a better account of discursive forces in this process. Applying these diagnostic elements to future empirical research has the potential to improve the rationale, speed, mode and impact of social meta-norm diffusion in multiscale environmental governance.

2.1 Introduction

There is growing recognition that to achieve environmental outcomes, attention to the social dimensions of environmental sustainability is critical (Bennett et al., 2017; Biermann et al., 2012). The way in which environmental and social spaces are navigated, and outcomes are achieved, is shaped by governance. Environmental governance incorporates the formal and informal architecture (i.e., rules, rule-making systems, institutions and processes) and agents (i.e., actors and networks) at all levels of decision-making, from global-to-local, relating to natural resources use and management (Biermann et al., 2009a). Environmental and social meta-norms form part of the environmental governance architecture as principles that set the standards of expected behaviour considered essential for environments and societies to flourish (Hufty, 2011; Khagram et al., 2002). The integration of both environmental and social meta-norms within global environmental commitments and practice is considered crucial to widespread achievement of strategic sustainable development agendas that support human dignity, opportunities and the integrity of the Earth's system (Berkes et al., 1998; Biermann et al., 2012; Raworth, 2017).

Conventional examples of environmental meta-norms include protection of biodiversity and preservation of ecosystems (Haas, 1999; Matulis & Moyer, 2017; Saunier & Meganck, 2007). These norms manifest in global commitments such as the *Convention on Biological Diversity* (1992), the *World Heritage Convention* (1972) and the *Ramsar Convention* (1975). Within these commitments, humans are alternately framed as beneficiaries (or destroyers) of ecosystem goods and services, or as an intrinsic part of social-ecological systems (Berkes et al., 1998; Mace, 2014). The increased consideration of human well-being in human-environment relationships has led to the emergence of 'social' meta-norms in environmental governance such as the protection of human rights, gender equality, social equity and environmental and social justice (Kooiman & Jentoft, 2009; Moore, 2012; Okereke, 2008a; Saunier & Meganck, 2007). Such social meta-norms now manifest in various forms at the global scale (e.g., the *Sustainable Development Goals*, and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*), and are reflected in the contemporary objectives of many global environmental organizations. For example, the International Union for Conservation of Nature's 2017-2020 Programme pledges equity, social justice, transparency and inclusion to ensure that 'natural resource governance at all levels enables delivery of effective conservation and equitable social outcomes by integrating good governance principles and rights-based approaches' (IUCN, 2017).

While there has been sustained interest in the complex and subjective diffusion of environmental norms (e.g., Sandbrook et al., 2019), the process of diffusion and the practical influence (i.e., beyond written commitments) of social meta-norms remains under-explored and largely unknown (e.g., Acosta et al.,

2019; Okereke, 2008a; Song et al., 2019). A review of global environmental governance literature conducted as part of this study reveals only three articles that explicitly explore the diffusion of social meta-norms in environmental governance (see Acosta et al., 2019; Okereke, 2008a; Song et al., 2019). Specifically, Okereke (2008a) finds the diffusion of equity norms in global environmental regimes relies on the extent norms align with neoliberal ideas and structures. In the context of coastal fisheries, Song et al. (2019) find global-level policy commitments on gender and human rights have gained minimal traction in national level policies of Pacific Island countries. Similarly, Acosta et al. (2019) find that while commitments to gender mainstreaming in Ugandan climate and agricultural policies have been formally adopted at the national level, the ‘gender equality’ norm is watered down at several stages of the policy cycle. Despite these findings, there has been little attempt to explain such incongruence more generally, especially to understand the mechanisms through which social meta-norms diffuse (or not) in environmental governance, making progress on the uptake and impact of these norms difficult to assess and achieve.

In this article, I seek to address this gap by developing a more robust understanding of how different drivers and responses shape, and are shaped by, meta-norm diffusion. I first targeted peer-reviewed environmental governance papers (covering various forms of natural resource management and multiscale environmental regimes) that explicitly explored the diffusion of social meta-norms; however, as mentioned above, this search only returned three articles. I then expanded my search to include broader governance literature on any form of social meta-norm diffusion (e.g., human rights, gender equality, women’s and youth rights, equity and justice) (n=73), in addition to examples of diffusion of broader meta-norms in environmental governance (e.g., protection of biodiversity and preservation of ecosystems) in my original search (n=56). I identified 132 articles in total to be included in my review.

I used an inductive approach to first identify eight common drivers of social meta-norm diffusion from the literature (Figure 2-1). Through a process of consultation and validation between the co-authors, I then characterized the drivers thematically along a spectrum ranging from prescriptive to non-prescriptive. This grouping revealed epistemological preferences within the literature. Analyses guided by conventional norm diffusion theory, for example, focused on prescriptive or compliance oriented drivers (e.g., Thomson, 1993). Analyses grounded in constructionism and sociological institutionalism (e.g., Krook & True, 2010; Miller & Banaszak-Holl, 2005), by contrast, focused on non-prescriptive drivers. I then turned my attention to norm responses. We identified, based on similar terminology (or synonyms), five response types (Figure 2-2), which confirmed other response typologies built for different sectors (e.g., Zimmermann, 2016). My development of the response typology was largely guided by a constructionist epistemology as it allowed for a more nuanced view of responses (i.e., rather than just ‘uptake’ or ‘presence/absence’ which is the focus of conventional norm diffusion theory).

Based on my review, I argue that the limited (actual) diffusion of social meta-norms in environmental governance is best understood by drawing together conventional, discursive, and relational strands of norm diffusion theory and multiscale environmental governance scholarship. Conventional norm diffusion theory explains why and how norms spread (or fail to) according to prescriptive formal regulatory and normative forces, such as the strength of compliance and the economic 'fit' of a norm (Cortell & Davis, 2000). A newer strand of norm diffusion theory (drawing on constructionism, discursivism, and sociological institutionalism) underscores the agency of governance actors in the diffusion process and the meaning systems and cognitive frames shaping norm interpretation. This newer perspective highlights multi-actor translation, whereby actors are not passive recipients, rather they shift the meaning and content of meta-norms through processes of interpretation and contestation (Elgström, 2000; Krook & True, 2010; Lombardo et al., 2010; Wiener, 2009; Wiener & Puetter, 2009). A parallel strand of scholarship on multiscale environmental governance highlights the relational space between distinct levels of governance (i.e., global, regional, national and local including provincial and city governance structures) and probes the vertical movement and translation of environmental discourses across scales (Cash et al., 2006; Morrison, 2007). These various conventional, discursive and relational aspects have been considered in isolation until now which has limited full understanding of social meta-norm diffusion.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, I offer a conceptual overview of norms and norm diffusion and highlight knowledge gaps pertaining to the lack of integrated studies exploring both the drivers and responses of social meta-norm diffusion in multiscale environmental governance (section 2.2). I then provide a synthesis of the drivers of diffusion, comprising both prescriptive and discursive drivers to reveal a more comprehensive range of the enabling and constraining mechanisms that shape how norms travel and become operationalized (section 2.3). Specifically, through considering the role of discursivism in this synthesis, I highlight the role of agency (i.e., of state actors and nonstate actors affiliated with local, national, regional, global or transnational governance organizations) in the norm interpretation process. I then draw from the synthesis to develop a typology of responses elicited by meta-norms in order to theorize the stages a norm passes through in the process towards internalization (i.e., reaching a point of individual actor conviction) (section 2.4). Finally, building on the evidence of discursive forces in norm diffusion, I hypothesize a potential interaction between drivers and responses by drawing these elements together in a conceptual diagnostic (section 2.5). My diagnostic provides a crucial first step in developing a more complete understanding of the dynamics shaping social meta-norm diffusion in multiscale environmental governance.

2.2 Conceptualization of norms and norm diffusion

Global governance scholars have generally characterized three types of norms; meta-norms, constitutive norms, and practical norms (adapted from Björkdahl, 2002; Hufty, 2011; Wiener, 2009). Meta-norms are global principles considered to promote 'justice and the good society' (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 889). Also referred to as fundamental, global or international norms, they are typically global principles that may manifest in the form of international agreements and guidelines or aspirational goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals. By comparison, constitutive norms (also referred to as organizing principles) are policy or political processes within governance agencies that provide normative guidance for best practice (Wiener, 2009). Constitutive norms are non-prescriptive, leaving space for local reinvention of norm content (Krook & True, 2010). Examples of constitutive norms include; legitimacy, transparency, inclusiveness, and adaptability (for an overview of constitutive norms in natural resource management see Lockwood et al., 2010). In contrast, practical norms (also referred to as standardized procedures or regulatory norms) are, by design, relatively inflexible. Practical norms refer to the prescriptions, rules and regulations that delimit the conduct of individuals or groups, including sanctions and codes of conduct (Hufty, 2011). Examples of practical norms in environmental governance include the International Organization for Standardization 14000 standard for environmental management. Practical norms are also in the form of guidelines such as the Food and Agriculture Organization facilitated 'Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication', where practical norms become manifestations of overarching meta-norms (FAO, 2015).

Global governance scholars use meta-norm diffusion theory to explore how norms emerge and travel across and between governance scales (Björkdahl, 2002; Krook & True, 2010). Scholars originally developed meta-norm diffusion models in the 1990s to describe how nation-states socialize into international communities (Checkel, 1999; Meyer et al., 1997; Strang & Meyer, 1993). These scholars focus on the way meta-norms diffuse and whether they achieve their intended outcomes (e.g., Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Strang & Meyer, 1993). Such characterizations emphasize the salience of political structures in shaping diffusion and tend to describe the process as linear and axiomatic, whereby norms first emerge, follow a global-to-local pathway, and eventually become internalized within local contexts. Increased recognition of women's political rights have frequently been described this way whereby; 'norm emergence' represented recognition of suffrage in Western countries, and in turn led to a global movement that reached a 'tipping point' of support. This followed a 'cascade' of normative change within domestic policies, whereby analysts have viewed suffrage as internalized once widely accepted in local settings (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Keck & Sikkink, 1998).

However, conventional norm diffusion theory has since been critiqued for its tendency to view norms as static and consequently failing to consider multidirectional influences on norm emergence and appropriation (Bernstein & Cashore, 2012). Some scholars have argued that the predominant focus on top-down diffusion has overlooked the complexities of how norms travel and are negotiated across and between different hierarchical scales of governance (Morrison, 2007; van der Vleuten et al., 2014). Greater analytical attention to the discursive nature of norm diffusion suggests that the pathways through which norms travel vary, and diffusion may occur top-down, laterally, bottom-up or in a dynamic and contested manner (van der Vleuten et al., 2014; Zwingel, 2012). There have been several important meta-norm diffusion studies that focus on global (Krook & True, 2010; Legro, 1997), regional (van der Vleuten et al., 2014) and domestic (Bernstein & Cashore, 2012; Cortell & Davis, 2000) levels of governance. These studies have also extended the focus on government and intergovernmental actors, to private or nongovernment agencies operating in various multiscale relationships (Fejerskov, 2017; Morrison et al., 2017). Despite these developments, multiscale analyses remain less common.

Meta-norms are conventionally framed as 'good things' (e.g., Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Keck & Sikkink, 1998) that help propagate cooperative liberal values throughout global governance systems. Sociological institutionalists contend that this assumption views meta-norms as vehicles for the spread of hegemonic principles into domestic contexts (Schofer et al., 2012; Wiener, 2006). Governance actors are perceived as passive recipients of norms, eliding the fact that the people (i.e., individual citizens) towards whom meta-norms are targeted have their own voices, values and interests. A more recent elaboration of norm diffusion literature has brought greater analytical focus to the actors that promote and translate norms (Zimmermann, 2016; Zwingel, 2012). These theorists argue the emergence and appropriation of social meta-norms is highly contested, whereby norms rarely retain similar content, or the same intended effects across countries and time (Kardam, 2004; Krook & True, 2010; Okereke, 2008b; Roggeband et al., 2014; Zwingel, 2012). In this strand of scholarship, discursive, or cultural-cognitive drivers, as described by Scott (2013) (i.e., cultural compatibility and norm source), are also important analytical distinctions (Strang & Meyer, 1993). This perspective underscores the way governance actors interpret and contest norms as a pivotal component of norm diffusion (Krook & True, 2010; Wiener, 2009). Specifically, actors use their cultural-cognitive frames to negotiate norm meanings. This process is described elsewhere as norm 'bending', 'shrinking', or 'stretching' (e.g., Lombardo et al., 2010; Roggeband et al., 2014). However, while this body of scholarship is growing, the translation of meta-norms by governance actors remains under-researched. Consequently, the discursive nature of norm interpretation tends to be overlooked as a key element of meta-norm diffusion (Zimmermann, 2016).

Furthermore, while meta-norm diffusion scholarship spans diverse disciplines and governance sectors (i.e., law, health, education, humanities), the environmental governance sector has received less analytical attention. Recent studies have explored the diffusion of global environmental policies, such as voluntary sustainability standards (Derkx & Glasbergen, 2014) and policy themes including gender and human rights-based approaches (Song et al., 2019). These studies imply that both prescriptive drivers (i.e., regulations and sanctions) and discursive drivers (i.e., the extent and way norms resonate with actors in diverse social and cultural contexts) are influential in shaping how norms diffuse. Although not explicitly framed as 'diffusion of meta-norms', environmental governance scholarship offers rich empirical insights into the range of both prescriptive and non-prescriptive drivers shaping how norms diffuse in the environment sector.

Thus, there are three knowledge gaps in conventional understanding that limit understandings of the process shaping social-meta-norm diffusion. First, the discursive nature of norm interpretation and translation is undervalued in influencing meta-norm diffusion. Second, there is a lack of integrated studies looking at both the drivers and responses shaping meta-norm diffusion. Finally, there are few examinations of how social meta-norms spread in the context of multiscale environmental governance. In the remaining sections of this paper, I seek to overcome these gaps by emphasising the non-prescriptive nature of diffusion, and highlight the active role governance actors play in this process.

2.3 Drivers of social meta-norm diffusion

Here I draw together the theories and critiques of meta-norm diffusion to date and develop a synthesis of the drivers that shape diffusion (Figure 2-1). Drawing from diverse disciplines, I identify and position eight drivers of diffusion on a spectrum ranging between those considered prescriptive through to discursive. The different drivers identified in the review are not intended as an exhaustive set; instead they offer an alternative explanation for the state of social meta-norms. Although I present each driver as distinct for analytic purposes, in reality they are inextricably connected or evolving together, often in response to rapidly shifting political and social contexts. Conventional meta-norm diffusion scholarship often overlooks this variety of drivers, focusing in depth on regulatory and normative drivers, with limited analytical attention to the discursive nature of norm diffusion.

I find that analyses guided by conventional norm diffusion theory predominantly present examples of formal and prescriptive (i.e., regulatory and normative) drivers which characteristically produce patterns of relatively predictable and/or stable behaviour through regulation or conformity of action

(Meyer et al., 1997). These drivers often reflect visible top-down diffusion via formal policies, compliance and enforcement mechanisms, economic ideologies, or through institutions and their associated normative social rules. In contrast, articles grounded in constructionism and sociological institutionalism tended to provide examples of discursive drivers, which are more informal, and provide greater attention to actor agency and subjectivities (Krook & True, 2010; Lombardo et al., 2010). These drivers are often intangible and in many cases are dependent on the way and the extent norms resonate with actors across diverse social and cultural contexts (Song et al., 2019). I explicate these drivers with examples from environmental governance and/or explorations of social meta-norm diffusion from other sectors.

Figure 2-1. Spectrum of drivers influencing social meta-norm diffusion ranging from those that are formal, prescriptive and rational to more discursive, intangible and informal. The placement of the drivers along the continuum are for heuristic purposes only and are not yet a definite guide.

Driver 1: Compliance mechanisms

Conventional theorists suggest that meta-norms are societal rules where compliance with the principles of a norm is an effective way to achieve diffusion (i.e., through prescriptions and regulatory controls) (Thomson, 1993). In this sense, the impact of a meta-norm is judged by the degree such rules affect state behaviour, placing emphasis on formal prescriptions as evidence (Björkdahl, 2002). In environmental governance, examples of such compliance-based mechanisms include various hard laws including legally binding environmental treaties, conventions, policies and regulations that, for example, have been applied to the protection of endangered species or regulations on the use of chemicals and emissions (Bernstein & Cashore, 2012). These forms of compliance mechanisms use the 'logic of consequences', which rewards conformity (i.e., through material and financial incentives) and punishes noncompliance (i.e., through sanctions or loss of international legitimacy) (Gilardi, 2013).

Such forms of compliance do work in some contexts, for example *The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer* (1987), which was the first universally ratified treaty. However, scholars also caution that using prescriptive, and often punitive, mechanisms to drive the diffusion of social meta-norms is difficult due to their moral or ethical character, making them more elusive in different contexts (Goetz & Diehl, 1992). Consequently, global quests to facilitate diffusion of social meta-norms

through compliance mechanisms alone have been found to yield limited results (e.g., Kardam, 2004; Okereke, 2008a; Zwingel, 2012 who specifically explore gender equality, equity and human rights norms). In these cases, formal legislation is perceived as futile. Hard laws can be deliberately drafted to be ambiguous, allowing flexibility in application but having no specific written obligations directed at nation-states ratifying agreements (Sindico & Gibson, 2016). In fact, human rights treaties have been described as ineffective and weak because they lack incentives for compliance (Zwingel, 2012). Yet, enforcement of norms at the national scale is still the dominant mechanism for effective multiscale governance in most countries.

Global environmental governance literature has been criticised for its over-emphasis on hard law compliance mechanisms as a causal driver of diffusion (Bernstein & Cashore, 2012). Using the case of climate governance in the European Union, for example, Jordan et al. (2012) illustrate the inconsistency between high policy ambition and weak implementation mechanisms. However, shifts away from prescriptive compliance and enforcement methods towards softer measures to shape environmental governance arrangements are increasingly evident. Soft laws, such as codes of conduct or voluntary guidelines, are argued to be less difficult to establish and change and can facilitate cooperation among relevant actors more so than hard laws (Skjærseth et al., 2006). Rather than a weakness, the absence of coercive mechanisms when enforcing social norms may become an advantage as the notion of governance is to solve a problem through 'mutual consultation and analysis, rather than an offence to be punished' (Chayes & Chayes, 1995, p. 26). Others argue the effectiveness of 'soft law' on environmental norms increases when coupled with hard law rules (Skjærseth et al., 2006). For example, the global climate regime consists of both elaborate legally binding frameworks and soft laws providing guidance for a multitude of actors (Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen & Kok, 2002) and can promote wider agreement on global climate commitments.

Driver 2: Economic benefit

There is strong agreement that prevailing economic conditions affect meta-norm diffusion at all scales of governance (e.g., Cortell & Davis, 2000; Dimitrov, 2016). Western industrialized countries have a commanding presence in global political economies and tend to perpetuate meta-norms linked to neoliberal economic ideologies (Okereke, 2008b). Okereke (2008b) explains that not only does promotion of economic ideologies assist in ensuring developed countries maintain their advantage over those less developed, it also ensures that global environmental governance cooperation does not overtly challenge the values of these societies. The most crucial driver determining 'successful' norm diffusion is argued to be contingent on the degree to which norms promote economic growth (Elgström, 2000), and whether norm requirements are achievable within the scope of pre-existing neoliberal economic order (Okereke, 2008a). As Dimitrov (2016) found during the 2015 climate negotiations in Paris, arguments framed in terms of economic benefit were most persuasive among political elites in adoption

of the agreement (a constitutive norm). However, while framing social meta-norms in economic terms may facilitate diffusion, this may also promote instrumentalist and essentialist views of norms (see Leach, 2007 for an overview of the risks of essentialist portrayals of gender through environmental development). Such perspectives risk promoting norm adoption at the expense of watering down the inherent qualities of a norm and simplifying governance problems.

Driver 3: Functional interaction

Norm diffusion between more than two policy domains is complex (Morrison, 2017). Structuralist accounts of meta-norm diffusion suggest the integration of 'new norms' such as gender equality arise in normative spaces where they must contend for support with other norms and priorities (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). Increasing multi-lateral agreements in environmental governance have led to what is termed 'treaty congestion', compounded by 'regime density', where there is an intersection of norms, governance agencies, legal systems and policy domains (Stokke, 2002, p. 147). Functional interaction between differing treaties and policy domains arise when regimes deal with issues that relate (i.e., biodiversity and climate change) or due to regime overlap (i.e., where global and regional governance objectives and jurisdictions intersect) (Visseren-Hamakers et al., 2011). It is generally thought, the higher the structural density of governance regimes with intersecting policy domains (i.e., water, agriculture, energy), the lower the likelihood of norm integration (Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen & Kok, 2002) and effectiveness of norms in influencing behaviours (Bernstein & Cashore, 2012). In the case of social meta-norms diffusion, the structural density of intersecting policy domains is a barrier to diffusion. Song et al. (2019) and Acosta et al. (2019) problematize this predicament in terms of lack of willingness, interest and importance placed on the integration of gender issues within fisheries, agriculture and climate policies respectively.

Despite being a requirement for sustainable development, functional interaction of differing policy domains presents a considerable analytical and practical challenge where successes are few (Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen & Kok, 2002). Achieving multidirectional integration often necessitates a fundamental shift in constitutive and/or practical norms, beliefs and behaviours of actors within these systems (Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen & Kok, 2002). The integration process is likely to cause conflicts with existing interests, challenge power relations and raise public concerns (Bernstein & Cashore, 2012). However, structural complexity can also mask changes in norms (see Morrison et al., 2017), signalling the risks of relying on prescriptive drivers alone to explain and measure diffusion. There is significant potential to better manage the interplay of diffusion between functionally linked policy domains by focusing on collaboration and joint establishment of best practices among governance actors to foster integration and better account for trade-offs (Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen & Kok, 2002).

Driver 4: Institutional normative environment

Institutional architectures influence the spread of meta-norms (Biermann et al., 2009b; Fejerskov, 2017). Institutional architectures refer to the practices or 'cultures' of governance agencies and their associated normative ideologies (Haas, 1999; Meuleman, 2010). Political predisposition to adhere to norms can shape the normative fit of social norms (Cortell & Davis, 2000) and the compatibility of the norm with specific sets of shared values, interests and beliefs of the nation-state, governance agency or other influential groups (Checkel, 1999). To demonstrate the significance of institutional normative environments in social meta-norm diffusion, Fejerskov (2017) uses the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) (an international nongovernmental development organization) as a case to document the emergence of gender equality meta-norms and consequent changes in the discourse and practices of the organization. In this study, the BMGF's efforts to keep pace with international development discourse required bringing gender equality, a prominent social meta-norm, to the forefront of the organization's priorities. Such a shift in focus lead to distinct changes in the political and social character of the organization. Yet, the high interpretability of gender equality meant such transitions were not prescriptive and negotiated in keeping with the organization's objectives.

The degree to which meta-norms converge with dominant ideologies and practices within governance agencies influences diffusion (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). The importance of understanding normative ideologies is highlighted by Biermann et al. (2009b) who reflect on the highly fragmented nature of environmental governance, where underpinning ideologies influence how norms are interpreted, success is measured, and the design and application of management tools and approaches. Tensions between ideologies are illustrated by Lockwood and Davidson (2010) who explore the influence of three distinct ideologies (neoliberalism, localism and ecocentrism) competing to establish their natural resource governance agendas in Australia. The results highlight that normative ideologies can legitimize norms, leading to different meanings and inducing different responses. In some cases, there may be some disagreement over the nature of outcomes where a diverse set of governance agencies and individual actors understand social-ecological functions and dynamics differently (Leach et al., 2010). Other studies have found that competing ideologies can also lead to the convergence of environmental governance goals (Morrison & Lane, 2006). Nevertheless, significant scope remains to explore the impact of normative ideologies in environmental governance to more clearly conceptualize and draw case comparisons on the drivers shaping meta-norm diffusion in complex multiscale governance systems (Morrison, 2017).

Driver 5: Norm source

Norm source refers to the person or group of persons promoting a particular norm and those supporting the canvassing of its principles (Franck, 1990; Okereke, 2008a). In environmental governance, as in many other contexts, the perceived conviction or legitimacy of the norm source correlates with the

degree to which ideas are received (Moore, 2012; Okereke, 2008a). By tracing the integration of equity norms into the Law of the Sea Treaty (1970), Okereke (2008a) argues that the stature and presentation style of the Maltese Ambassador, Arvid Pardo, a persuasive norm advocate, influenced the internalization of this norm. By contrast, 'norm receivers' (i.e., actors to be persuaded) may resist or obstruct norm diffusion if they see the source of the norm as illegitimate. In many cases, norm resistance occurs when norm recipients perceive ideas as exogenous to them; that is, as universalistic world models 'not strongly anchored in local circumstances' (Meyer et al., 1997, p. 156). For example, developing nation-states may perceive norms to be originating from Western states, and their views and assumptions of global values (Meyer et al., 1997). Scholars have found this to be particularly true in the case of gender equality norms (e.g., Kardam, 2004). In many instances, actors will be reluctant to engage in meaningful change strategies if they view norms as foreign in conception and propagation, or where conviction for the norm is lacking.

Driver 6: Norm issue framing

How actors frame a meta-norm and the nature of the issue-area influences the chance of norm internalization (Jordan et al., 2012; Okereke, 2008a). Norm specificity is essential for governance actors to consider a norm legitimate (Franck, 1990). The assumption that all meta-norms are 'good things' (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Keck & Sikkink, 1998) reinforces the notion that norms are static, and suggests responses will be binary between norm-abiding communities (where actors have adopted 'better' behaviours) and deviants. Yet, a sociological perspective suggests such dichotomized views only serve to reinforce a view of 'us' (norm proponents) versus 'them' (norm violators) (Zwingel, 2012). Sociological institutionalists argue that meta-norm diffusion scholarship has been preoccupied with norm acceptance or rejection rather than critically examining how norms are constructed, and whose interests meta-norms may, or may not, privilege (Schofer et al., 2012).

Many forms of governance are characterized by networks of actors working across scales, sectors and geographies, who are united (to differing degrees) by their aim to maintain and drive improvements within these systems (Leach et al., 2010; Morrison, 2007). However, these governance actors follow different narratives and ideologies that frame problems and potential solutions. Given the pluralism of views and motives, environmental governance objectives may not necessarily converge or complement each other (Leach et al., 2010; Mace, 2014). Within the environmental governance community, for example, there can be friction between those that prioritize biodiversity conservation and those that view natural resource management as the means to address food security and human wellbeing priorities (Bennett et al., 2017; Matulis & Moyer, 2017). The pluralism between social-driven and conservation-driven objectives in environmental governance suggests the interpretation of social meta-norms by organizations and actors may differ.

As social-meta norms evolve into constitutive and practical forms, they often remain ambiguous and lack prescriptions about how a norm is to be operationalized (Kooiman & Jentoft, 2009; Okereke, 2008a). Yet, diffusion literature rests on the problematic assumption that norms are unequivocally definable. For example, Song et al. (2019) found significant variation in the interpretation of gender related commitments among fisheries actors in international, regional and national fisheries policies and guidelines across three Pacific Island countries. These responses ranged from vague to concrete. Such examples suggest there is a tension between prescriptive policies and enforceable action, on the one hand, and the freedom for interpretation and tailoring provided by voluntary or broad commitments on the other hand. In translating social meta-norms into practice, these findings emphasise the challenge of maintaining flexibility in interpretability of norms, while simultaneously effecting change in action.

Driver 7: Cultural resonance

All forms of governance, irrespective of their objective, have a cultural dimension. The values, attitudes and beliefs of a given group of governors are reflections of their cultures (Meuleman, 2010). Early norm diffusion research suggested that cultural resonance with a norm occurs when 'the prescriptions embodied in an international norm are convergent with domestic norms' (Checkel, 1999, p. 97; Legro, 1997). In cases where there is 'no congruence' with a norm, the domestic culture is perceived as a barrier to diffusion (Checkel, 1999, p. 87). The extreme of this view then suggests that local culture either provides resonance for a norm, or it does not (Zimmermann, 2016). However, the idea of resonance can present an essentialist depiction of local culture and domestic governance structures 'as both inhibiting change and resisting change themselves' (Zimmermann, 2016, p. 100). The Western 'conservation ethic' can be viewed as distinct from motivations playing out in indigenous cultural practices (e.g., Johannes, 2002) even where cultural practices may be seen as equivalent to contemporary environmental conservation strategies. Without this nuanced understanding, efforts to promote conservation practice as an environmental norm may lead to actions that are designed or implemented in socially inappropriate ways (Foale et al., 2011). Consequently, scholars have turned their attention to understanding the various outcomes of norm promotion in different locales (e.g., Meuleman, 2010; Zimmermann, 2016; Zwingel, 2012). Specifically referring to gender equality norms, Zwingel (2012, p. 126) argues, 'the key to norm translation is that gender equality norms are to the largest extent possible cross-culturally negotiated rather than imposed'. This argument is echoed by Acosta et al. (2019) who challenge the assumption that global gender equality norms have transformative potential if there is no room for context specific translations or the navigation of local norms in domestic policies.

Driver 8: Societal temper

The success of meta-norm diffusion is subject to the wider societal temper in which diffusion takes place. Also referred to as the 'moral temper' of the international community (Okereke, 2008a, p. 26),

the societal temper is characterized by a host of drivers including; the economic prosperity of an era, social movements, scientific breakthroughs, technological advancements, the frequency of large-scale natural disasters and the emergence of novel challenges, among others (Okereke, 2008a; Saunier & Meganck, 2007). The incidence, scale and alignment of these drivers can alter international political dialogue and norm priorities, issues, responsibilities and commitments (Okereke, 2008a). Interaction with, and participation in, transnational networks is also important for the distribution of norms, and scholars have highlighted the influence of civil society, donor, and partner support on norm diffusion (Bernstein & Cashore, 2012). Environmental governance is also often problem driven, therefore the moral temper of a particular era could be used as proxy for determining the likelihood of internalization of social meta-norms depending on whether the social context is favourable or unfavourable (Meyer et al., 1997; Okereke, 2008a).

2.4 Responses shaping social meta-norm diffusion

As I have stressed, meta-norm diffusion literature has tended to understate the importance of ensuring norms resonate with governance actors and overemphasized the formal and prescriptive drivers promoting global level norm setting. More focus is also needed on the process of norm interpretation between global and local governance scales (Cortell & Davis, 2000; Roggeband et al., 2014; Zwingel, 2012). A small but growing body of literature suggests there is also a need to clarify the responses that meta-norms invoke, due to the limited conceptual ability of the range of prescriptive and discursive drivers to explain the outcomes of norm diffusion (Hufty, 2011; Zimmermann, 2016; Zwingel, 2012).

The success of the diffusion process has previously been measured according to the degree of compliance by norm receivers (e.g., Keck & Sikkink, 1998). The dominant analogy provided by innovation dissemination in agricultural research or evaluation would be to determine if a new technology was present and utilised by more and more farmers at greater intensity (e.g., Shikuku et al., 2019). However, using conventional models of diffusion leaves limited space to understand the potentially complex processes of interpretation and translation where ‘the outcomes of norm diffusion can only ever be described as deficient, never as different’ (Zimmermann, 2016, p. 103). Rather than viewing norms as finished products, constructionism conceptualizes diffusion as a process where norms are contested and (re)interpreted by various actors in diverse settings (Elgström, 2000; Kardam, 2004; Krook & True, 2010). Constructionists perceive these actors as dynamic components of nonlinear norm diffusion pathways (Zwingel, 2012). Actor responses are not necessarily static and are influenced by various drivers of diffusion, such as norm source and norm framing as described previously; meaning a response by the same actor can change over time. For instance, an actor could contest a norm, and

then resist, or actively seek to implement, and then contest. Different actors within any society, organization, or nation could also experience multiple responses simultaneously.

A small number of frameworks draw analytical attention to actors roles in norm formulation (Hufty, 2011; Wiener & Puetter, 2009), norm integration into governance systems (van der Vleuten et al., 2014), or response stages to norm adoption (Zimmermann, 2016). Yet, environmental governance has not fully benefited from this analytical attention. I draw together diverse strands of diffusion literature to extend Zimmerman's (2016) work on norm adoption, in order to develop five response types shaping meta-norm diffusion in environmental governance (Figure 2-2). I group these responses based on similar terminology (or synonyms). While the response types are treated separately here, in reality I expect the distinctions between them are blurrier with potential overlaps and hybrids.

	Resistance	Rhetorical Adoption	Contestation	Implementation	Internalization
Response	Capacity to withstand changes associated with a norm	Adoption of a norm is detached from action and compliance	Interpretation and shifting meaning of a norm	Practical application of a norm	Norm becomes a constitutive part of institutional and individual behavior and identity
Synonym	Abandonment, block, deferment, defence, defiance, false compliance, indifference, inhibit, obstinacy, opposition, rejection	Decoupling, incomplete internalization, lip-service, partial compliance, symbolic commitment	Adaptation, amendment, argumentation, conflict, (re)interpretation, modification, mutation, (re)negotiation,norm-bending, norm-shrinking, re-defining, reinvention, translation	Appropriation, embracement, embedding, integration, sustained adoption	Acceptance, domestication, institutionalization, localization, success, vernaculization
Source	Elgström (2000); Fejerskov (2017); Graham et al. (2012); Matulis and Moyer (2017); McGee (2016); Roggeband et al. (2014); Saunier and Meganck (2007); Scott (1989); Wiener and Puetter (2009); Zimmermann (2016)	Cortell and Davis (2000); Meyer et al. (1997); Saunier and Meganck (2007); Zimmermann (2016)	Cardenas (2007); Checkel (1999); Dimitrov (2016); Elgström (2000); Florini (1996); Graham et al. (2012); Kardam (2004); Krook and True (2010); Peterson et al. (2013); Roggeband et al. (2014); Wiener (2009); Wiener and Puetter (2009); Zwingel (2012)	Cortell and Davis (2000); Finnemore and Sikkink (1998); Graham et al. (2012); Martinsson (2011); Zimmermann (2016)	Checkel (1999); Cortell and Davis (2000); Elgström (2000); Finnemore and Sikkink (1998); Krook and True (2010); Martinsson (2011); Okereke (2008a); Wiener and Puetter (2009); Zimmermann (2016); Zwingel (2012)

Figure 2-2. Typology of responses elicited by meta-norms grouped according to synonymous terms sourced in norm diffusion and global governance literature.

Response 1: Resistance

Resistance as a concept has begun to gain traction in areas of environmental social science, including social-ecological resilience thinking (e.g., Brown, 2016; Herrfahrdt-Pähle & Pahl-Wostl, 2012). Resistance in its most basic form implies the capacity of an individual to resist change. Resistance is often viewed as a significant barrier to meta-norm diffusion and may occur when a norm is incompatible with established interests, ideas and practices (Cortell & Davis, 2000; Fejerskov, 2017). This is well illustrated in conservation practice where historically many conservation organizations and funders have relied purely on natural sciences to inform their approaches. Yet, Bennett et al. (2017) suggest that increased pressure to integrate social science perspectives (i.e., attention to the human dimensions of conservation) has been met with resistance due to a perceived 'threat' that social science poses to engrained institutional norms and practices of conservation organizations. This example illustrates

potential tensions between two sets of norms in the one ‘operating space’, and resistance presents an impediment to integrative conservation science.

Relatedly, some sociological and political science perspectives associate resistance with power, enabling individuals to determine their own strategies for change (Brown, 2016). Specifically referring to policy diffusion, Meijerink and Huitema (2010) argue actors resisting policies use strategies similar to those actors who promote them. Actors may use resistance as a means to exercise agency against forms of domination (Scott, 1989). Resistance is argued to be far more influential than other responses norm diffusion may evoke (Wiener, 2009), as it has qualities of defiance, persistence and de-legitimisation that can eventually erode and/or protect norms (Scott, 1989). Through enacting resistance, actors can re-work norms for local contexts. In this sense, resistance offers opportunities to challenge the top-down diffusion model that views actors and governance agencies as merely norm receivers (see also ‘empty vessel model’, Schulman, 1986). In the case of conservation, resistance may serve as a mechanism to oppose powerful interests that may undermine biodiversity conservation efforts (Matulis & Moyer, 2017) and disrupt political structures that have facilitated environmental devastation (Peterson et al., 2013). Simultaneously, actors may also use resistance to oppose competing conservation goals or efforts that are not in keeping with their own values and worldview (e.g., Hansen et al., 2014). For example, the marine conservation agenda in the Asia-Pacific region has faced some opposition on the basis that it reflects neoliberal and Western conservation values, rather than the wellbeing or needs of local people (Clifton & Foale, 2017).

Response 2: Rhetorical adoption

International relations scholars, who argue there is a disconnection between adopted policies and their translation into practice, have inspired the idea of rhetorical adoption. This response typically involves governments or agencies rhetorically accepting or committing to a norm in the form of a policy or law, but the norm is detached from practical implementation, action and compliance (Meyer et al., 1997; Zimmermann, 2016). Rhetorical adoption reflects strategic motives whereby societies and governance actors may have little to no interest in enforcing meta-norms, rather, their adoption is representative of their quest for international legitimacy (Zimmermann, 2016). A contemporary example by Morrison et al. (2020) illustrates how aspirations for international legitimacy through gaining World Heritage Status are masked by the rhetorical adoption of global commitments to environmental preservation. In terms of social meta-norms, a neoliberalist perspective posits that governments commit to such norms (i.e., ratification of human rights treaties) as a means to increase their international legitimacy rather than reflecting intentions to implement them (Zwingel, 2012). For this reason, some governance scholars characterize meta-norms as symbolic, weak and ineffective, as they do not offer incentives or motivation for compliance to act upon such issues (Saunier & Meganck, 2007; Skjærseth et al., 2006; Zwingel, 2012).

Rhetorical adoption responses are also prevalent among nonstate actors primarily within developmental regimes (Zimmermann, 2016). Although nonstate actors may have their own governing structures and directives, they are often willing to expand their agendas in response to emerging meta-norms, particularly if this means funding becomes more available (Zwingel, 2012). Other research suggests rhetorical adoption occurs when governance agencies feel pressured or obliged to adopt certain meta-norms (i.e., due to conditionality of funding), but do not have the willingness, skills or knowledge on how to translate these principles into practice (Fejerskov, 2017; Zimmermann, 2016). As meta-norms transfer into constitutive and practical forms, governance agencies may be constrained by funding, external support (i.e., research and monitoring and evaluation), recruitment choices and their internal capacity (or education) to appropriately adopt, implement and internalize these norms (Haas, 1999). Such constraints suggest that while commitment to a meta-norm may represent a step towards norm adoption, the extent to which the norm impacts upon its issue area in practice may vary significantly (Roggeband et al., 2014).

Response 3: Contestation

In global governance, the emergence of meta-norms may occur as direct, and deliberate, outcome of international negotiations (Biermann et al., 2009b). However, ratification of global or regional environmental treaties rarely leads to unequivocal adoption by regional and national governments or agencies (Hettiarachchi et al., 2015). Meta-norms are dynamic and often have contested meanings that may even lead to the emergence of new norms (Krook & True, 2010). This process of contestation may be ongoing with strong probability that norms will shift in meaning overtime (Moore, 2012; Wiener & Puetter, 2009). A regional examination of gender equality norms (via process tracing) shows how the 'movement' of this norm through various stages of policy formulation led to new interpretations between different scales of governance and also through time (Roggeband et al., 2014). The negotiation of meta-norms can enable different governance actors to advance their interests. In the case of international climate negotiations, Moore (2012) documents a process of norm contestation, where developing countries protested against developed country control over practical norms (in this case climate change adaptation funding). Yet, environmental governance scholars rarely directly examine norm contestation, leaving the interpretation process and its influence in meta-norm diffusion unclear (Morrison et al., 2017). By acknowledging the continuing evolution of meta-norms, the role of actors as co-creators of norms becomes clear, opposing the assumption that actor responses are bound to a binary 'accept' or 'reject' (Roggeband et al., 2014).

Response 4: Implementation

Implementation refers to how an established meta-norm actually fares in practice, often associated with the operationalization of domestic policies (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). Constructionists argue however,

that the implementation stage is rarely fixed; rather, it involves the continuous negotiation of norms by norm advocates, particularly when there is substantial norm opposition (Elgström, 2000; Roggeband et al., 2014; Wiener & Puetter, 2009). The formulation of domestic policies corresponding with a meta-norm instigates a new stage of policy negotiation and re-formulation (Roggeband et al., 2014). Sociological institutionalist scholars Haas (1999) and Strang and Meyer (1993) suggest that evidence of successful diffusion in one context invokes desires for connected actors (i.e., neighbouring states in these cases) to emulate norm implementation practices. In terms of constitutive and practical norms however, Jordan and Huitema (2014) suggest that learning, competition and coercion, rather than imitation, are what motivates nation-states to emulate one another when referring to the diffusion of climate polices. Despite some notable exceptions (e.g., Sabatier, 1986), there is insufficient scholarship devoted to implementation. This highlights opportunities for future research to trace the translation of meta-norms into constitutional and practical forms.

Response 5: Internalization

Full internalization of a meta-norm is the final stage or 'success' of diffusion (Zimmermann, 2016). Early norm diffusion scholarship suggested that internalization transpires when 'norms acquire a taken-for-granted quality and are no longer a matter of broad public debate' and become a constitutive part of institutional and individual behaviours and identities (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p. 895). While norm contestation and implementation phases may require collective efforts, internalization depends on individual actor conviction (Zimmermann, 2016). Collective agency can be influential in this process, particularly when civil society and social movements are significant in norm promotion and spread. Actors within any society, organization, and/or nation may internalize norms, whilst others may remain sceptical, hostile, indifferent, or resistant. Actors who have internalized a norm become norm advocates or norm entrepreneurs and may partake in persuasion processes to promote the meta-norm among other actors (Elgström, 2000). Environmental psychology studies offer many examples of the internalization of pro-environmental behaviours (e.g., Byerly et al., 2018), however few studies have managed to document social meta-norm internalization in the context of environmental governance.

2.5 Discussion and future directions

Social meta-norms are essential to promoting best practice, equity, and effectiveness in environmental governance, however successful translation into national and local action is seldom observed (Acosta et al., 2019; Okereke, 2008a; Song et al., 2019). While social scientists have identified and examined a range of drivers and responses influencing diffusion, they have to date been examined in relative isolation from each other. By drawing together the theories and critiques of meta-norm diffusion, I have

developed a diagnostic to understand the drivers and responses that construct diffusion pathways. This diagnostic helps to explore why and how norms travel, and why in many cases they fail to achieve their intended aims (Figure 2-3).

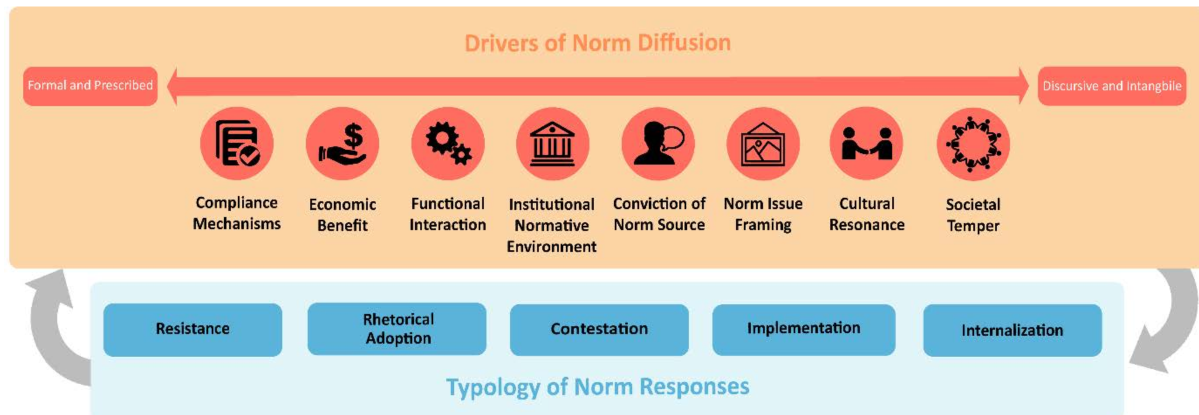

Figure 2-3. Meta-norm diffusion comprises of intersecting drivers and responses Each driver and response is presented as distinct for analytic purposes; however, in reality they are linked, interacting and evolving.

The diagnostic elements I identify illustrate that social meta-norm diffusion is driven by, and oscillates between, various regulatory and normative forces, but is also shaped by discursive factors. These drivers have bearing on the responses that social meta-norms may invoke. Specifically, my synthesis of norm responses suggests that 'successful' diffusion is determined by the extent norms are internalized, a process that is largely dependent on the extent norms resonate with individual actors. Understanding how the responses of actors at different scales may differ (as a function of the nature of the norm, as well as shaping the process of diffusion itself) will have implications for the sustainability and scale of outcomes (e.g., Mills et al., 2019). My results suggest multiscale diffusion is likely to involve a process of norm negotiation and re-interpretation, to ultimately generate shifts in actor behaviours, interests, beliefs and practices.

The significance of actor agency in the diffusion process implies that a focus only on drivers is insufficient to understand the diffusion process. For instance, my synthesis raises questions about the extent that formal and prescriptive drivers of meta-norm diffusion alone (i.e., ratification of human rights norms into domestic environmental laws) are able to reach deep-seated internalized support for such norms among individual actors. Similarly, only focusing on the responses social meta-norms may invoke, overlooks the dynamic range of drivers shaping norm responses. To understand the extent social meta-norms have an impact in environmental governance, the diffusion process needs to be viewed as dynamic and integrated. In fact, this need extends to other social or governance innovations where contestation, flexibility and adjustment are inherent in the very definition of the innovation and its

success (e.g., adaptive co-management, Plummer et al., 2013). This messiness reflects a contemporary challenge for all diffusion research to extend beyond linear conceptions of diffusion, simplistic measures of presence/absence or normative views of what successful diffusion or 'uptake' would look like.

The interconnectedness of the drivers and responses also raises questions about the potential tensions of promoting particular drivers over others, and the consequences this has for norm responses. Future empirical applications could analyse the cause and effect interactions of these elements in multiscale contexts. This may involve tracing the diffusion of social meta-norms enshrined in global goals, policies or agreements such as the Sustainable Development Goals, or that of specific social meta-norms, such as gender equality, within diverse environmental governance agencies, projects and contexts. This is particularly poignant in cases where governance agencies may lack the willingness, resources or knowledge to meaningfully translate these principles into practice. Relatedly, full consensus and coordinated action of nation-states may not be attainable making it difficult to uphold the environmental standards essential for effective governance of the Earth's system (Biermann, 2012). International enforcement has limits so as not to undermine the sovereignty of nations. When meta-norms are imposed as universalistic expectations or are perceived as foreign in conception and propagation, it is likely to fuel resistance among nation-states. To ensure social meta-norm diffusion does not play out as neo-colonial agendas or treat actors as passive recipients, these investments should prioritize spaces for negotiation, co-production, interpretation and contestation so that norm-fit and 'local' legitimacy are prioritized over resemblance to another or ('the original') interpretation. In fact, my review highlights that the absence of coercive mechanisms for the diffusion of social meta-norms may be more effective in the sense that spaces are opened up for norm negotiation and contestation. This may help in the diffusion of 'new norms' (e.g., human rights) that have not been traditionally considered or applied. Hence, to avoid tokenism and rhetorical adoption of social principles, this may mean embracing the process of norm contestation in these negotiations and identifying the uptake of an adjusted or interpreted variation of the norm as legitimate. Whether this flexibility and adjustment risks dilution (i.e., the interpreted version of the norm into action is so weak that it doesn't resemble or achieve the original intent) would require context specific research and assessment.

Given norm diffusion scholarship has rarely been applied to social meta-norms in the context of environmental governance, the drivers and responses identified are largely informed through a review of the literature across diverse disciplines. Although the breadth of insights within this diagnostic facilitates a deeper and more holistic understanding of the potential mechanisms and role of cognition in shaping how norms evolve and spread in complex environmental governance settings, I hold that further research will help assess the extent to which these are applicable for different fields and scales of environmental governance. Ultimately, future studies would work toward determining the extent

social meta-norms are ‘good’ (i.e., in promoting equitable and just outcomes) through environmental practice, as opposed to merely conveying an image of ‘doing good’ without concerted effort to implement and adhere to social meta-norms. I argue that to move beyond social meta-norms on paper will require investment in and recognition of translation processes and norm adjustments as they shape environmental practice.

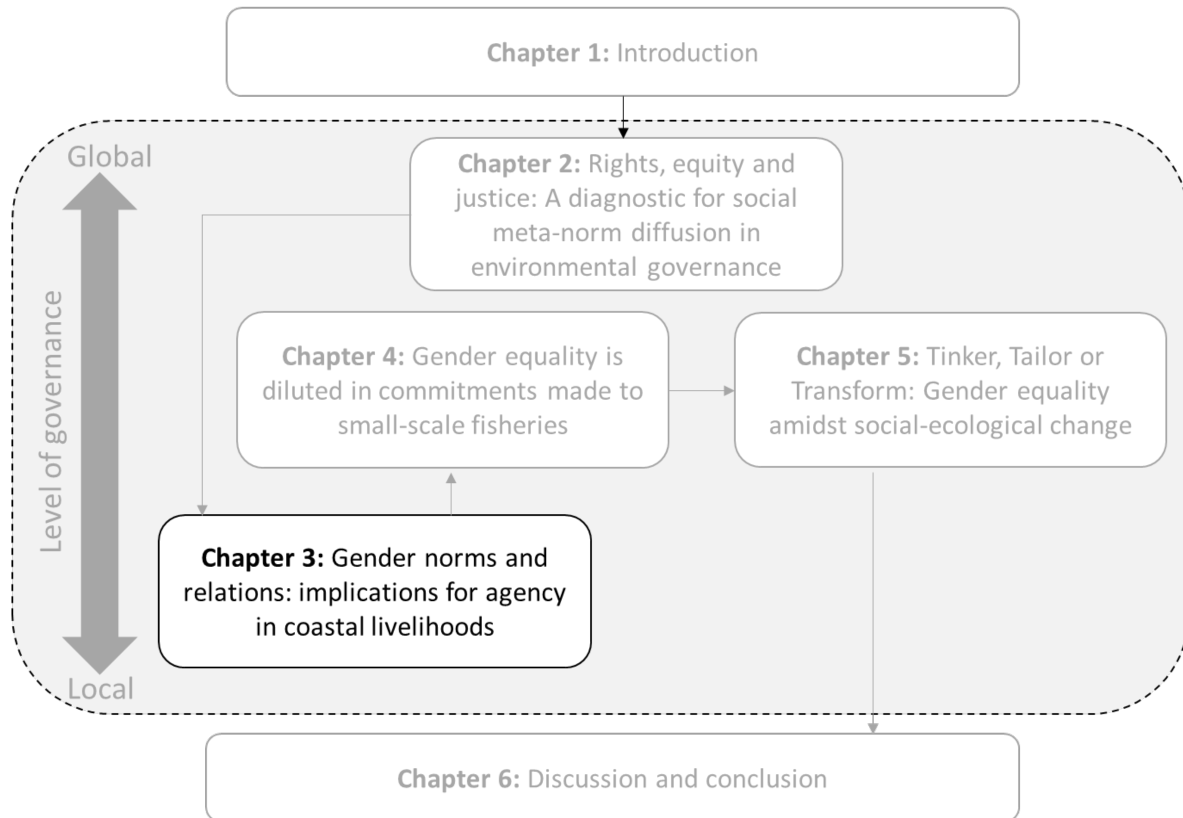

Figure 2-4. Thesis map: Chapter Two to Chapter Three.

In Chapter Two I developed a diagnostic to facilitate understanding of the different conditions and mechanisms that shape diffusion of gender equality in different environmental governance contexts. In Chapter Three I zoom-in to provide an example of the local level context in which the gender equality pursuits of environmental governance organizations may ultimately seek to have influence. This local level analysis is undertaken in three coastal dwelling communities of Solomon Islands involved in natural resource based livelihood initiatives, and provides insight into the types of gender inequalities governance organizations may seek to address.

3 Gender norms and relations: implications for agency in coastal livelihoods

Published as **Lawless, S.**, Cohen, P., McDougall, C., Orirana, G., Siota, F., & Doyle, K. (2019). Gender norms and relations: implications for agency in coastal livelihoods. *Maritime Studies, 18*, 347–358.

Contribution: I developed the research question for this chapter. I collected the data in collaboration with GO and FS. I analysed the data and wrote the chapter. PJC, CM and KD provided advice on research objectives and manuscript format. PJC, CM, GO, FS and KD and assisted with structuring and editing the published manuscript.

Abstract

Improving livelihoods and livelihood opportunities is a popular thrust of development investments. Gender and other forms of social differentiation influence individual agency to access, participate in, and benefit from existing, new or improved livelihood opportunities. Recent research illustrates that many initiatives intended to improve livelihoods still proceed as ‘gender blind’, failing to account for the norms and relations that will influence how women and men experience opportunities and outcomes. To examine gender in livelihoods, I employed empirical case studies in three coastal communities in Solomon Islands; a small island developing state where livelihoods are predominantly based on fisheries and agriculture. Using the GENNOVATE methodology (a series of focus-groups) I investigated how gender norms and relations influence agency (i.e., the availability of choice and capacity to exercise choice). I find that men are able to pursue a broader range of livelihood activities than women who tend to be constrained by individual perceptions of risk and socially prescribed physical mobility restraints. I find the livelihood portfolios of women and men are more diverse than in the past. However, livelihood diversity may limit women’s more immediate freedoms to exercise agency because they are simultaneously experiencing intensified time and labour demands. My findings challenge the broad proposition that livelihood diversification will lead to improvements for agency and overall wellbeing. In community-level decision-making men’s capacity to exercise choice was perceived to be greater in relation to livelihoods, as well as strategic life decisions more broadly. By contrast, capacity to exercise choice within households involved spousal negotiation, and consensus was considered more important than male or female dominance in decision-making. The prevailing global insight is that livelihood initiatives are more likely to bring about sustained and equitable outcomes if they are designed based on understandings of the distinct ways women and men participate in and experience livelihoods. My study provides insights to make these improvements in a Solomon Islands setting. I suggest that better accounting for these gendered differences not only improves livelihood outcomes, but also presents opportunity to catalyse the re-negotiation of gender norms and relations; thereby promoting greater individual agency.

3.1 Introduction

In many developing country and small island contexts, human wellbeing is tightly tied to primary productivity, often accessed via fisheries and agriculture. In these contexts, livelihoods are a common entry point to drive improvements to wellbeing (Ellis, 2000; Vijaya et al., 2014). Here I broadly define a livelihood as means of generating income, securing food or spending time (Jiao et al., 2017; Nielsen et al., 2013). A precondition for improving wellbeing through livelihoods is an understanding of how gender inequalities have implications for individual agency (Kabeer, 1999a). Sen (1985, p. 203) defines agency as what a "person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important". Having choice and exercising choice, by this definition, are essential for individuals to access, participate in and benefit from livelihoods opportunities to enhance their own wellbeing. Whilst many studies propose a range of indicators of agency (e.g., Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007; Kabeer, 1999a; Sen, 1985), having choice and exercising choice are frequently cited as central elements, and are strongly correlated with the manifestation of gender inequalities (Boudet et al., 2013; Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007; Kabeer, 1999a; Malhotra et al., 2002).

Agency can vary between individuals as a result of the differing sets of choices available to women and to men, and differences in their capacity to exercise these choices (Boudet et al., 2013). In short, the conditions shaping individual agency are gendered. In many development contexts opportunity structures (i.e., education, information, extension services) tend to favour men, elevating them into positions where they are more able than women to access and control productive assets (i.e., land, income, equipment, technology) and natural resources (i.e., fish, land and produce) (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2014). Women tend to be less able to make claims on natural resources and determine the direction of decisions related to assets and resource use within households and communities (Agarwal, 1997; Okali, 2006). In situations where income poverty and geographical remoteness are greater, the disparity in the choices available to women and men, and opportunities to exercise these choices, become more extreme (Boudet et al., 2013).

Gender inequalities in individual agency are underpinned by norms and relations that regulate the different roles, responsibilities, and expectations society ascribes to women and to men. Gender norms are the attitudes and informal 'rules' that govern behaviours considered to be appropriate, acceptable, or desirable for women and for men within a particular society (Boudet et al., 2013). Gender relations refer to the relationships between women and men, and how these relationships are influenced by, and in turn influence, the social expectations of women and men in society (Agarwal 1997). These norms and relations are themselves expressions of, and produce, different manifestations of agency by shaping individuals abilities to act freely and have choice (Boudet et al., 2013). A study examining livelihoods

across 20 primarily developing countries, found that women's agency is more closely bound by traditional gender norms and relations than men's (Boudet et al., 2013). Agency is not only influenced by gender, but is also influenced by (and intersects with) other common 'markers of disadvantage' including; poverty, age, ethnicity, religion and disability status, that can accentuate the effects of gender norms and relations (World Bank, 2013, p. 39).

Development initiatives that alter, supplement, or diversify existing livelihoods will have gendered impacts; critically, even where they do not include an explicit focus on gender (Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2009; Stacey et al., 2019). Yet, recent research highlights that many initiatives intended to improve livelihoods still proceed as 'gender blind' (Kleiber et al., 2019b; Stacey et al., 2019). These initiatives tend to focus on either women or men and not account for the influence of gender norms and relations on opportunities and outcomes. The way livelihood initiatives are designed and delivered can reinforce, maintain or shift gendered patterns in the divisions in labour, participation in decision-making, and access to/control over assets and resources in households and communities (Okali, 2006; Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2009). If gender is not accounted for, inequalities in women's and men's agency to negotiate their socio-economic conditions and maintain their wellbeing may be perpetuated, or even exaggerated (Kawarazuka et al., 2017; Nightingale, 2006; Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2009). In order to improve opportunities and outcomes for both women and men, livelihood initiatives (i.e., those that introduce new and/or altered farming and fishing methods/management, or marketing strategies) need to be designed to consider how gender inequalities affect individual agency.

Yet, in many contexts understandings of the influence of gender upon agency and upon livelihoods is lacking. Specific knowledge gaps relate to how gender norms and relations shape the different choices individuals have to access and participate in livelihoods, and their ability to exercise that choice. In this paper, the overarching research question I seek to answer is: how do gender norms and relations influence the expressions of agency of women, men and youth in their livelihoods? I address this question by capturing the gender-differentiated experiences of women, men, and youth using an established methodology that combines qualitative and quantitative techniques. I develop this understanding in three coastal, relatively remote communities of Solomon Islands, a small island developing state, where the majority of the population are highly reliant on coastal resources. My empirical data relate to current livelihoods and include some inisghts from externally delivered livelihood initiatives these communities have previously engaged with. I structure my results according to the description of agency that Boudet and colleagues (2013) offer which distinguishes between, a) choices of individuals to access and participate in livelihoods, and b) individual capacity to exercise choice in livelihoods (including the new or altered livelihood initiatives being facilitated). I make this distinction to avoid the common assumption that *access* to livelihoods enables or equates to an individual's ability to *exercise* choice (Boudet et al., 2013; Kabeer, 1999b). As Kabeer (1999b)

expresses, it is import to differentiate between access to choice as measure of potential ability, and the actualization of choice.

3.2 Methods

3.2.1 Study context

Solomon Islands is a small island developing state situated in the south western Pacific Ocean. The nation is the third most populous of the Pacific Islands Countries and Territories with approximately 600 000 inhabitants; 80% of whom reside in rural areas (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2009). Solomon Islands is ranked low in human development and is placed at 152 of 189 countries in the UNDP human development index (UNDP, 2018). Land (and to some extent coastal marine areas) is governed and allocated through customary tenure systems, and 87% of land is customarily owned (AusAid, 2008). The majority of the population are dependent on subsistence and/or small-scale agriculture (89%) and fisheries (60%) for household food and income, with under 20% of the population participating in salaried employment (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2009).

Customary practices and beliefs, Christianization, colonization, and more recently, independence, have profoundly affected the contemporary culture, social structure, economy and the use and status of natural resources in Solomon Islands (Allen et al., 2013; Bennett, 1987; Foale & Macintyre, 2000). These historical periods have shaped deep-seated gender norms and relations, that are known to influence decision-making related to land and coastal resources (Akin, 2003; Foale & Macintyre, 2000), divisions in labour and broader expectations of moral behaviour (Cohen et al., 2016; Pollard, 2000). In terms of livelihood activities, women tend to be primarily responsible for crop farming, with an estimated 71% of women engaged in subsistence farming in comparison to 51% of men (JICA, 2010). Men's participation is higher in reef and offshore fishing, while women generally participate in inshore coastal environments, such as lagoons and mangrove areas (Kronen & Vunisea, 2009). Whilst most people in Solomon Islands' sustain their daily livelihood needs through primary production, people living in more geographically remote areas simultaneously experience what is described as 'poverty of opportunity' (Lightfoot et al., 2001). This means there are few opportunities for people to change from subsistence livelihoods or to bring about improvements to their living situations. In an attempt to redress this, many development initiatives have used different approaches to improve or diversify opportunities available for women and men in coastal rural areas – reflecting a broader Pacific and global trend (Cinner & Bodin, 2010; Gillett et al., 2008).

3.2.2 Study area

The research was undertaken between September 2014 and September 2015 in three coastal communities; one community in Western Province and two communities in Malaita Province (Figure 3-1). Each community comprised of a cluster of between four and 10 villages. These villages are geographical proximate and have historical social alliances, and the purposes of this paper, I refer to these village clusters as one community.

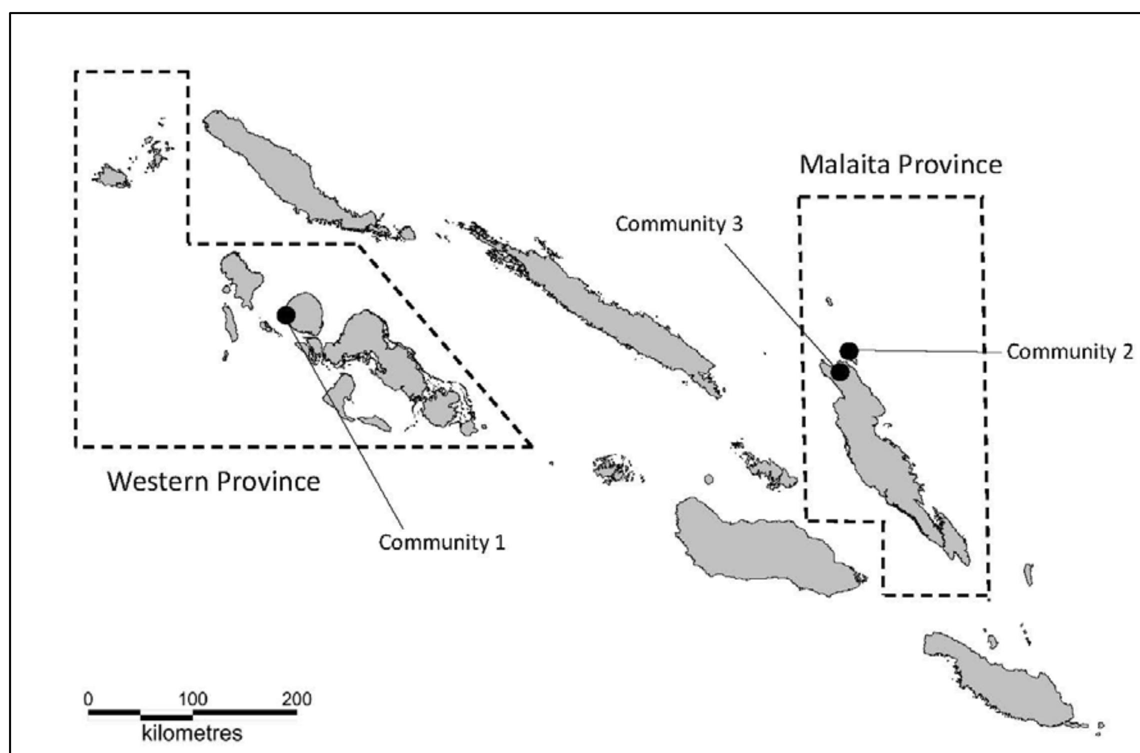

Figure 3-1. A map of Solomon Islands indicating the three study communities.

Western and Malaita Provinces reflect the national trend of high rates of participation in subsistence and/or small-scale farming (Western 93% and Malaita 95% of households) and fishing (Western 83%, Malaita 49% of households). The differences between engagement in fisheries in the two provinces is partly explained by the relatively greater proportion of the population residing in coastal areas in Western Province compared to Malaita. Western Province has a higher rate of salaried employment (20%) compared to Malaita (9%), mostly attributable to the greater rates of commercial logging and tourism in the West (Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2009).

3.2.3 Study sample

Our selection of Solomon Islands as a case was opportunistic; as it was a focus of the CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems and projects funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research that were focused on community engagement to realize improvements to livelihoods. Communities involved in the program were selected because they had: (i) a high dependence on aquatic (i.e., mangrove, reefs, and coastal) resources and/or terrestrial (i.e., forest and agricultural plots); (ii) experienced resource decline associated with fisheries and/or agriculture; and, (iii) expressed an interest in receiving support to improve livelihood opportunities and the condition of their productive resources. At the time of data collection, the communities studied had been involved in the program between one and two years. Activities undertaken prior to this study included community consultations for preliminary scoping and agreement to research, and the participatory development of broad-scope community action plans. Preliminary and collaborative activities that followed included the development of fisheries management plans, inter and intra-community sharing of farming techniques, and training in organic farming methods. In Community 1, a women's savings club[2] was also initiated by an external organization prior to engagement with program.

3.2.4 Data collection

Data were collected using four different focus-group discussion (FGD) formats (Table 3-1). Questions were designed to explore how gender norms and relations influenced the wellbeing of community members. The FGD formats used were contextualized versions of the tools developed for GENNOVATE[3] a comparative global research initiative examining gender norms and agency in natural resource management (see Badstue et al., 2018; Petesch et al., 2018). The GENNOVATE methods were selected because they had been developed and peer reviewed by a group of gender and development experts, were designed explicitly to examine capacities (including agency) to innovate in livelihood domains and offered an opportunity for subsequent global comparison.

Table 3-1. Objectives and scope of focus-group discussions.

Format	Objective
FGD 1	To explore women's and men's experiences with and perceptions of norms and relations shaping gender roles, household and community decision-making related to livelihoods, women's physical mobility, and access to livelihood opportunities

[2] A local micro-finance arrangement designed to economically empower women by offering a safe space to save and loan money.

[3] https://gennovate.org/

FGD 2	To explore women's and men's experiences with and perceptions of factors enabling and constraining innovation, opportunities for agriculture entrepreneurship, social cohesion and networks
FGD 3	To explore women's and men's experiences with and perceptions of inequality and social differentiation, including factors shaping socioeconomic status and mobility, and their gender dimensions
FGD 4	To explore female and male youths' experiences with and perceptions of norms and relations shaping gender roles, household and community decision-making related to livelihoods, women's physical mobility, access to livelihood opportunities, social cohesion and networks

FGDs were designed and written in English, and then translated, tested and modified by local researchers fluent in English and Pijin to clarify any ambiguities. FGDs were conducted in Solomon Islands Pijin, which was the common language across all communities (and between researchers and respondents). Prior to commencing research, a meeting with community leaders was held where the research objectives were discussed and a schedule of FGDs was drafted. After the meeting, respondents volunteered their participation for the FGDs and provided verbal informed consent. Due to community confidentiality agreements, community and respondent identities remain anonymous.

A total of 24 FGDs were conducted with 232 respondents across three communities. Eight FGDs were held in each community over a period of five days with separate groups of a) adult men (n=79), b) adult women (n=92), c) male youth (n=45), and d) female youth (n=16). Respondent demographic data were collected prior to each FGD. Respondents were aged between 16 and 70 years of age, resided locally and were actively engaged in fishing and/or agriculture (Table 3-2). Youth were unmarried, and between the ages of 16-24. FGDs were held with between five and 20 people and took between 40 minutes and five hours.

Table 3-2. Size of communities where research was conducted , education completion rates, study participation and the number of FGDs conducted.

	Community 1	**Community 2**	**Community 3**
Community demographics			
No. villages	7	4	10
No. households	50+	72	68
Average no. of household members	5.4	6.5	6.5
Primary education (% participation/completion)	100/61	87/39	91/72
Secondary education (% participation/completion)	54/0	27/1	52/1
No formal schooling (%)	0	13	9
Participation in study			
No. FGDs	8	8	8
FGD respondents (adult men)	25	18	36
FGD respondents (adult women)	29	26	37
FGD respondents (male youth)	11	20	14
FGD respondents (female youth)	nil	10	6
Total respondents	65	74	93

3.2.5 Data analysis

FGDs were recorded digitally and in writing. Transcripts were translated from Pijin into English using digital and written recordings. Data were coded in NVivo10. Preliminary coding was undertaken using a coding structure developed from the GENNOVATE study, which consisted of theory-driven codes (overarching themes included gender norms, agency and agricultural innovation), and data-driven codes based on sampling a sub-set of transcripts. I then analysed data for emergent themes through an iterative process that involved the comparison of data between respondent groups and between communities. Data from FGDs were predominantly qualitative, however FGD format one and two involved collection of Likert scale data. These quantitative data were analysed using Pearson's chi-square test for independence.

3.3 Results and discussion

3.3.1 Livelihood choices

Our study sought to explore the manifestations of agency through the livelihood choices available to women and men. Demographic data illustrated that primary or secondary livelihood activities of respondents primarily focused on the production of food and income through fisheries and agriculture in close proximity to their communities. Across all three communities 91% of women reported farming as a primary livelihood activity, and 81% of men reported they either farmed or fished as their primary livelihood activity. It was common across all communities for households to have small agricultural plots (referred to as gardens) located on family-owned land. Community 1 was geographically closer to a large regional centre than Communities 2 and 3. Discussions of both women and men in Community 1 reflected greater access to salaried employment than the respondents of Community 2 and 3, where pursing salaried employment would require migration to an urban centre.

In this section I present the results and discuss how gender norms and relations (and the shifts in these expectations) have shaped divisions in labour (section 3.3.1.1), physical mobility (section 3.3.1.2) and influenced the livelihood activities individuals were able to pursue. I then examine the gendered impacts of livelihood diversification in response to the introduction of new or altered livelihood initiatives (section 3.3.1.3).

3.3.1.1 Gender norms and divisions in labour

To supplement my demographic data on livelihood roles FGDs explored underlying norms. Discussions of norms shaping gender roles in FGD formats one and four indicated distinct perceptions of divisions

in labour and livelihood activities that were socially appropriate for women and men to participate in. These perceptions in turn influenced the livelihood choices available to individuals. Adult women reported that "gardening is our work", whereas men reported a diversity of livelihood practices in addition to gardening; such as building and selling hand-carved dugout canoes, cutting and selling firewood, building houses for informal salaries and fishing for both food and income. Men in Community 1 also reported they were able to work for nearby logging companies. Despite women's greater access to salaried employment in Community 1, across all communities adult women suggested they had access to limited opportunities, "some of us women only have our garden for our livelihoods". Men had a greater set of choices to access and participate in livelihoods. This is consistent with the findings of Scheyvens (2003) who suggests that the program of the early missionaries in Solomon Islands aimed at restricting women to the domestic sphere whilst encouraging men to be part of the growth of the modern economy.

Respondents reported that customary beliefs influenced contemporary livelihoods. Both female and male respondents reported that, in the past, domestic labour was primarily a woman's responsibility, and according to local custom, men were forbidden from cooking and washing women's clothes. As one adult woman reported, "Men were the boss and were served by the women, like a chief". There was evidence that these expressions of masculine status were maintained in present-day livelihood practices. Both female and male respondents reported women's ability to leave the household or community (e.g., to attend markets) was hindered because in her absence her husband would have to undertake "women's work". Both female and male respondents reported that in this situation the husband and wife risk criticism from other community members and "… they will say she must be the boss of her husband". While I do not have data to suggest this was the case here, it has been found elsewhere that where people are exhibiting increased agency in a way that challenges existing power relations, there is a risk of increased tension in relationships, and even violence, towards individuals or groups that exhibit greater agency (Boudet et al., 2013).

3.3.1.2 Gender norms and physical mobility

Across all three communities, female and male respondents reported women faced restrictions in traveling to sell their produce at markets in regional centers. An adult male respondent expressed "there is no reason for a woman to go out marketing, she is supposed to be staying at home with the kids". Another male respondent suggested there was also some level of distrust associated with women travelling away from the community; "[a] woman makes the husband work hard in doing everything at home from looking after the kids, cooking, washing and going to the garden whilst the woman is out somewhere doing marketing. Who knows what she is doing? She can do anything she wishes in the absence of her husband …". However, different views were shared in Community 1 where a women's

savings club initiative had appeared to increase the social support and acceptance women received to attend markets. One woman reported “before we had a savings club our husbands didn’t let us do anything. If we came back late they would be cross. But now if we come back late they hug us!”.

Individual physical mobility (and migration more broadly) is viewed as a fundamental capability shaping individual freedom (de Haas, 2009). In the instances where women migrate or become more physically mobile, the potential for gender roles to shift becomes greater, allowing more flexibility in divisions in labour and livelihood pursuits (de Haas, 2009). Yet, research in other developing contexts has established that even in the instances where there are no restrictions on women’s physical mobility, the jobs that women undertake outside of their communities are merely extensions of their domestic roles (i.e., teaching, nursing or cooking) (Boudet et al., 2013; Start & Johnson, 2004). This suggests that physical mobility freedoms do not necessarily correlate with greater agency to pursue a range of livelihoods, as there is still a need to reconcile livelihood choices with the norms that determine the appropriate roles for women and men to undertake.

3.3.1.3 Gendered impacts of livelihood diversification

We found evidence that historically strict gendered divisions in labour had become more relaxed and the livelihoods women and men were participating had diversified. An adult woman reported “before, because of custom, men did not do the work of women, like washing clothes. Now it’s changed. If the men husk coconuts, the women husk coconuts too”. Female respondents reported they had more recently become actively engaged in net fishing, an activity once only undertaken by men. In the instances livelihood initiatives had led to increased income and food for the household (i.e., from the women’s savings club and organic farming), my results indicated a correlation with the destabilization of norms related to divisions in household labour. In these situations men became more prepared to undertake ‘women’s work’ to allow their wives to continue production and sale of products. One adult man reported “today women can instruct their husbands to clean the house when they are away. This is not something that was practised before”. One adult male respondent reported, “since [external organization] have come into our village I’ve realized the term ‘gender’ and today women and men in the village share responsibilities. Men can wash dishes and women can cut the firewood too”. Some respondents suggested these shifts in norms were facilitated by exposure to external organizations, population growth and increased pressure for primary production. Other studies suggest that traditional divisions in labour have destabilized overtime due to an increase in women accessing formal education (Pollard 2000), and specific to coastal livelihoods, shifts toward a cash-based economies (Barclay et al., 2018) leading women and men to question traditional norms.

Whilst I found evidence of shifts in divisions in labour, these were not always perceived as positive. One adult woman reported "Life now is hard … [in the past] men had their own work, and women had their own work. Nowadays women's work is heavy … Before, carrying water and hoeing the garden only the men did. But now, the women are doing this work". Female respondents in Community 1 reported that because of the savings club, they now not only needed to maintain their domestic roles, but also needed to find time to participate in new livelihood activities. My results are consistent with other studies from Solomon Islands that suggest women's labour demands continue to escalate as livelihood activities diversify (Cohen et al., 2016; McDougall, 2014; Pollard, 2000). Through the frame of adaptive capacity, higher livelihood diversity is considered to be a positive attribute correlated with a greater ability to adapt in the event of social or ecological change (Cinner & Bodin, 2010; Cohen et al., 2016). Yet, women's own reflections indicated that this had led to a greater labour burden. These findings indicate that a diversity of livelihood choices may limit women's more immediate freedoms to exercise agency as a result of increasing responsibilities and time pressures. As argued by Start and Johnson (2004), having many livelihood choices does not necessarily equate to women's freedom to depart from entrenched gender roles.

We explored factors shaping individual choice to trial and adopt new agricultural activities. An example raised in discussion was organic farming practices that varied from the popular practices of renewing a garden plot referred to as "slash and burn". Across all three communities 91% of women reported they were primarily responsible for land based food provisioning. Female respondents reported their adoption of new practices was limited by perceived risks associated with experimenting with new methods; "those who practice organic farming go hungry for some time until they start to reap the yields". These results suggested that women held greater concerns about limited or delayed rewards in trialing new agricultural practices (such as those introduced externally). I found among women and men, the willingness to adopt new practices would be higher with prior evidence of success, "people in the village want to see results first before they try new things". This finding emphasizes the importance of addressing these risks for women, and the perceptions of risks amongst both men and women (as opposed to initiatives focusing solely on technical or knowledge gaps), before any progress might be made along an agricultural-livelihood improvement pathway.

Risk perception and exposure affects the choices available to an individual (Gustafson, 1998). In many contexts women are found to be more risk averse than men as perceptions of risk are reinforced by norms that promote the reproductive responsibilities of women, leaving women with less time and physical space to experiment and innovate (Fothergill, 1996; Gustafson, 1998). Willingness to bear risk in trialing new or altered livelihoods is found to be influenced by the presence, absence or quality of relationships with external organizations affiliated with livelihood initiatives (Cohen et al., 2016). Initiatives that can help carry the cost of innovation, with particular recognition to the constraints of

women, are more likely to enhance opportunities to access, participate in and lead to improved outcomes (Cohen et al., 2016).

Scholars examine historical patterns of labour as a starting point to understand the contemporary cultural distinction and views of women's and men's roles in livelihoods (Pearson, 2000). The destabilization of these gender norms that shaped historical divisions in labour can open up spaces for women to innovate and experiment with new or altered livelihood activities (Boudet et al., 2013). In developing country contexts, high livelihood diversity can be viewed as a safety net to maintain basic needs where risk is spread (Ellis, 2000). On the surface, women's increased participation in net fishing might be interpreted as an indication of greater livelihood choice, however my findings signaled that diversification in this case was associated with intensification of women's labour. In case studies that employed the same methodologies in Cambodia and Philippines, Locke et al. (2017) found that diversified livelihoods of women could also represent family hardship, where a woman needs to add value to her husband's enterprise – the consequence being a greater labour burden and further constraints upon agency. Interestingly, perception of risk (found to be greater for women) was in fact a strong reason given for *not* trialing new livelihoods. In my case, diversified livelihoods did not represent increased choice in the way in which individuals generate income, secure food or spend their time. Just as important to understand, although not examined here, are the structural factors such as the political institutions, constraints of geography and rurality, market and economic opportunities, and the State (Agarwal, 1997; Start & Johnson, 2004).

3.3.2 Capacity to exercise choice in livelihoods

Understanding agency in the context of livelihoods requires identifying both gender differences in the availability of choice, but also individual capacity to exercise that choice. The conditions in which individuals exercise choice in livelihoods is affected by their ability to make strategic life decisions, not only in relation to livelihoods, but within households and communities broadly (Boudet et al., 2013). Community and household decision-making domains are commonly analysed separately in gender literature in order to distinguish between the different gender-based constraints at these scales (Agarwal, 1997; Kabeer, 1999b; Malhotra et al., 2002). Using a visual representation of a 'power' ladder, adult females and males scored their power and freedom to make 'all' to 'none' of their own life decisions. Quantitative results indicated only a marginal difference in the experiences of women and men; where slightly more women (57%) than men (50%) indicated that they had the power and freedom to make 'most' to 'all' of their own life decisions (n=64, df=4, p=>0.01). Although the quantitative difference was slight, my examination of qualitative responses illustrated that women and men were in fact referring to decision-making within different domains. Men's discussions on power in decision-making

were dominated by references to decisions made at the community level (i.e., in relation to schools, the Church, and management of coastal resources, specifically land, fish and reefs). By contrast, women most commonly discussed decision-making at the household level (i.e., in relation to children, crop farming and household consumption). These results illustrate two quite different points. First, that a relative measure of agency is dependent on particular settings, social hierarchies and individual values. These findings expose the different realms of decision-making women and men are exposed to, and, consistent with Sen's definition of agency, their ability to act on behalf of what an individual values and has reason to value. Second, the distinctions in my qualitative data highlight some limitations of quantitative methodologies, described as "simple windows on complex realities" for social and gender analysis (Kabeer, 1999b, p. 447). The pairing of the both quantitative and qualitative data here provided a view of women's and men's relative agency in different decision-making domains; it was the qualitative data only that enabled us to see distinctions in the *type* of decisions being made. In the following sections I explore women's and men's power and freedom to make decisions in the community (including through external support structures) (section 3.3.2.1) and within the household (section 3.3.2.2) in more detail.

3.3.2.1 Exercising choice in communal domains

Decisions made in communal domains can affect the sets of livelihood choices individuals have, and capacities to exercise those choices (Agarwal, 1997; Meinzen-Dick et al., 2014). In Solomon Islands community leadership structures and relationships of power are underpinned by customary tenure systems as well as gender norms and relations that influence the different opportunities individuals have to benefit from livelihoods and to participate in their governance (Hviding, 1998; JICA, 2010).

Land and marine tenure operated through a system of matrilineal descent in Community 1 and patrilineal descent in Communities 2 and 3. Whilst I did not conduct an in-depth exploration of the influence of customary tenure rights on agency, my results reinforced the findings of others who challenge the assumption that matrilineal descent systems transmit greater decision-making power to women (see Macintyre, 2008; Meinzen-Dick et al., 1997). Discussions among men in all communities inferred that in practice, men ultimately act as spokespeople and negotiators in extra-household decisions regarding the use of land and marine resources, irrespective of inheritance systems. Discussions in FGD format one suggested women overall, and men who did not hold primary land rights, were less able to determine the direction of decisions about the use and management of coastal and terrestrial resources - regardless of inheritance systems. Respondents from Community 2 reported that as the number of people involved in farming had increased, the land available for gardening had become scarce, and disputes over land and tenure had increased. Literature examining tenure rights pay close attention to gender disparities (Meinzen-Dick et al., 1997; Okali, 2006). Yet studies that use

measures of women's access to or control over coastal or terrestrial resources often fail to demonstrate how such rights translate into agency, specifically freedom to exercise choice (Kabeer, 1999a).

FGD formats one and four explored norms and relations that shaped gender roles and decision-making power. Responses suggested that men had more explicit involvement in local community and traditional governance structures than women. The importance of intersectionality became clear in Communities 2 and 3 where it was reported that migrants and/or men who do not have tenure rights experienced substantially less agency in community decisions. Formal leadership positions (e.g., clan chiefs, village chiefs, village chairmen, church leaders) in all three communities were predominantly held by men. These roles prescribed responsibilities for negotiating, enforcing and sanctioning (e.g., through compensation payments) community activities and rules. The only exceptions were the leadership positions held by women in women's, youth, church or community groups. Women's exclusion from communal decisions that enforce or modify rules governing a community (e.g., decisions that affect customary tenure rights, control over coastal or terrestrial resources, and access to external support structures and opportunities) will have adverse implications for their livelihoods (Agarwal, 1997; Boudet et al., 2013). For example, a study exploring community based coastal marine management in Solomon Islands found that women rarely participated in management decisions, and associated their exclusion with the closure of an area commonly fished by women (Rohe et al., 2018b).

There is evidence to suggest that women may have greater agency when they have access to supportive community groups (Boudet et al., 2013). I found the explicit efforts of non-government organizations to support the contributions of women in the activities they led (i.e., through the women's savings club in Community 1) appeared to increase women's self-efficacy, brought social and economic security to households and communities, and led to improvements in overall wellbeing. One woman explained; "when organizations come into our community we see the light. Like when you [external organization] come, you educate us and open our minds. That's why we know we have the right to make decisions and we feel free to speak out. Before our mouths were zipped. We had good ideas, but we never voiced them. If we voiced our ideas, no one would follow them". From an etic perspective, I observed that the very act of engaging with external organizations increased the self-confidence of both women and men in dealing with 'outsiders'. Nonetheless, this confidence is not necessarily stable as flow on effects for the empowerment of women through access to community groups are certainly not guaranteed. Malhotra et al. (2002, p. 8) contend that women's access to external support and resources should be perceived as 'enabling factors' and not be interpreted as 'proxies' for empowerment. This was true in my case where respondents reported that external livelihood initiatives had sought to increase women's representation in decision-making positions through encouraging women into community governance structures and leadership (i.e., in marine management committees). Whilst this had transformed the formal governance arrangements, female respondents suggested that this did not necessarily translate

into women's greater voice or influence (see also Cornwall, 2003). Further research might examine whether increased confidence and greater representation translates to broader agency and overall wellbeing of both women and men.

3.3.2.2 Exercising choice in the household domain

When exploring individual agency to make decisions within households, my quantitative results indicated that women perceived they had a moderate degree of power. During discussions some women suggested they were "the boss of the house", simultaneous views reported that men function as the "household head". These discussions suggested women had power to make small decisions relating to their family (i.e., how many crops to sell versus consume), they were less able to contribute to strategic life decisions, (e.g., about large household expenditures). In FGD format one, which explored perceptions of gendered decision-making power, a hypothetical situation was presented (twice with roles reversed) about the autonomy a wife/husband would have to purchase an item without requiring the wife's/husband's approval (Figure 3-2; Table 3-3). Women's and men's power in household decisions varied with a weak positive correlation indicating women faced slightly more difficulty than men. I found the views of youth were more polarised; the majority of both female and male youth reported it would be 'hard' – 'very hard' (52%) for a wife, but 'very easy' (56%) for a husband to make decisions regarding the use of money in the absence of his wife's support. The more rigid views held by youth were expressed through references to men as the 'head of the house' and 'the boss' more frequently than adults. Whilst my findings do not provide evidence of the persistence of such beliefs, it is possible they may relate to the geographic isolation of the communities participating in this study. Consistent with Whitehead et al. (2007), it is also feasible that youth tended to represent more strongly in group discussions the views of how they felt things *should* be. Whitehead et al. suggest that the formation of gendered identities among youth are shaped by both implied and overt expectations held by family and wider social networks, which are influenced by gender and cultural norms. This would be an area worthy of further exploration in this specific context.

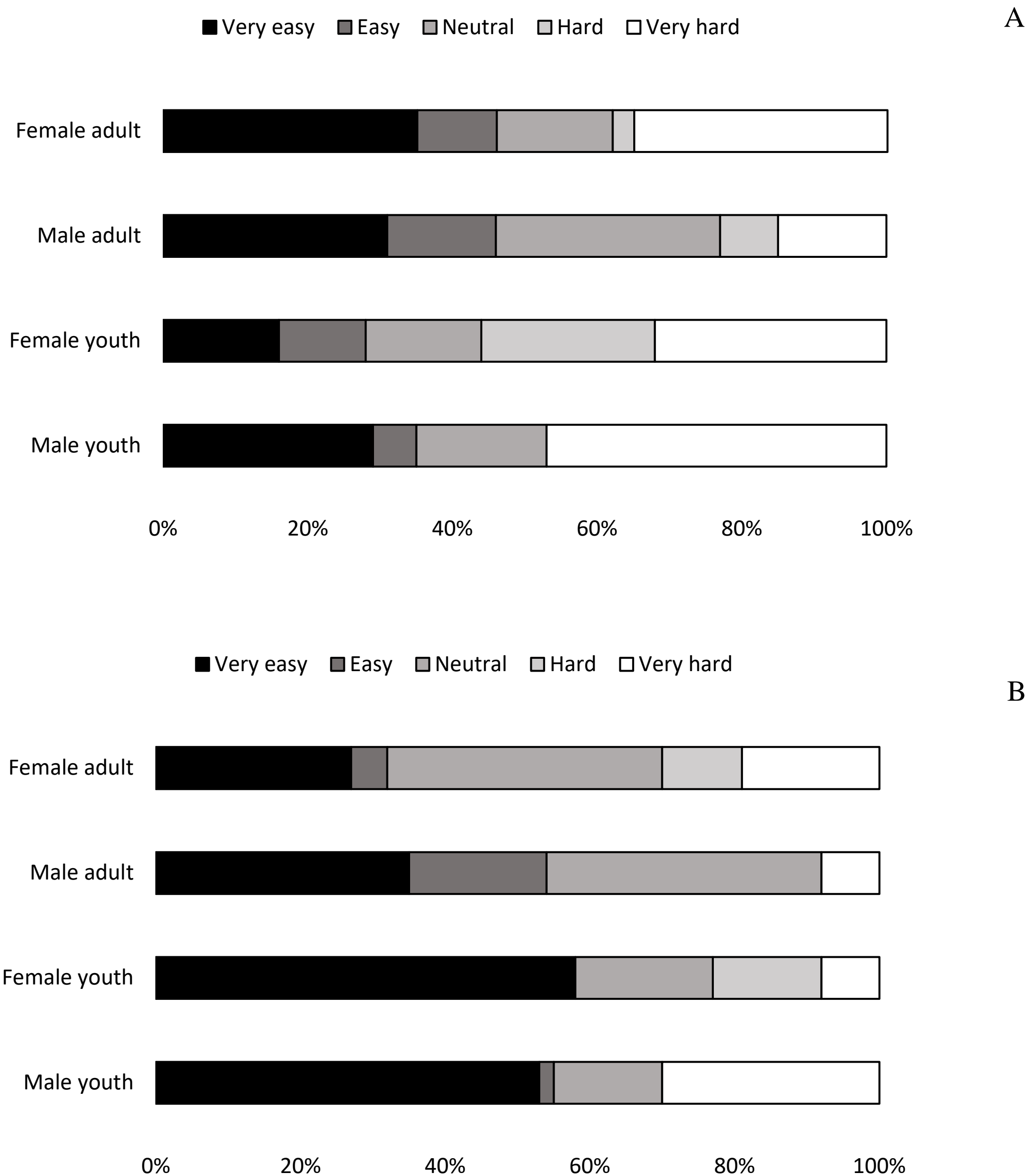

Figure 3-2. The ease or difficulty to make a purchase without spousal approval. Responses across all three communities indicating the degree to which (A) a wife or (B) a husband could proceed with a purchase (i.e., a sewing machine, or an outboard engine, respectively) without approval from their spouse.

Table 3-3. A summary of chi square tests (df = degrees of freedom, n = sample size) tests to determine the ease or difficulty with which (A) a wife or (B) a husband could proceed with a purchase. Results indicate the statistical significance (p<0.05) of response.

		df	n	p
A – the ease with which a wife may proceed with a purchase	Adult and youths combined	12	139	<0.01
	Adult women and men combined	4	63	>0.05
	Youth females and males combined	4	76	<0.01
	Comparison across communities	8	139	>0.05
B – the ease with which a husband may proceed with a purchase	Adult and youths combined	12	142	>0.05
	Adult women and men combined	4	63	>0.05
	Youth females and males combined	4	79	<0.05
	Comparison across communities	8	142	>0.05

There was a strong consensus in discussions among adults that a husband and wife should share decision-making within the household. This emphasis on negotiation and the need to maintain intra-household gender relations was far more prevalent than expressions that there was, or should be, overt gendered dominance in household decision-making. Even so, men, women and youth all conveyed that in practice men had the final say in decisions. This finding is consistent with Montgomery et al. (1996), who suggest joint household decision-making can mask male dominance. Other studies find that men tended to support the idea of spousal cooperation and shared opinions in household decision-making, however only in the instances where they did not disturb existing household power dynamics (Boudet et al., 2013; Locke et al., 2017).

Whilst these results present rigid differences in household decision-making, both women's and men's capacity to contribute to decision-making at the household level is context dependent. This fluid nature of decision-making will often influence the extent to which women will have the power to contribute to the final decision (Agarwal, 1997). For example, Pollard (2000) highlights the social and cultural complexity of decision-making in Solomon Islands by suggesting that the dominant ideology that women are subordinate to men, is paralleled by women's own conceptions of their centrality within their households and society more broadly. Creating spaces for women to exercise choice through participatory approaches have become common practice for initiatives. However external ideals of equality can be inappropriate, because in some instances women themselves may have a stake in patriarchal arrangements and overtly challenging these arrangements could risk women's means of negotiation (Cornwall, 2003). The overt compliance, and the importance some women place on maintaining gender relations and roles, may give women "room to maneuver" through maintaining

harmony (Cornwall, 2003, p. 1331). Although, Cornwall also highlights the tension that not challenging inequitable relations runs the risk of "reinforcing stakes that maintain a status quo that the marginal have tactics to grapple with, but no possibility of realizing strategies for change because they lack the power and agency to do so (cf. de Certeau, 1984)" (Cornwall, 2003, p. 1331).

3.4 Conclusion

As development initiatives increasingly turn their attention to livelihoods as an entry point for improving human wellbeing, it becomes important that these efforts consider the way gender influences how individuals experience opportunities and benefits differently (Boudet et al., 2013; Meinzen-Dick et al., 1997; Okali, 2006). Despite years of research and best practice guidance, many livelihood initiatives are gender blind, and often persist with a narrow focus on bringing new livelihoods to women (Stacey et al., 2019). Yet, unless norms, roles and aspirations of both women and men are understood and carefully navigated there is a risk that initiatives may amplify women's existing workloads under the banner of 'participation' or 'empowerment', risk backlash from family and community members, and have contradictory consequences for individual agency and overall wellbeing (Cornwall, 2003; Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2009). My empirical case studies offer some points of guidance for livelihood investments in coastal communities in Solomon Islands. The methodology I used provides readily accessible tools that could be utilized prior to commencing livelihood initiatives.

By applying the description of agency that Boudet and colleagues (2013) offer, I emphasize the distinction between the sets of livelihoods *available* to women and men, and the differences in their *capacity to exercise choice* between and among these livelihood pursuits. The research tools I employed did not explore livelihood aspirations of women, men and households, but this is a critical foundation for initiatives seeking to change, add or improve livelihoods directly. My findings challenge the broad proposition that diverse livelihoods serve as a safety net to maintain basic needs and spread risk (Ellis, 2000). This proposition underplays the risk that diversification may simultaneously increase labour burdens. I found that the livelihoods women and men choose to pursue were restricted by social and gendered expectations and gender-influenced perceptions of risk. The cross-case analysis that employed the same methodology illustrated that these social constructions are not rigid, in that if initiatives work to change beliefs (for example, by legitimizing women's mobility beyond the village) this can lead to a renegotiation of gender relations that expand women's agency to experiment and innovate (see Locke et al., 2017). Further, if *compelling* opportunities become available, then both women and men may have agency to innovate in ways that defy existing norms (Locke et al., 2017).

We found that capacity to exercise choice in livelihoods is correlated with the dynamic interactions that govern individual choice between the community and household settings. Most men (not all) had greater capacity to exercise choice and determine the direction of decisions in community settings. In the household setting, the gendered difference was less distinct, with both women and men emphasising spousal cooperation as the priority. Individual perceptions of their capability to exercise control in situations that affect their lives is an important mechanism shaping agency (Bandura, 1990). My results highlighted the different domains of decision-making women and men were exposed to, and may value. Consistent with Sen (1985), it is important that livelihood initiatives seeking to drive improvements to wellbeing, also recognize individual abilities to act on behalf of what an individual values and has reason to value.

Research focused on gender differentiation of roles, expectations, and aspirations can offer critical guidance to ensure that livelihood initiatives, and the outcomes they seek to promote, are equitable and contribute towards both sustainable and locally-perceived improvements to wellbeing. At the frontier of gender research are gender transformative approaches which suggest that certain initiatives can serve as a catalyst for the re-negotiation of gender norms and relations (e.g., Cole et al., 2018). I found some evidence of shifts in norms and relations from engagement with the women's savings club. This engagement had, in part, increased women's and men's openness to new roles and responsibilities within the household and in community governance. Nonetheless, and as cautioned by others (e.g., Nightingale, 2006; Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2009), whether livelihood initiatives intentionally acknowledge and engage with gender or not, they will interact with gender – in ways that may reinforce, or alternatively, shift existing gender norms and relations thereby having implications for the agency of different individuals. My findings add weight to others (e.g., Buvinić, 1986; Okali, 2006) who have established that livelihood initiatives are more likely to bring about sustained and equitable outcomes if they are designed and delivered based on understandings of how women and men participate in, and experience livelihood opportunities differently. However, considerable scope remains for research to investigate the manner in which livelihood initiatives can apply this knowledge in a way that challenges and shifts the underlying norms and relationships that perpetuate gender inequality.

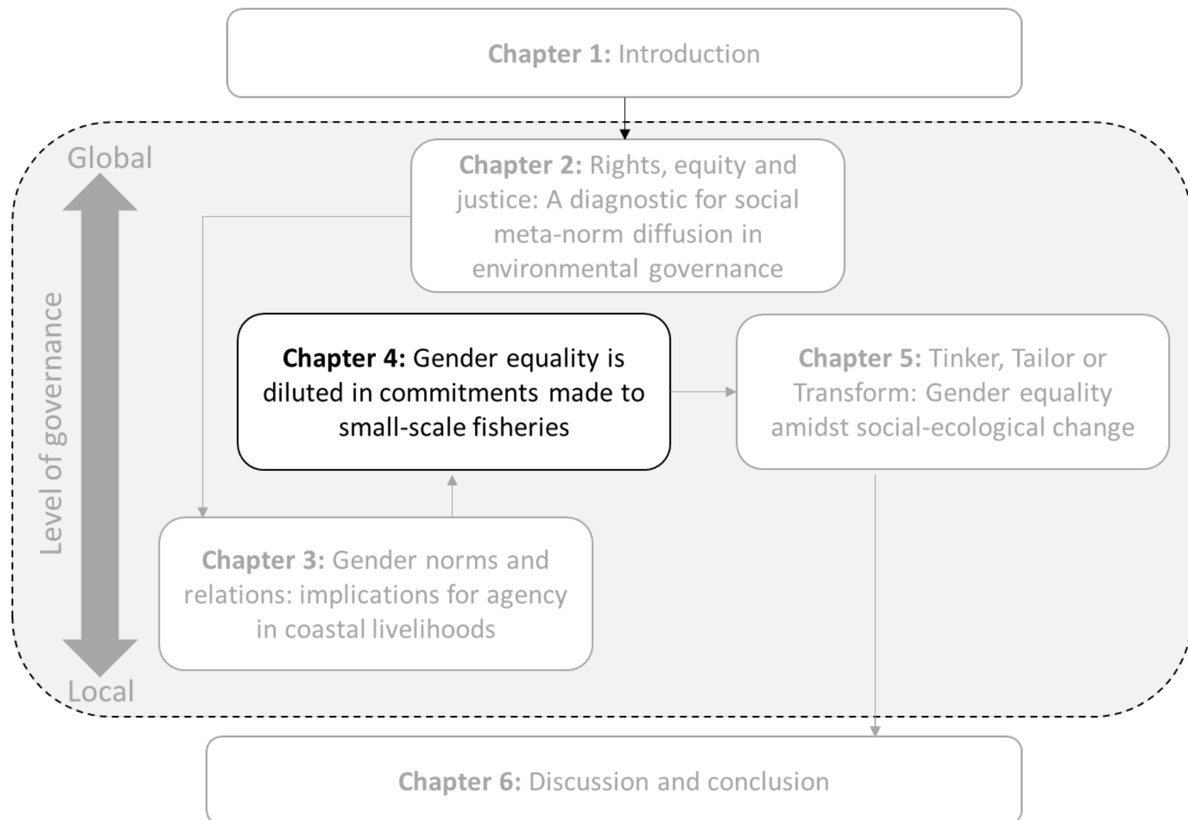

Figure 3-3. Thesis map: Chapter Three to Chapter Four.

In Chapter Three I discussed how gender considerations are critical to driving effective and equitable development outcomes, including the type gender considerations that governance organizations may need to integrate into initiative design and delivery. Whilst gender analyses such as this, and other gender integration guidance exists (e.g., de la Torre-Castro et al., 2017; Doss & Kieran, 2014), an understanding of how gender equality is being considered and influences environmental governance at regional and national levels is lacking. In Chapter Four I explore written gender equality commitments made to small-scale fisheries in the Pacific Islands region.

4 Gender equality is diluted in commitments made to small-scale fisheries

Published as **Lawless, S.**, Cohen, P. J., Mangubhai, S., Kleiber, D., & Morrison, T. H. (2021). Gender equality is diluted in commitments made to small-scale fisheries. *World Development, 140*(105348).

Contribution: I developed the research questions for this chapter. I collected the data in collaboration with SM, and I analysed the data. PJC and THM provided advice on the research questions, study design, data collection and analysis. PJC, SM, DK and THM assisted with the structuring and editing of the published manuscript.

Abstract

Gender equality is a mainstream principle of good environmental governance and sustainable development. Progress toward gender equality in fisheries, particularly small-scale capture fisheries, is critical to the sustainable development of many Small Island Developing States and coastal countries. However, while commitments to gender equality have surged at global, regional and national levels, little is known about how this principle is constructed, and proposed to be implemented across different geographies and contexts, making progress and barriers toward gender equality difficult to assess and navigate. I conducted key informant interviews with actors working in small-scale fisheries (n=26) and gender and development (n=9) sectors across the Pacific Islands to identify influential policy instruments (n=76) that I systematically analysed according to (1) representations of gender and gender equality, (2) rationales for pursing gender, and (3) gender strategies and actions. I found that fisheries policy instruments frequently narrowed gender as a concept to a focus on women, whereas the gender and development policy instruments considered gender as diverse social identities, norms and relations. In fisheries policy instruments, rationales for pursuing gender equality diverged substantially yet, overall gender equality was predominantly pursued for instrumental (i.e., to achieve better environmental outcomes) rather than intrinsic (i.e., because there is inherent value in fairness) reasons. Over two-thirds of gender equality strategies focused on an organization's own human resourcing and project assessments, rather than on direct action within communities, or for women and men reliant on fisheries. My findings illustrate gender equality commitments and investments to be narrow and outdated. Critical shifts in dominant gender equality narratives, objectives and multi-level strategies provide an opportunity for fisheries governance and development agendas to meet current best practice, and ultimately make more meaningful progress toward gender equality. The methodological approach I apply holds value for other development sectors where there is genuine commitment to critically examine, and subsequently enhance, progress toward gender equality.

4.1 Introduction

Gender equality is a mainstream principle of good environmental governance. Written and formal commitment to this principle now characterizes most major environmental conventions, organizational principles and environmentally sustainable development investments. This trend derives from decades of documenting the relationship between gender equality and sustainable natural resource use as positive and self-reinforcing, particularly in development contexts (Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2009; Rocheleau, 1995). For example, the costs of gender inequality have been found to lead to reductions in agricultural productivity and economic losses (FAO, 2011), greater food insecurity (Agarwal, 2018), and reduced effectiveness of environmental management interventions (e.g., marine protected areas) (Kleiber et al., 2018). Correspondingly, harmful gender norms and gender inequalities, including prevalence of gender-based violence, interact with disparities in access to natural resources, such as fisheries, forests, water, and energy, as well as gendered vulnerability to climate instability and disasters (Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2009; Rocheleau, 1995). Consequently, different strands of research and practice have embraced gender equality as a pillar of both equitable *and* effective environmental governance.

Productive environmental sectors, such as fisheries, reflect the complex interplay between such social and ecological challenges. The small-scale fisheries sector supports the livelihoods of approximately 110 million women and men, 97% of which reside in developing countries (World Bank et al., 2012). In Small Island Developing States, such as the 22 countries and territories within the Pacific Islands region, coastal ecosystems support exceptionally high levels of biodiversity (CTI, 2009), as well as food and nutrition security, economic opportunity, and human-wellbeing for largely coastal-dwelling populations (Andrew et al., 2019). The social and ecological development challenges and opportunities mediated through small-scale fisheries have attracted the attention of donors, international development organizations, governments, and the private sector, of which there is growing concern about issues related to social equity and justice (Cohen et al., 2019). These concerns have generated an unprecedented surge in global, regional and national commitments to address gender equality in the small-scale fisheries sector. These commitments are reflected in the 2015 global Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (FAO, 2015) and in multiple regional and national small-scale fisheries policies across different geographies (Cohen et al., 2017; Kusakabe, 2005; Nunan, 2006). Accompanying these commitments is an increase in gender-related financial investments, many of which use small-scale fisheries as an entry point (e.g., DFAT, 2019; PEUMP, 2019).

Despite these growing commitments and investments, the translation of gender equality, from fisheries policy to practice, has been difficult. Broadly, gender equality refers to "the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys" (UN Women, 2017). Promoted as a societal 'good', the global principle of gender equality is universal in character (e.g., United Nations, 2015). Critiqued for offering 'one-size-fits-all universalising remedies' to complex, diverse and changing issues of inequality throughout the world (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015, p. 397; Oyěwùmí, 1997), scholars emphasise the principle as a 'global template' for more locally relevant articulations anchored in local circumstances (Razavi, 2016, p. 28). Yet, language related to gender equality found in regional and national fisheries policies continues to be broad and even conflicting (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015; Lawless et al., 2020). For example, an analysis of small-scale fisheries policy found that gender commitments across global, regional and national level policies of Pacific Island countries were not coherent, open to wide interpretation and, in some cases, completely overlooked (Song et al., 2019). Flexibility within and towards commitments can enable diverse and subjective interpretations of gender equality by different fisheries actors (i.e., policy-makers versus fish workers) (e.g., Johnson, 2017), and also allow adaptations to sectoral, national and local contexts (Jentoft, 2014). Yet, this degree of freedom is frequently unwelcome by researchers and managers who are seeking prescriptions for how to 'do gender' (Ferguson, 2015).

A deeper understanding of how and why gender equality is being pursued, and what the proposed actions entail, is crucial to understanding the operationalization of this principle in the small-scale fisheries sector. In this paper I use discourse analysis (e.g., Hajer & Versteeg, 2005; Krook & Mackay, 2010) of small-scale fisheries policy instruments (i.e., global guidelines, regional policies, national policies and legislation, organizational program guides, annual reports, research reports, organizational policies or strategies, gender audits, codes of conduct and promotional material) to understand:

How is the concept of gender, and the principle of gender equality, represented in policy instruments that govern small-scale fisheries?
What implicit and explicit rationale are used to pursue the principle of gender equality?
What are the strategies and actions proposed to address gender inequalities?

I answer these questions for fisheries governance in the Pacific Island region, by examining global and regional level commitments alongside national policy instruments from Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. These questions are pertinent to any sector, policy realm or investment seeking to contribute towards environmental governance and sustainable development. The methodology I develop and apply to examine multi-level gender commitments here would be of value for such future analyses.

4.2 Methods

4.2.1 Study context

The Pacific Islands region is one of the most biologically and culturally diverse in the world (Veron et al., 2009). Small-scale fisheries (i.e., the people, gears, methods and processes used to harvest and benefit from marine resources in coastal habitats and inland waters) reflect this diversity, providing a foundation for livelihoods, food and nutrition security, and are a cornerstone of Pacific Islanders' cultural identity (Kronen & Vunisea, 2009; Veitayaki & Novaczek, 2005). To ensure these benefits are secure amidst environmental and demographic change, substantial investments are made throughout the region to improve environmental conservation, fisheries governance and social-ecological resilience (e.g., SPC, 2015).

The articulation of gender in small-scale fisheries both reflects, and reinforces gender norms and relations which are tempered by customary, colonial and contemporary influences on Pacific Island societies (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2005; MacIntyre & Spark, 2017). Despite common misconceptions, fishing activities are not exclusively undertaken by men (Kleiber et al., 2013). Through the use of sex-disaggregated data, fisheries research in the Pacific Islands region has endeavoured to illuminate the divisions in labour between women and men in fish harvesting (e.g., Bliege Bird, 2007; Kronen & Vunisea, 2009) and value chains (e.g., Barclay et al., 2018; Kruijssen et al., 2013). Research within fisheries reliant coastal communities has extended into examinations of the gender norms and social relations that determine women's and men's different freedoms, opportunities and rights. For example, how societal views of women and men differentiate individuals' voice and agency in decision-making to govern resources (e.g., Rohe et al., 2018b; Vunisea, 2008); freedoms to access and rights to govern marine resources (e.g., Foale & Macintyre, 2000); and mobility and physical freedoms to economically benefit from fisheries (e.g., Lawless et al., 2019). These gendered differences have been found to affect the capacities of different women and men to engage with livelihood innovations (e.g., Locke et al., 2017), and access fisheries extension services and support structures (i.e., markets and educational opportunities) (e.g., Cohen et al., 2016; Tekanene, 2006). However, the degree to which these insights have been accounted for as considerations, barriers or as opportunities to progress gender equality has not yet been evaluated.

To explore the construction of gender broadly, and gender equality as a governance principle, I reviewed global, regional and national policy instruments applied in the Pacific Islands region. I selected Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu as comparative national cases, representing three Melanesian nations where rural lives and livelihoods are commonly linked with small-scale fisheries. Given the colonial

history of the Pacific Islands region, contemporary coastal ecosystem governance takes the form of collaborative management through a combination of customary and central government authority. Fiji's governance system is well defined with customary tenure and boundaries recognized in law, and forms the foundation for a national network of locally marine managed areas (Govan, 2009; Mangubhai et al., 2019). In contrast, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu have more informally managed areas that integrate aspects of local and customary governance (Baereleo et al., 2016; Cohen & Steenbergen, 2015; Govan, 2009). The comparison of these countries is useful for examining gender commitments as they have the highest concentration of small-scale fisheries investment and governance actors (i.e., donors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations, government ministries and independent experts) across the region (SPC, 2021).

A mosaic of regional agencies support Pacific Island countries in the governance of their diverse natural resources, including small-scale fisheries. These agencies include the Pacific Community, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, Pacific Islands Development Forum, and the University of the South Pacific. Support provided by these agencies is mandated by Pacific Island governments, and further strengthened by inter-agency collaboration under the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (Vince et al., 2017). Ocean governance, including small-scale fisheries governance, mainly involves local NGOs and some private organizations, with investment from foreign donors and international NGOs (Vince et al., 2017). In disparate and sometimes coordinated efforts, these actors have helped to establish a range of locally and externally initiated interventions to manage fisheries systems, particularly in coastal marine environments.

While efforts to integrate gender into small-scale fisheries commitments and investments of regional agencies, national governments and NGOs are relatively recent in the Pacific Islands region, they are becoming more widespread (Cohen et al., 2017; Harper & Kleiber, 2019; Mangubhai & Lawless, 2021). For instance, there has been an increase in gender-related commitments across regional and national small-scale fisheries policies and projects (e.g., FAO, 2015; SPC, 2015). Accompanying these commitments has been an increase in financial investments, which often seek gender outcomes via the entry point of small-scale fisheries (e.g., DFAT, 2019; PEUMP, 2019). Despite this trend, international gender equality commitments (e.g., Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979); Beijing Platform for Action (1995)) are still not effectively actioned within the region. A review of 15 Pacific Island countries and territories finds that gender is rarely considered and poorly integrated in regional and national legislation, and Pacific Islands governments and ministries (i.e., ranging from health, agriculture and environment) have limited capacity to mainstream gender (SPC, 2016). Consequently, gender inequality remains a pertinent and pervasive issue in the Pacific that requires urgent questioning and transformation of the ways in which gender equality has, or has not, been addressed to date.

4.2.2 Data collection

I employed a mixed method approach using key informant interviews to identify global, regional and national policy instruments deemed influential by experts, followed by a systematic document review. My selection of key informants (n=35) working in small-scale fisheries (n=26) and gender and development (n=9) sectors involved a combination of purposive and snowball sampling of governance actors in each country, as well as at Pacific Islands meetings and conferences. Key informants were predominately Pacific Island nationals and included development practitioners (n=22), government officials and policy-makers (n=9), and scientists (n=4) who met the following inclusion criteria: (a) self-identified as either a small-scale fisheries and/or gender expert; and (b) were working in, or with a focus on, the Pacific Islands region, Fiji, Solomon Islands or Vanuatu. A process of stratification ensured that all fields of actors (global, regional, governmental, NGOs, private sector and independent experts) were represented in the sample. I developed the stratified sample through a series of consultative discussions with small-scale fisheries governance actors working in the Pacific during a regional workshop in November 2017. All interviews were conducted in country and took place face-to-face between August 2018 and February 2019 and, for the purposes of this study, were used to identify influential policy instruments.

I used two phases of identification to determine the list of policy instruments for review. In the first phase, I invited key informants to identify and share via email: (a) policy instruments (i.e., guidelines, policies, legislation, program guides, annual reports, research reports, organizational strategies, gender audits, codes of conduct and promotional material) informants used or found useful in guiding the integration of gender within their work; (b) policy instruments from their organization that provided descriptions or details of their work that related to gender; and (c) regional and national small-scale fisheries commitments (i.e., policies, regulations and acts (n=7) and national fisheries corporate plans (n=3) in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu). I added any other instruments that interviewees mentioned during interviews to the sample. In total, the sample included 76 policy instruments. In the second phase I differentiated instruments into those related to the small-scale fisheries sector (n=55) and those that focused on gender more broadly (i.e., those produced by humanitarian organizations and women's rights groups) (n=21). For these three country case studies, these instruments reflect the full set of formal commitments influencing the governance of small-scale fisheries, and I consider this sample representative of instruments *being used* and *having influence* throughout the broader Pacific Islands region.

Policy instrument attributes are listed in Figure A1 (see Appendices section 8.1), and include the geographic focus (panel a), organization types (panel b) and instrument types (panel c). Some instruments were produced in collaboration with multiple governance actors, and I account for these collaborations in Appendices Figure A1 (panel b). I refer to actors working together across different levels of governance (i.e., global to local) as ‘multi-level collaborative’ groups. Similarly, I refer to actors working at the same level of governance as ‘global collaborative’ or ‘national collaborative’ groups. Specific policy instrument titles and authors are not referenced due to confidentiality agreements (i.e., instruments would identify organizations and individual interviewees). Instrument publication dates ranged from 1991 to 2018.

4.2.3 Analytical approach

I used discourse analysis to examine the construction of gender equality as a governance principle across these 76 policy instruments (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005). The qualitative data analysis software NVivo 12 Plus assisted us in organizing and coding all statements on gender. I specifically examined policy instruments to determine how gender was represented, rationalized and the proposed strategies to address gender inequalities, following the three phases of coding based on Saldaña (2009). In the first phase, I used attributional coding to determine policy instrument attributes including publication date, author(s), organization type of author(s), country or region of focus, and instrument type. In the second phase, I applied structural coding, which involved a combination of coding according to both pre-determined and emergent codes. I developed the pre-determined codes (or parent nodes) through reviewing feminist studies grounded in social constructionism that explored how gender equality has been conceptualized in other sectors (e.g., Krook & Mackay, 2010; Verloo & Lombardo, 2007). I used grounded theory to determine child nodes, which were themes that emerged during coding, and organized under each parent node. In the final phase, I used elaborative coding, which after coding was completed, involved combining similar and duplicate nodes, and in cases where nodes were too broad, I re-coded into more specific sub-nodes.

My coding was structured according to the three research themes explored in this paper. My first set of codes were pre-determined and explored how gender equality as a governance principle was represented, including how gender was defined and the nature of issues targeted. I examined definitions of gender equality, femininity and masculinity. I used several search terms including: ‘gender’, ‘women’ or ‘woman’, ‘men’ or ‘man’, ‘boy’, ‘girl’, ‘sex’, ‘equality’, ‘equal’ ‘equity’, ‘equitable’ and ‘empowerment’ across all 76 policy instruments. I then used emergent coding to identify distinct issue areas gender inequality was associated with, which I coded into 44 child nodes.

I then used a second set of codes I had pre-determined to understand the rationale for why gender equality was pursued as a principle. I conducted this phase of analysis in four stages. In the first stage, I sorted policy instruments into two categories; those that were gender blind and those that were gender aware (Figure 4-1). I considered gender blind instruments as those that did not account for any of the following: different experiences, roles, responsibilities, rights, needs, obligations and power relations associated with being female or male (sensu IGWG, 2017). In contrast, I considered gender aware instruments as those that acknowledged some or all of these differences. In the second stage, I categorized the gender statements based on whether gender was pursued for instrumental or intrinsic reasons, which I determined according to the broader context they were presented within policy instruments (Figure 4-1). I consider instrumental frames as those that value gender equality as a means to achieve or enhance outcomes such as improved productivity, increased incomes or enhanced effectiveness of small-scale fisheries management (Tallis & Lubchenco, 2014). In contrast, intrinsic frames are those oriented towards the values of fairness and justice as outcomes in and of themselves (Tallis & Lubchenco, 2014). In the third stage, I coded all policy statements that expressed gender related objectives. I thematically aggregated these coded statements (through a process of re-coding into child nodes) into broader objectives. In the fourth stage, I examined the written contexts of these objectives to determine distinct rationale, including associated approaches, for pursuing gender equality within the policy instruments.

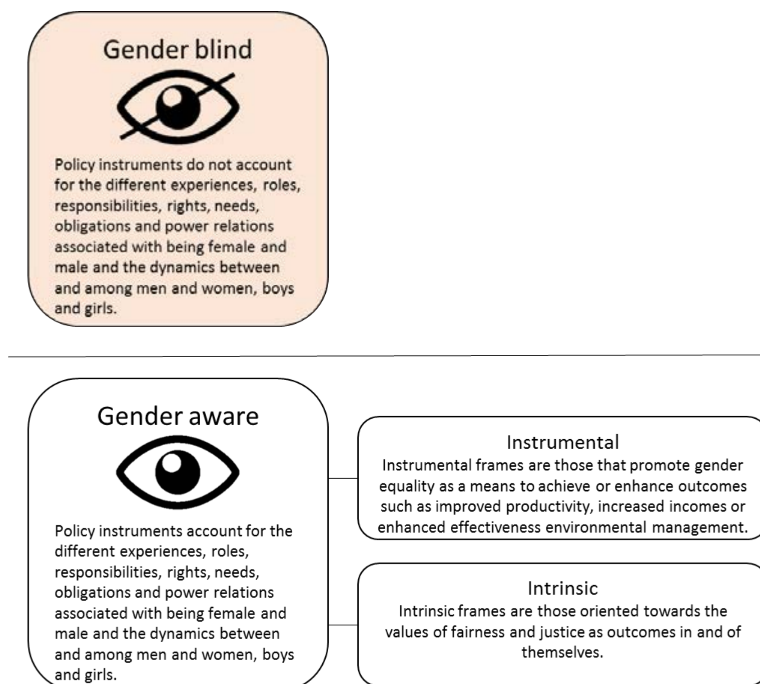

Figure 4-1. Categorization of policy instruments. Analysis involved first sorting policy instruments into those that were gender blind and those that were gender aware, and secondly, sorting those that provided instrumental or intrinsic rationale for pursuing gender equality.

The third and final pre-determined coding involved examination of the different gender strategies proposed in policy instruments. The strategy codes (adapted from Danielsen et al., 2018) focused on two broad categories of end beneficiary; (1) process strategies that provide a gender-enabling environment for organizations and organizational staff; and (2) project strategies that directly engage with gender concerns of 'stakeholders' including women and/or men within households, communities, and social systems. I analysed these strategies and determined 31 child nodes corresponding to strategy types.

4.3 Results

4.3.1 Representation of gender equality in small-scale fisheries commitments

To understand how gender equality is represented in, with and alongside commitments to small-scale fisheries I examined the 55 policy instruments to determine how gender was defined and the nature of gender issues targeted. I first examined definitions of gender, including constructions of femininity and masculinity. There were 3929 statements about gender in total. Although these policy instruments were identified by key informants as the most influential around gender and small-scale fisheries, they predominantly presented gender as a focus on women (79%) (Figure 4-2), and rarely used language that indicated an understanding of gender as a social construct (i.e., attention to socially prescribed roles, norms and relations). For example, a list of 'gender equality outcomes' proposed in a Fijian fisheries policy exclusively focused on what should be done for women, such as research on women's participation and access to fisheries services.

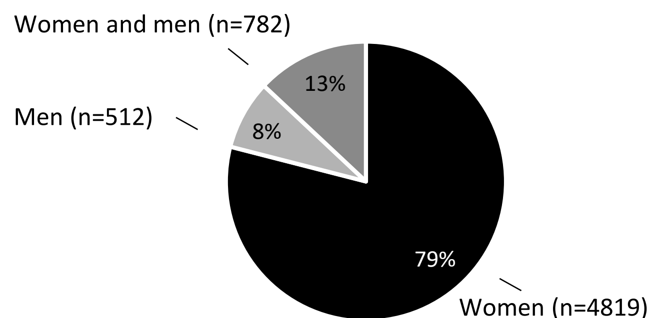

Figure 4-2. Statements (n=6113) referring to 'women', 'men' and 'women and men' found in the 55 small-scale fisheries policy instruments. Twelve policy instruments included no sex-disaggregated or gender language. The search accounted for variations and plurals (including woman, female, man and male).

Thirty-five out of the 55 small-scale fisheries policy instruments portrayed women as victims or emphasized their vulnerability. A program guide for the Pacific region produced by a multi-level collaborative group reported they had “a specific focus on vulnerable groups such as women and youth”, a common sentiment across the policy instruments. Other policy instruments stressed this vulnerability by highlighting areas of weakness among women and youth. Specifically, women’s “weaker negotiation power” when it came to fisheries business activities (global fisheries guidelines, global collaborative group), and “weak political voices” in community committees (donor, project report, Vanuatu). Only one instrument cautioned this portrayal, stating, “While it is important to be gender-sensitive, there’s a need to recognize the danger of stereotyping women as vulnerable in ways that might obscure their strengths and resilience to change” (research report, local NGO, Fiji).

By contrast, men were rarely discussed individually and the majority of statements about men appeared alongside mention of women, for instance, “Marine resources ... form the basis of men and women’s livelihoods in Pacific Island countries” (program guide, multi-level collaborative group). In other cases, statements about men were used to highlight differences between genders, for example, “Women and men have different abilities, knowledge, skills and talents to contribute to solutions” (program guide, donor organization, Pacific region). Only one instrument referred to masculinity and the influence of gender norms on men. The policy of a donor organization stated, “Despite the privileged position that gender norms accord males in most respects, these norms nonetheless create distinct vulnerabilities and negative outcomes for boys and men ... particularly those who do not conform to gender norms about masculinity”. There were only two policy instruments that positioned men as part of the solution to addressing gender inequalities. For example, one policy stipulated that “Because gender norms are created and perpetuated from birth onward by families, communities, schools and other social institutions, it is key to work with men (e.g., fathers and teachers) ... The more men see gender issues as ‘their’ issues, the less such issues will be marginalized” (organizational policy, Pacific region).

The conflation of gender with women also reflects a distinct ‘watering down’ of gender term usage. In fact, I found cases where diluting the term ‘gender’ was a purposeful and well-intentioned strategy. For instance, a donor guide for gender proposals suggested to;

“Avoid the overuse of the word ‘gender’ throughout project documents as this may disengage people. A clever tactic is to use gender responsive terms without directly using the word ‘gender’ or ‘gender equality’. These terms include: accessible, fair, appropriate, inclusive, collaborative, participatory, equitable, responsive, empowering, sensitive, engaging, universal”.

This sentiment was echoed in an international NGO research report, which cautioned;

"... the word [gender] is tainted and confrontational. We have to pitch it at the right level and focus on the inclusion aspect ... Discussions surrounding topics on women and gender are mostly received defensively by both men and women. Many people conceive discussions on equality as a prelude to blame and hostility".

The same research report suggested;
"... using key words such as "inclusivity" ... have the potential to address issues of inequality ... in a manner that is perceived less confrontationally ... changes in messaging are integral to continue building upon progress made in gender equity in the Solomon Islands".

To further understand how gender is represented as a global governance principle, I examined the issues (or entry points for change) with which gender inequality was associated, prioritized and absent in the small-scale fisheries policy instruments (n=55) and in the more specific gender policy instruments (n=21). Eighteen issues were common to both. A unique set of six issues were presented in small-scale fisheries policy instruments, compared with an additional 20 issues identified in the gender and development instruments (Table 4-1). Figure 4-3 provides a visual representation of the number of issues identified within small-scale fisheries policy instruments according to the level of governance focus.

Table 4-1. Gender issues or entry points for change addressed in (a) only small-scale fisheries policy instruments, (b) only gender policy instruments, and (c) both small-scale fisheries and gender policy instruments.

Level of focus	(a) Issues unique in small-scale fisheries instruments	(b) Issues unique in gender instruments	(c) Issues covered by both
Individual	***Women:*** - Lack of recognition in fisheries policies/ legislation/ regulations - Under-valued status in fisheries (i.e., invisibility of role and contribution) - Overlooked traditional ecological knowledge	***Women (disabled, widows, single, indigenous, ethnic minorities):*** - Representation in politics, private sector, governance boards/committees - Physical mobility restrictions - Portrayal in policy/media - Power and agency - Self-confidence/ efficacy/ aspirations ***Men:*** - Challenging masculinity or men specific interventions ***Youth*:** Youth development (specifically adolescent girls) ***Diverse sexual orientations and gendered identities***	***Women:*** - Vulnerability to disasters - Decision-making - Economic empowerment - Leadership - Participation in development - Women's organizations or networks
Relationship or household	Nil	- Family and marital relations, parenting, child development	- Inequitable divisions in labour
Communal	- Benefit sharing from small-scale fisheries	Nil	- Resource access (material, financial and natural) - Opportunities to improve livelihoods
Organizational	Nil	- Compliance with gender commitments - Coordination and coherence of gender commitments - Discriminatory aspects of customary and faith based organizations - Gender as a development priority by national governments, donors and development partners - Gender responsive budgeting	- Establishment of gender research priorities, methods, monitoring and analysis - Inter-organizational partnerships to work on gender - Organizational gender strengthening (training, knowledge, skills, capacity) - Gender-sensitive organizational environments (i.e., cultures and practices)†
Societal	- Food and nutrition security - Marine tenure rights	- Cultural/religious discrimination - Gender studies and training - Globalization and trade liberalization - Health‡ - Human trafficking - Labour migration - Law and policy§ - Peace and security - Sex for money	- Access to basic healthcare - Access to basic services†† or welfare - Formal employment opportunities - Poverty - Violence against women (sexual, domestic, gender-based)

†Including accountability to gender commitments, organizational and staff capacity, recruitment processes specifically promotions and salaries, and working environments and conditions.
‡Access to health care (including health education), facilities and infrastructure, gender-sensitive health programs, reproductive health, sexually transmitted disease (incl. HIV AIDS).
§Gender-sensitive and inclusive language, human rights of women, and social protections in terms of productive and reproductive rights.
††Including water, fuel, food, transport, sanitation, technology and electricity.

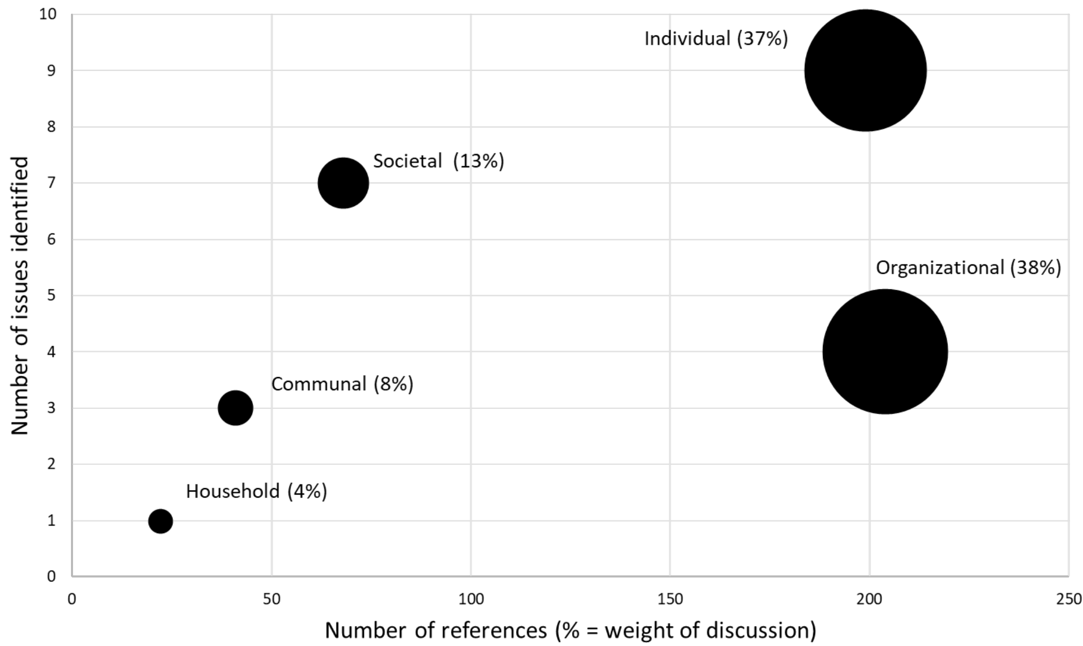

Figure 4-3. The level at which small-scale fisheries policy statements referred to gender issues . Circle sizes represent the weight of discussion given to issues at each level.

I found there was disproportionately high attention given to gender issues at individual (37%) and organizational levels (38%), compared to societal (13%), communal (8%) and household (4%) levels. At an individual level, small-scale fisheries policy instruments presented a narrow focus on women only. In contrast, the gender and development policy instruments accounted for gender norms (i.e., social expectations of what women and men should do) as well as diverse and intersectional identities that acknowledge the economic, social or other status of different women and different men. At the household level, gender differences in divisions in labour were recognized in small-scale fisheries policy instruments, but issues associated with intra-household or family relations were not acknowledged. At the organizational level, both the small-scale fisheries and gender and development instruments focused on organizational environments (i.e., creating standardized gender research priorities and practice; capacity building; and gender-sensitive organizational environments such as inclusive recruitment processes), and the need to facilitate inter-organizational partnerships to work on gender. These organizational level issues were predominantly identified in policy instruments produced by regional and national level fisheries actors. Yet at this level, only the gender and development policy instruments identified issues beyond individual organizations (i.e., the coordination and coherence of gender commitments and priorities across governments, donors and development partners). The societal level indicated unique issues only addressed by fisheries (i.e., marine tenure and food and nutrition security) that were not represented in the gender policy statements. Of all the policy instruments, those produced by organizations operating at the global level (i.e., donors and international NGOs) identified the majority of societal level issues including human rights issues and gender-based violence. In

contrast, issues identified at the societal level in policy instruments from the gender and development sector were produced by actors operating at various levels. Although I have categorized these issues as 'societal', statements in policy instruments produced by global actors suggested many of these issues were also pertinent at individual, household and communal levels.

4.3.2 Rationale for pursuing gender equality in small-scale fisheries commitments

I examined the 55 small-scale fisheries policy instruments to determine the dominant rationale and objectives presented for pursuing gender equality as a governance principle (according to the four stages described in section 4.2.3). I conducted this phase of analysis in four stages. In the first stage I sorted policy instruments into those considered gender blind (n=12) and gender aware (n=43). The gender blind policy instruments included all national fisheries policies and legislation in each country (with the exception of one fisheries policy from Vanuatu), as well as regional and national level guiding policy instruments. Of the 43 gender aware instruments, 30 provided sufficient evidence to determine why gender was committed to in small-scale fisheries. In the second stage, I determined that gender was predominately presented instrumentally (75%) (i.e., to achieve or enhance environmental outcomes) rather than intrinsically (25%) (i.e., to achieve just and fair outcomes) (Figure 4-4). Based on these groupings, in the third stage, I identified 16 distinct objectives indicating why gender was considered across the 121 policy statements.

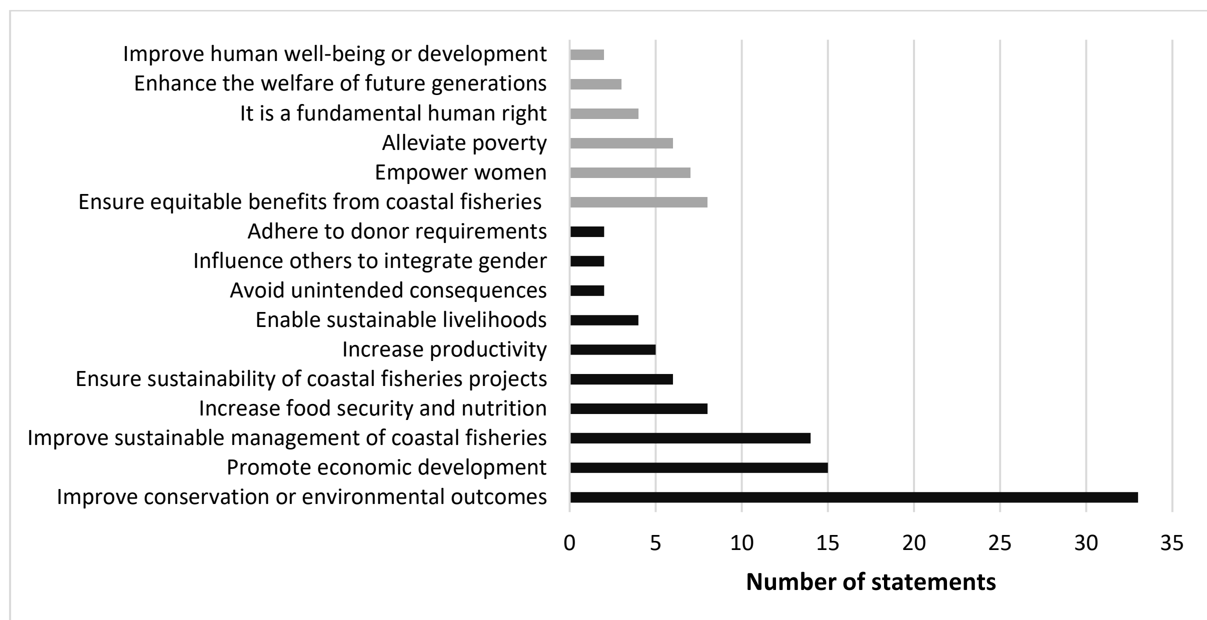

Figure 4-4. Statements (n=121) indicating dominant objectives for why gender equality is pursued as a governance principle in, with and alongside small-scale fisheries. Objectives are organized according to whether they are intrinsic (grey bars, n=30) or instrumental (black bars, n=91).

I analysed the objectives according to the organization that produced the policy instrument (Figure 4-5). A single objective was expressed in 11 of the 30 policy instruments, whereas multiple objectives were expressed in 19 policy instruments. Global level policy instruments (i.e., those produced by international NGOs and donors) presented the most diversity in objectives, yet particularly for international NGOs, there was a clear relationship between 'improved conservation or environmental outcomes', 'sustainable small-scale fisheries management' and 'economic development' objectives. In contrast, policy instruments produced by multi-level collaborative groups tended to present gender considerations as important for the promotion of humans rights and food security. Policy instruments produced by regional agencies expressed the greatest diversity in their objectives and pursued gender for a combination of instrumental and intrinstic reasons, with 'sustainability of projects' being the most common. National governments were the only organization type that did not express the importance of gender equality for environmental outcomes in their policy statements. Instead, they cited 'sustainable livelihoods', 'welfare of future generations' and 'to influence others to integrate gender'. Evidence of the intrinsic value of gender was not found in policy statements produced by private, national or local actors, with the exception being a fisheries policy from Vanuatu that cited concerns to "safeguard the welfare of future generations" as a key objective. Policy instruments produced by private organizations were the only organizational type who did not cite the importance of gender for any intrinsic value only identifying economic and environmental objectives. I also found significant divergence in objectives within statements by the same organizations. The most extreme example of objective divergence was an international NGO who cited 13 of the 16 differing objectives for commiting to gender in small-scale fisheries, spanning both instrumental and intrinsic reasons. In contrast, policy instruments produced by three separate donor organizations only cited between one and three different objectives.

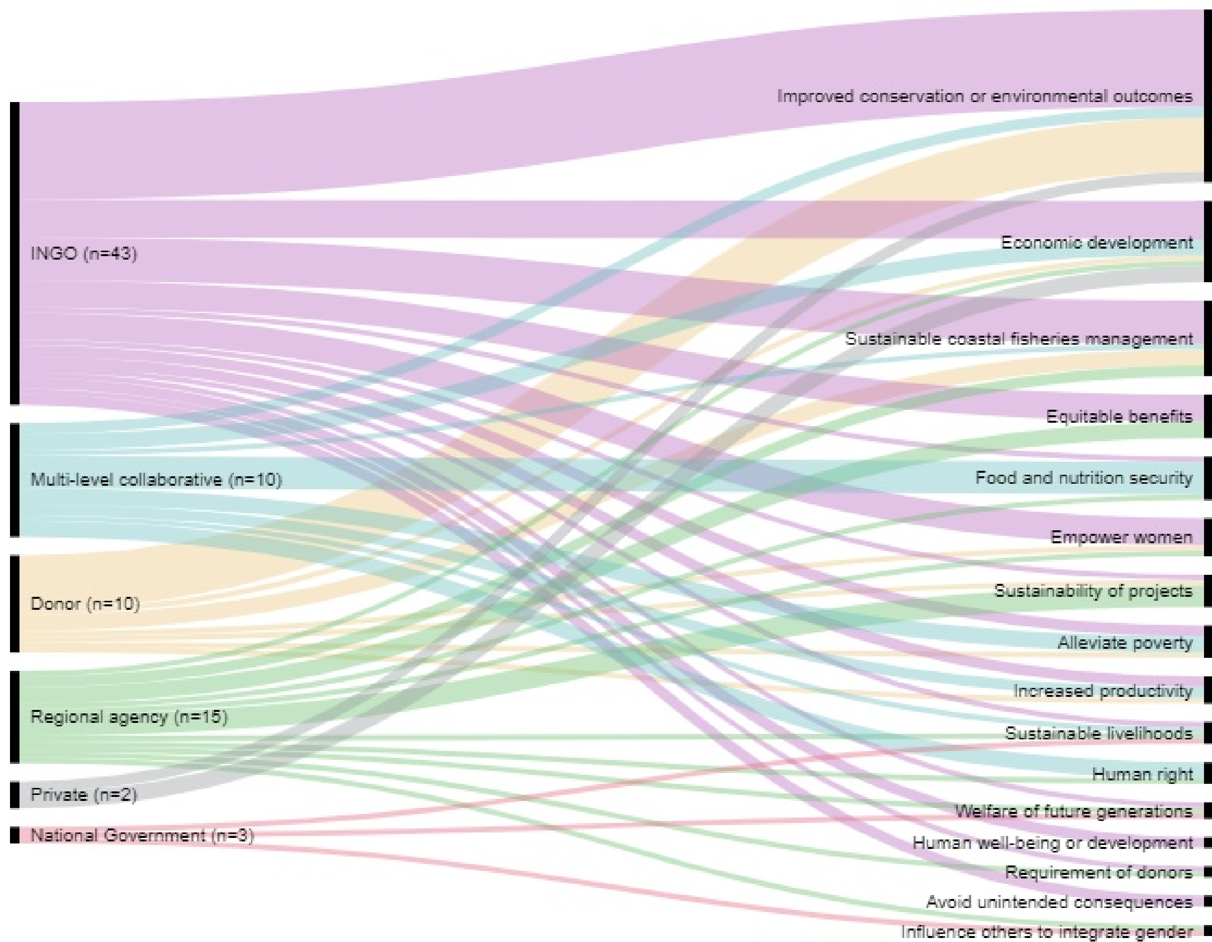

Figure 4-5. Relationship between organization type and gender objectives presented in small-scale fisheries policy instruments. Here 'n' refers to the number of times any particular organization type (of which I identified six, listed on the left of the figure) stated an objective. Not illustrated in this graph are the policy instruments for which I found no evidence of gender objectives, including those produced by local NGOs (n=2), global (n=1) regional (n=3) and national (n=1) collaborative groups, independent experts (n=2) and United Nations agencies (n=2).

In the fourth stage of analysis I found that the objectives applied within small-scale fisheries policy instruments were oriented toward six distinct rationale based on desired outcomes: (1) no outcomes (e.g., blind to gender); (2) project outcomes (e.g., donor targets reached or to achieve project success); (3) environmental outcomes (e.g., enhanced environmental stewardship); (4) productive outcomes (e.g., greater fish catches); (5) economic outcomes (e.g., enhanced incomes of fishers); and (6) human opportunity outcomes (expanded in Table 4-2). The grouping of the six rationale was based on the context the gender objectives were described in the policy instruments. Some of these objectives span multiple rationale, however, they have been grouped according to best fit.

Table 4-2. Six gender rationale emergent within small-scale fisheries policy instruments.

		Rationale	Objective(s)	Narrative	Approach	Policy Instrument	Organization type: Governments	LNGOs	Regional	INGOs	Donors	Experts	Private
Gender blind	Blind	**(1) Gender considerations are not relevant, or inherently addressed**	Nil	Objectives and outcomes are not connected to gender, or assume that gender considerations are automatically incorporated.	None to minimal social analysis. Follows a 'business as usual' approach.	- National fisheries policies, strategies and plans - Organizational codes of conduct, research reports	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Gender aware	Instrumental	**(2) Gender considerations enhance small-scale fisheries projects**	1-4	Project outcomes are prioritized and gender considerations are a means to reach targets or achieve project success.	Minimal gender and social analysis. Follows a 'do no harm' approach.	- Organizational gender audits, policies, program guides			✓	✓	✓		
		(3) Gender considerations facilitate conservation and environmental outcomes	5, 6	Gender is considered instrumental to achieving conservation and environmental outcomes. Conservation and environmental goals are the principle priority.	Accounts for gender norms and relations, particularly emphasizes gendered access and control over natural resources and the goods and services they provide. In some cases, this can take the form of essentializing women's connection with nature.	- Organizational policies, program guides - Regional policies - Global gender and fisheries guidelines			✓	✓	✓		✓
		(4) Gender considerations increase productivity	7, 8	Equitable access and support in harvest and post-harvest activities is prioritized to increase efficiency and benefits.	Avoids considerable changes to environmental function but promotes productive livelihood models. This often involves providing direct support and services to women.	- Organizational policies, program guides - Global gender and fisheries guidelines				✓	✓		
		(5) Gender considerations maximize economic opportunity and growth	10	Ambivalent about the relationship between gender and the environment. Financial benefits prioritized over environmental outcomes.	Environmental management geared toward maximizing economic benefits, including market oriented and value-additive approaches to generate income. Economic objectives can lend to gender exploitative methods.	- Organizational gender audit, policies, program guides - Global gender and fisheries guidelines			✓	✓	✓		✓
	Intrinsic	**(6) Gender considerations are integral to human opportunity**	11-16	Gender equality is viewed as a fundamental human right or of its own intrinsic value.	The environment is viewed as an entry point or means to promote gender equitable outcomes. Gender-relations, power and intersectionality are prioritized.	- Organizational gender audit, policies, program guides - Regional policies - Global gender and fisheries guidelines	✓		✓	✓	✓		

Note: The rationale (including their underlying narrative and approach) are organized according to whether they are gender blind or aware, instrumental or intrinsic, and the policy instrument and organization type promoting each. The gender objectives associated with each rationale are in the 'Objective(s)' column, and range from 1-16: (1) Adhere to donor requirements, (2) Influence others to integrate gender, (3) Avoid unintended consequences, (4) Ensure sustainability of coastal fisheries projects, (5) Improve conservation or environmental outcomes, (6) Improve sustainable management of coastal fisheries, (7) Increased productivity, (8) Enable sustainable livelihoods, (9) Increase food security and nutrition, (10) Promote economic development, (11) Ensure equitable benefits from coastal fisheries , (12) Empower women, (13) Alleviate poverty, (14) It is a fundamental human right, (15) Enhance the welfare of future generations, (16) Improve human well-being or development.

(1) Gender considerations are not relevant, or inherently addressed. This rationale de-emphasizes gender as a factor to consider in small-scale fisheries governance. I found three main drivers of this rationale. First, the link between social and ecological systems is weak, where the role of humans in fisheries management is not associated with the management of fish. A review of a national fisheries ministry found "...fishing agreements are very broad and focus on the management of stocks. Therefore, the interlocutor could not see that gender equality could be a priority in this context" (regional agency, organizational gender audit). Second, this rationale emphasizes the absence of, or incentive to address, gender issues in the sector, for example the same review found, "the political will to mainstream gender in the department was rated low". The review document referred to an interview with a fisheries department employee citing that "he never came across those [gender or women specific] issues". A third factor underlining this rationale promotes a business as usual approach, for example, "Women were involved because, in many cases, they are landowners ... It was noted that those initiatives were not the results of particular will for promoting gender equality, but because they were part of the usual programmes carried out by the Ministry" (regional agency, organizational gender audit).

(2) Gender considerations enhance small-scale fisheries project outcomes. This rationale emphasizes gender considerations as a means to achieve successful programs and projects as the end goal. Both global organizations and regional agencies suggested the likelihood of project success was dependent on women's contribution to small-scale fisheries management and the degree to which the interests of women and men were accounted for. A technical report produced by an international NGO in Solomon Islands reported, "there is a potential to amplify the project's expected benefits by better integration of women into natural resources management".

(3) Gender considerations facilitate conservation and environmental outcomes. Under this perspective, gender is viewed as instrumental to achieving effective conservation and environmental outcomes. In some cases, this rationale may assume that women are innately connected to nature and therefore their participation is vital. For example, a regional fisheries policy stated "... the participation of women in ecosystem-based fisheries management is crucial ... because women are more likely than men to take a long-term (inter-generational) view of the benefits of conservation" (multi-level collaborative group). There is an assumption that the involvement of women will lead to improvements in compliance with natural resource management measures. This is well illustrated in another regional fisheries policy which states, "Women and youth are closely involved in harvesting and selling marine resources, but are less likely to respect management measures on which they are not consulted" (regional agency).

(4) Gender considerations increase productivity. This rationale stresses the potential for productive improvements (i.e., harvests from farming and fishing). Promotional material produced by an

international NGO in Solomon Islands emphasized that women are more productive than men agriculturally as they "…produce 60 to 80 percent of all food in developing countries". This rationale sees potential productive gains when there is equitable access to productive opportunities and resources. For example, promotional material produced by an international NGO in Fiji stated, "Gender-equal access to agricultural resources could increase the average woman farmer's crop yields by up to 30%. Involving women in water projects can increase their effectiveness by 6 to 7 times".

(5) Gender considerations maximize economic opportunity and growth. This rationale prioritizes economic gain and emphasizes building financial and business capacities of women in particular. An annual report produced by a private organization stated "... a great part of this business capacity development is to incorporate gender dimensions and consider ways in which to enhance women SME's [small-medium enterprise] capacities and abilities". Approaches promoted by this rationale often operate under the banner of 'women's economic empowerment'.

(6) Gender considerations are integral to human opportunity. This rationale recognizes gender equality as its own distinct goal and emphasizes a crucial link between gender equality and human opportunity. The global fisheries guidelines state, "Gender-equitable fisheries policy should necessarily be designed to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination in the fisheries sector" (global collaborative group). The interconnection between gender equality and other development outcomes was recognized in an organizational policy of a conservation focused donor, who expressed that "efforts to combat environmental degradation and those to address gender inequality can be mutually supportive is also reflected in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, which recognizes gender equality and women's empowerment as a sustainable development goal in its own right, as well as a catalyst for reaching all other goals".

4.3.3 Gender strategies in small-scale fisheries commitments

I coded for evidence of gender strategies (i.e., a set of actions proposed for implementation targeting a specified gender issue or to accomplish a non-gender defined goal) proposed in small-scale fisheries policy instruments. I found 252 statements providing evidence of different gender strategies, which were aggregated into seven distinct strategy types (Figure 4-6, see Table A1 in Appendices section 8.1 for detailed strategies). I grouped these strategy types into two broad categories based on the end beneficiary; (1) process strategies which aimed to foster gender-enabling environment for organizations and organizational staff; and (2) project strategies which directly engaged with the gender concerns of 'stakeholders' (i.e., women and/or men within households, communities, and social systems).

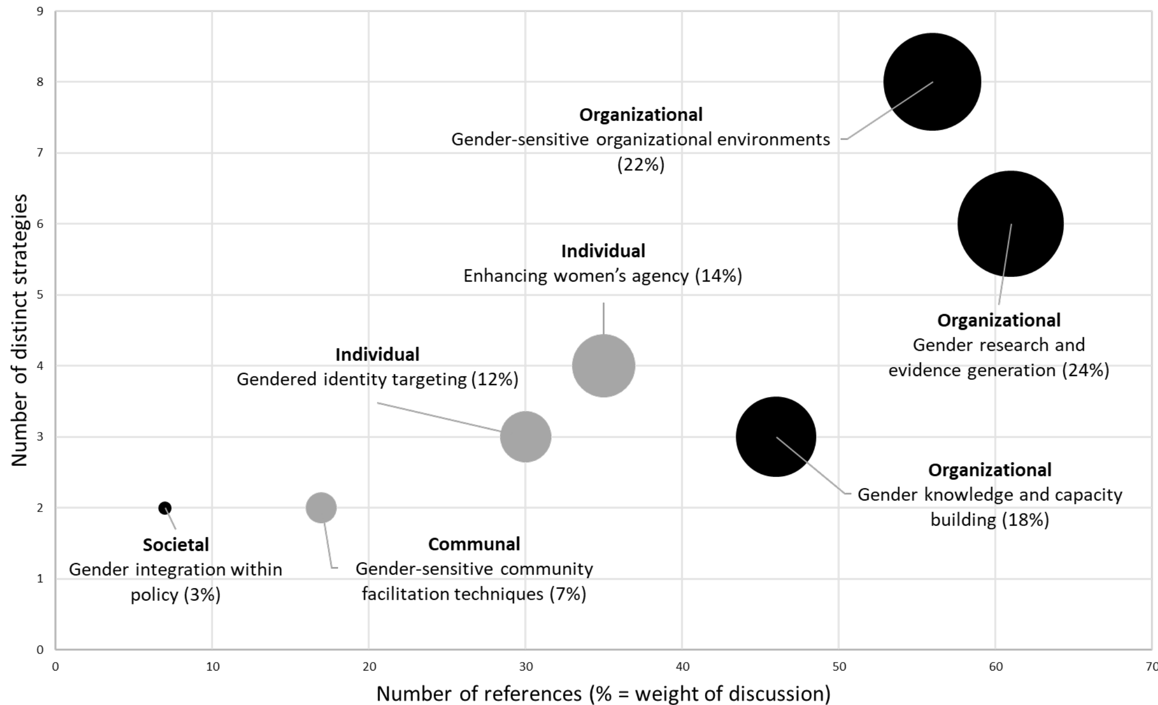

Figure 4-6. Seven gender strategy types – of which four are process strategies (black circles) and three are project strategies (grey circles) – are organized according to the level (bold text) at which they are targeted. The circle sizes are proportionate to the number of policy statements identified at each level (i.e., individual (n=65), communal (n=17), organizational (n=163) or societal (n=7).

Two thirds of gender strategies (67%) proposed in small-scale fisheries policy instruments focused on process (i.e., evidence generation and internal organizational process), whereas only a third of strategies (33%) were proposed to more directly tackle gender inequality issues within communities, and/or social systems. Of the process strategies, 64% were targeted within organizations and the remaining 3% were targeted at the societal level. Process strategies related to 'research, monitoring or other evidence generation' were the most common strategy proposed, with greatest focus on monitoring and evaluating the gendered impacts of programs and projects during or after their implementation, and quantifying women's roles in, and contributions to, the fisheries sector. Yet, for all these evidence-generating strategies only two articulated the next steps or pathway through which this increased understanding would be employed to contribute to any gender or social change. Most strategies explained the need for evidence generation for reporting reasons, for example, "sex-disaggregated data will be collected throughout various activities of the project for ... gender considerations to be reflected in reporting" (organizational strategy, donor, Pacific region). The remainder of strategies (33%) were project oriented and were targeted at the individual (26%) and communal level (7%). I found no evidence of strategies targeted at the household level. Of the project strategies, only 28% acknowledged intersectional identities or a need to engage both women and men. The remaining 72% focused exclusively on women (i.e., enhancing their agency or delivering projects directly to women).

4.4 Discussion

In environmental governance, policies set the formal rules of play, priorities and visions to which funding, human resourcing, practice and behaviors will seek to align. In this section, I discuss the construction of gender, and gender equality as a principle, within policy instruments that are influencing the governance of small-scale fisheries in the Pacific Islands region. First (section 4.4.1) I discuss the implications of how I found gender and gender equality to be represented. In particular, I examine the common conflation of 'women' with gender, and discuss why it matters that gendered opportunities and issues at household and communal levels are largely overlooked in policy. Second (section 4.4.2), I discuss the multiplicity of gender objectives articulated within the policy instruments. By drawing on gender and development literature, I examine the limits of the dominant 'instrumental' framing of gender. Third (section 4.4.3), I discuss the value and limitations of gender strategies that I found to be largely focused on the workplace, and projects that target women as primary beneficiaries. For each of these findings, I present some alternative views and recommendations in my conclusion (section 4.5) that, if taken up, would lead to a more balanced and effective set of policies and strategies more likely to contribute to gender equality in small-scale fisheries and in environmental governance more broadly.

4.4.1 Representing gender and gender equality

Gendered understandings, opportunities and barriers are socially constructed and in the broadest sense reflect societal views of what women and men should or should not be, or can and cannot do, and how people should relate to each other within society and households (Boudet et al., 2013). Yet, my examination of influential global, regional and national policy instruments suggests that gender is typically used synonymously with 'women' in Pacific Islands small-scale fisheries (i.e., what women do, what women should do, or what should be done for women). Unlike the gender and development sector, attention to men, masculinity, or gender relations was rarely part of analysis and project design. A more holistic and current view of gender as intersecting with various elements of identity (i.e., a multiplicity of different social markers such as sex, ethnicity, age, religion, class) was overlooked. These results closely align with a phenomenon known as 'gender shrinking', where gender as a concept is diluted to a limited set of meanings and problems (Lombardo et al., 2010).

The "gross essentialism" and "patronising paternalism" (Cornwall, 2007, p. 71) of conflating gender with women fails to account for the diverse experiences and perceptions of gendered and sexual identities (Oyěwùmí, 1997), reinforces men's absence in the conceptualization of gender, and men's and societies agency to question, challenge and address gender inequalities (Chant & Gutmann, 2002). Explicitly acknowledging men as being part of gender problems and solutions, requires questioning and

challenging unequal power relations between women and men (Lombardo et al., 2010). This view can be uncomfortable for many, and even fuel resistance to engage with gender issues, within policies, projects and workplaces (Nazneen & Hickey, 2019). In these cases, the conflation of gender with women can be a deliberate strategy making the gradual acceptance of working on 'gender' more palatable with stakeholders that may not fully support the gender equality principle (Nazneen & Hickey, 2019). The one-dimensional focus on women could also be the result of the limited capacity and capability of governance actors who are newly tasked with integrating or mainstreaming gender at the behest of their organization or donor (Mangubhai & Lawless, 2021; Nazneen & Hickey, 2019). This problem can persist where governance actors (i.e., organizations and individuals within them) rhetorically adopt (and passively resist) or are actively resistant towards meaningfully considering gender amongst all the other commitments they have made, or reluctant to adjust their engrained frame (i.e., intrinsic or instrumental) or pre-planned strategies (Lawless et al., 2020).

The dilution of gender in small-scale fisheries policy instruments is consistent with the essentialist portrayals of women that have been found in broader environment and development contexts. For decades, gender analysis in natural resource management has emphasized women as the main victims of environmental change which frequently then translates to women-targeted strategies (i.e., women as participants and beneficiaries) (Resurreccion & Elmhirst, 2008). By contrast, views stemming from theories such as ecofeminism buy into the myth that women, more so than men, have an innate connection with nature, and are the best champions of conservation (Leach, 2007). Both these essentialist portrayals position women as "key assets to be 'harnessed' in resource conservation initiatives" (Resurreccion & Elmhirst, 2008, p. 6). The tension between depicting women as either victims or development champions can be counterproductive to women (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015; Leach, 2007). For example, targeting women to achieve conservation project goals or directing livelihood activities at women can increase women's labour and time burdens (Lawless et al., 2019) and even lead to backlash (particularly where gender relations have not been engaged with) (Chant & Gutmann, 2002), without advancing women's agency or positions within the household, community or society (Rao, 2017).

Regardless of how a women-only focus is implicitly or explicitly justified, the narrow interpretation of gender as women-only is reinforced by governance actors who hold, and then by extension expect and perpetuate, the view that women are vulnerable and inferior to men, legitimizing the notion that "Third World women" are in need of help (Cornwall, 2007; Koczberski, 1998, p. 401). The focus on women-specific issues, women as 'victims', 'participants' or 'recipients of help' highlight a tendency within policy instruments to depict women as individual and vulnerable agents disconnected from social settings, rather than contextualized in gendered environments (i.e., the household, community and wider social-systems). This sense of moral obligation to 'help' (whether that be to improve the status of

women as victims or champions) without attending to gendered environments, particularly in post-colonial contexts, can serve to further subjugate and imperialise women (Cornwall, 2007).

Gender equality barriers and opportunities permeate across multiple levels of governance (Heise, 1998). I found the focus on gender issues (or entry points for change) in policy instruments across different levels of small-scale fisheries governance was patchy, with a concentrated focus on individual and organizational levels. Policies provided minimal attention to gender dimensions at the household and communal levels, downplaying gender norms and relations, and broader structures in which inequalities are embedded and (re)produced. Gender power relations within households and communities fundamentally influence the experiences of individuals (including how they make choices, receive benefits, and experience costs) (Rao, 2017). Fisheries interventions that do not consider gender within household and community relationships may compound women's poverty (Cole et al., 2015a), reduce innovation capacities (Cohen et al., 2016; Locke et al., 2017), undermine social-ecological resilience (Kawarazuka et al., 2017), and create greater barriers in women's abilities to access, control and benefit from resources (Lawless et al., 2019). Conversely, where gender is understood as a social construction that creates different barriers and opportunities that span areas like tenure rights, education, access to material resources (Rao, 2017), a broader range of strategies becomes apparent to governance actors. Research has illustrated there to be benefits to understanding, then working in ways that might challenge (or at least not reinforce or exacerbate) structure and power, including destabilizing inequitable divisions in labour (Lawless et al., 2019; Locke et al., 2017) and providing more equitable access to productive assets (Cole et al., 2015a) in order to drive both ecological and social improvements.

Extending the focus on the levels in which gender issues are attended to (i.e., to also recognize those at household and communal levels) inevitably requires examining and renegotiating relationships of power, which are situated within broader social systems perpetuating inequality (Morrison et al., 2019). Engaging with structural and power relations is complex and may feel out of the realm of fisheries actors and their associated interventions. While I do not have conclusive evidence as to why fisheries policy instruments do not recognize or strategize addressing gender issues at these levels, I acknowledge that working on gender issues that require negotiation of power relations necessitates more expertise, funding and time. As Ferguson (2015) articulates, it is easy to argue practitioners are not doing enough to address unequal power relations without considering the bureaucratic constraints within organizations themselves, including the need to build a business case for tackling such issues and garnering the willingness to do so. Such processes may require navigating equally complex internal organizational dynamics of power.

4.4.2 Rationalizing gender equality

The way gender is rationalized will influence the parameters within which governance actors think and operate (Bacchi, 2009). This understanding is essential to assessing organizational priorities and, by extension, the extent to which progress toward gender equality is likely to be achieved. Across all policy instruments I found six distinct rationale used to justify the importance of gender equality. In fact, I found that within instruments produced by a single organization, up to 13 different objectives were used to explain why gender equality should be pursued. Diversity in governance objectives and their rationale has previously been described in the fisheries sector as involving "hard but delicate choices often between equally desirable but [in some cases] contradictory goals" (Jentoft & Chuenpagdee, 2009, p. 556). Such diversity shows that gender is recognized as integral to many different goals, but also reinforces the wickedness of governability problems, where values around the importance of gender equality are incongruent, and potentially, in conflict with each other (i.e., blind vs. intrinsic). Further, the multiplicity in gender objectives may create friction between the gender outcomes sought by small-scale fisheries interventions. This diversity raises questions about the extent governance actors can advocate for gender equality successfully without consensus or clarity on the reasons for pursuing the principle.

Although there was some variance, the predominant portrayal of gender was instrumental, where gender considerations were important to facilitate or accelerate environmental outcomes. This framing was distinct from intrinsic portrayals, where gender was considered to lead to fairness and justice as outcomes in and of themselves (i.e., through improving human well-being, or ensuring equitable benefits from fisheries). In some sense my finding is similar to Cohen et al. (2019) who argue that equity of rights over small-scale fisheries are being "squeezed" by conservation and economic objectives and associated strategies, compromising the substantial equitable benefits to human well-being. The deliberate rationalization of gender equality as an instrumental pathway towards conservation or economic gain can, for example, enable the concept to enter more easily into policy agendas to become a commonly accepted goal (Verloo & Lombardo, 2007). This is also referred to as 'norm bending' where governance actors partake in a process of molding a global principle (i.e., gender equality) to fulfil alternative goals (i.e., economic growth) (Lombardo et al., 2010). In the absence of analysis such as ours, the rationale behind pursuing gender equality as an accelerant or pathway to other goals limits the opportunities of actors to contest such goals (Lombardo et al., 2010). Norm bending shrouds progress toward gender equality and raises questions about the extent governance actors are able to make this progress, when (for the most part) equality is not ultimately the priority or end goal.

Yet, instrumental considerations of gender and associated interventions can accelerate the uptake of gender equality as a governance principle. In fact, instrumental frames that gain gender a foothold in sectors that have not historically integrated this principle can be a launch point to enable future progress. Nazneen and Hickey (2019) document how particular norms around women's rights are more compelling to non-advocates when presented instrumentally, particularly when they align with (rather than disrupt) dominant ideologies. I found the preferred language around 'inclusion' rather than 'gender equality' in small-scale fisheries commitments was strategic, and proposed to mask meanings of gender equality. This masking of gender offers the opportunity to build incremental acceptance of the principle, overcome resistance, and win the support of small-scale fisheries actors.

Despite some promise, promoting gender instrumentally essentially depoliticizes gender and gendered power dynamics (Lombardo et al., 2010). In this sense, gender equality is only valued contingent on whether it leads to other outcomes, such as improved conservation or increased productivity (Nazneen & Hickey, 2019; Rao, 2017). Viewing the importance of gender equality through the lens of achieving environmental goals, often means there are no provisions or mechanisms to account for, improve, monitor or continue to invest in changes to the status of women or men (i.e., women's sexual and reproductive rights, women's unpaid labour, violence against women, toxic masculinity and the harms of patriarchy upon men) (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015). Fisheries interventions that promote gender instrumentally are less likely to have explicit gender related outcomes, meaning project goals are achieved without any progress to overcome inequalities. In this sense, instrumental views of gender make "women work for development, rather than making development work for their equality and empowerment" (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015, p. 398). In these cases, the social justice goal is lost and the inherent moral and complex nature of such principles can be overlooked, and at worst, serve to reinforce or amplify inequalities.

4.4.3 Strategizing actions towards gender equality

Understanding the gender strategies proposed in commitments to small-scale fisheries is important to determine whether actions meet current best practice, and ultimately make meaningful progress toward gender equality. The gender strategies proposed predominately focused on processes to improve gender equality through formal workplace practice (e.g., equal opportunity recruitment) and evidence generation (e.g., data on the contribution of women in fisheries), rather than those applied in fisheries projects (e.g., actions toward enhancing women's agency). The tendency to focus on internal organizational gender strategies can be appealing as these strategies are often formal, bound by relatively prescriptive organizational policy and practice, including reporting requirements. While the recognition of organizational strategies are essential to establishing standards for a gender-sensitive and

equitable workplace, the predominant focus on internal strategies may serve as a distraction from bringing gender equality to the forefront of the organization's priorities and goals (Walby, 2005). In fact, the skew in focus may simultaneously limit resources and attention directed toward gender strategies applied within projects (i.e., for fishers, households and communities engaged in or affected by small-scale fisheries) (Walby, 2005). For instance, I found the focus on evidence generation for gender related reporting was disconnected from efforts to ensure data contributed to gender or social change, suggesting that these strategies were more rhetorical than actionable.

Of the project strategies identified, I found a considerable focus on women as primary project beneficiaries. This approach is common, and strategies that exclusively focus on addressing 'women's issues' have been noted across different sectors and contexts (e.g., Cornwall & Rivas, 2015; Rao, 2017; Stacey et al., 2019). The examples I encountered included facilitating improved links between women, markets, fisheries value-chains, training opportunities and business networks. Separate studies examining the application of gender strategies in coastal livelihoods and fisheries development projects in the Pacific and Indonesia respectively, also found strategies were largely targeted toward women, for instance, to facilitate their participation in projects and increased access to material or financial assets (Mangubhai & Lawless, 2021; Stacey et al., 2019). These approaches can be appealing as they offer tangible and quantifiable results. However, strategies solely focused on reaching women (or men) through the delivery of livelihood projects, assets or natural resources, without substantive strategies to address gender dimensions of access, use, adoption and distribution often fail to achieve their intended goals (Resurreccion & Elmhirst, 2008). The inattention of these strategies to the relational and structural dimensions of gender has led to gender exploitative interventions (i.e., those that intentionally or unintentionally reinforce or take advantage of gender norms, relations and stereotypes that exacerbate inequalities) (Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2009; Stacey et al., 2019).

4.5 Summary and recommendations

The quantity of written commitments and level of investments toward gender equality in environmental governance are unprecedented. On the surface, this suggests there to be, more than ever, meaningful progress toward gender equality. However, deeper examination of how gender is represented, rationalized and strategized by governance actors and within policy instruments illustrates that the nature of commitments and investments may not be fit for the complex social-ecological challenge at hand. In my examination of policies that govern small-scale fisheries in the Pacific, gender commitments are often diluted and expressed through narrow and outdated strategies. The small-scale fisheries sector remains preoccupied with a focus on 'women's issues' rather than gender equality and the power-laden dynamics of gendered identities and relationships. Organizations are mostly inward

looking, restricting their attention to internal strategies for reform, rather than societal, community and sector-based initiatives.

In extreme, yet prevalent examples, I found gender to be prioritized as an accelerant of instrumental goals, rather than for its own inherent value. Such instrumental approaches pay insufficient attention to the deeper, difficult-to-quantify, and more intractable social challenges. Preference for instrumental approaches tend to offer immediate and measurable changes or impacts (e.g., counting women's attendance), which may be appealing, perceived as achievable, and more palatable for fisheries governance actors. Yet, these approaches can unintentionally, or intentionally, distract from the deeper, multi-level and harder won shifts necessary to address the environmental, economic and social elements of sustainable development. To reclaim the gender agenda, with representations, rationale and strategies fit for purpose, a paradigm shift across environmental governance sectors is needed. I offer four recommendations to achieve this shift.

First, if gender equality goals are to be met, the small-scale fisheries sector requires an urgent recalibration to recognize that 'gender' is more than just a focus on women. At a minimum, alternate narratives and corresponding strategies need to recognize gender as socially constructed, including concerted effort to understand how interactive gender relations determine the freedoms, opportunities and rights of different women and different men. This effort is essential to recognizing men as dynamic actors in both problem identification and framing. The lowest bar, still often not reached, might be the proper implementation of sex-disaggregated data standards (e.g., Doss & Kieran, 2014) and gender-inclusive facilitation techniques (e.g., Kleiber et al., 2019b). Yet, to avoid gender considerations being 'tacked on', gender analysis needs to be applied and integrated from project conception (e.g., Van Eerdewijk & Brouwers, 2014).

Second, the sector requires greater balance between the almost singular focus on the instrumental rather than intrinsic value of gender equality. In the fisheries sector, this might be articulated as more balanced commitment to both Sustainable Development Goal 5 on Gender Equality and Goal 14 on Life Below Water. Such a shift necessitates the re-negotiation of organizational normative ideals about the gender-environment relationship. Therefore, dominant rationales about why governance actors care about gender need to be questioned. The methodology I apply, as with other analyses of fisheries governance (e.g., Cohen et al., 2019; Morrison, 2017; Song et al., 2018), can elucidate both explicit and implicit governance objectives (particularly identification of social-ecological tensions) as a starting point to promote more equitable pathways for change.

Third, shifting the current pathways for change also requires working to address relational and structural inequalities across multiple levels of governance. Multi-level governance analyses are increasingly

applied as a means to identify opportunities for solutions fit to address complex social-ecological challenges (e.g., Cohen et al., 2017; Jentoft & Chuenpagdee, 2009; Morrison et al., 2020). My analysis of the gender issues targeted across the different governance levels (i.e., the individual to societal level) has illustrated the areas of attention, and conversely inattention, given to gender by the small-scale fisheries sector, helping to identify future areas for improved gender integration. The household, communal and societal spheres present untapped opportunities and entry-points to balance current views and develop multi-level strategies for gender integration (Figure 4-7). For example, in the Pacific Islands region, I find the fisheries sector is uniquely positioned to address gender issues of marine tenure and food and nutrition security, which were not prominent in gender and development policy.

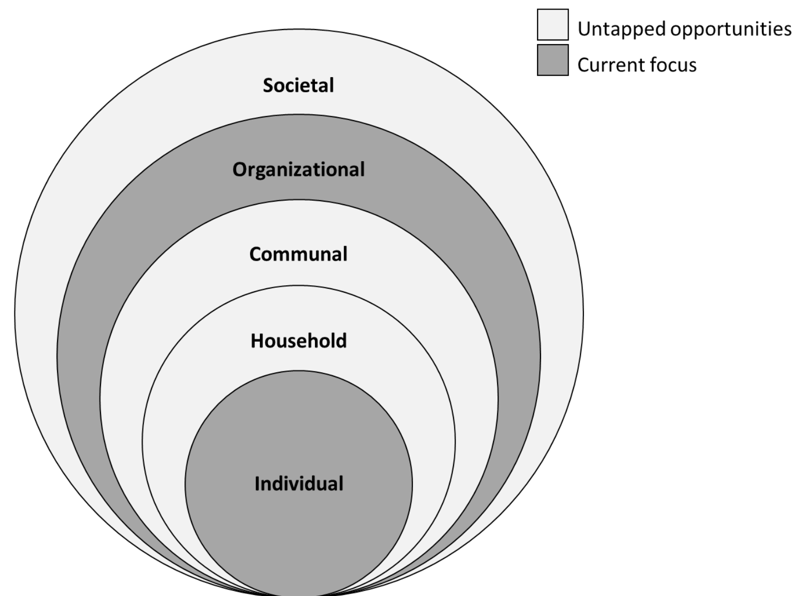

Figure 4-7. Untapped opportunities and entry-points for gender integration. Gender equality outcomes are affected (hence can be understood and addressed) at different levels, represented here as spheres (adapted from Heise, 1998). Small-scale fisheries policy instruments predominately focus on gender issues at individual and organizational levels of governance (dark grey), with few issues and strategies identified at societal, communal, and household levels of governance (light grey).

Finally, in building both gender-nuanced and multi-level strategies and actions, it would seem from my analysis that at least in the short term, fisheries actors will need to engage with gender and development experts and develop novel partnerships (i.e., feminist fisheries think tanks as proposed by Williams, 2019). This process may help to gradually transfer capacity and expertise to the fisheries sector. Such a step requires broadening collaboration beyond fisheries, and a fuller embracement of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary principles in a sector which has traditionally prioritized ecological sciences over study of the human dimensions (Stephenson et al., 2018).

I have demonstrated how gender equality manifests in commitments to small-scale fisheries across different Pacific Island geographies, in order to improve gender equality outcomes in practice. Importantly, narrow and outdated representations, rationale and strategies of gender equality are not isolated to the small-scale fisheries sector; these issues are pertinent to any sector, policy realm or investment seeking to contribute towards environmental governance and sustainable development (e.g., Agarwal, 2018; Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2009). The methodology I developed and applied to closely examine multi-level gender equality commitments offers substantial potential to measure and then improve the quality of outcomes of such commitments both across and within environmental governance sectors.

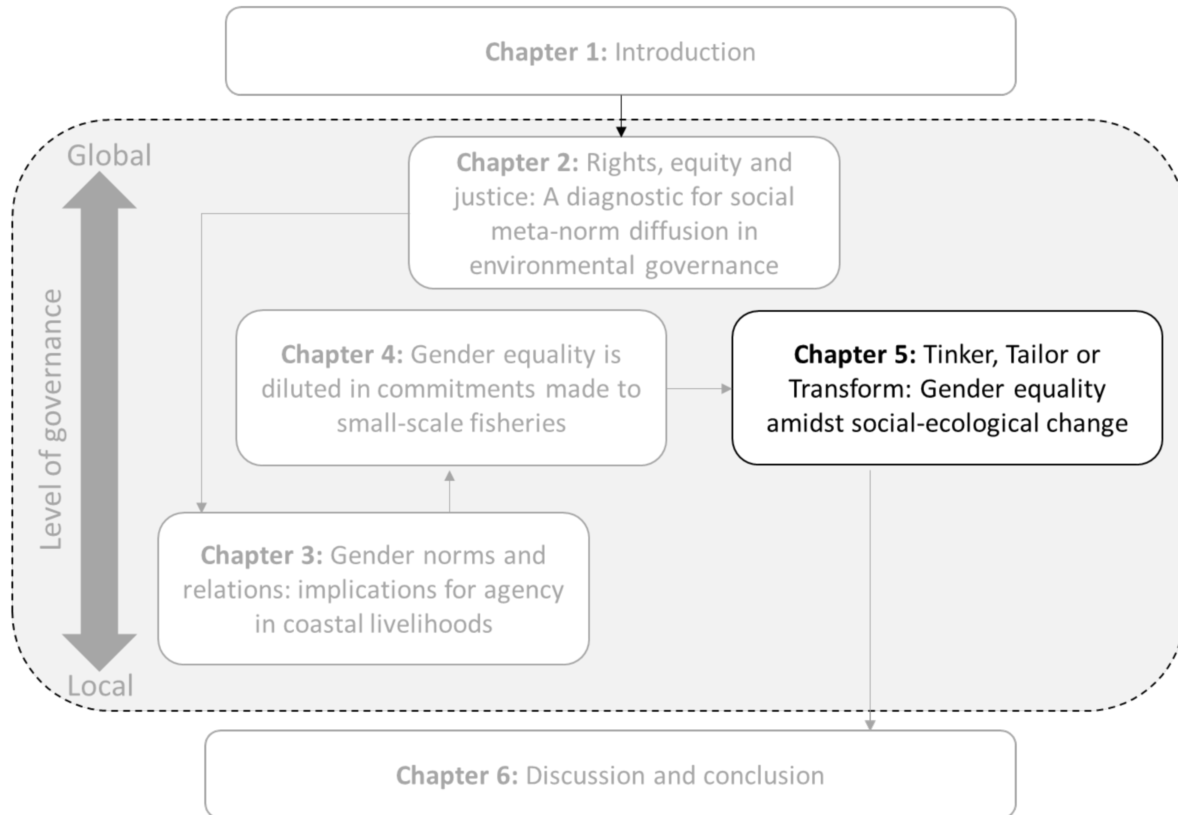

Figure 4-8. Thesis map: Chapter Four to Five.

In Chapter Four I provided an analysis of written gender equality commitments to develop an understanding of how gender equality is represented, rationalized and strategized in small-scale fisheries policy. This conceptualization of gender equality in policy is likely to have some bearing upon, the application of gender equality commitments in practice. Yet, practical assessments of gender equality actions are lacking in the small-scale fisheries sector. Therefore, in Chapter Five I extend upon my policy analysis to examine how commitments to gender equality materialize in practice.

5 Tinker, tailor or transform: Gender equality amidst social-ecological change

Adapted from **Lawless, S.**, Cohen, P.J., McDougall, C., Mangubhai, S., Song, A.M., Morrison, T.H. (2022). Tinker, tailor or transform: Gender equality amidst social-ecological change. *Global Environmental Change, 72*(102434).

Contribution: I developed the research questions for this chapter. I collected the data in collaboration with SM, and I analysed the data. PJC, AS and THM provided advice on the research questions, study design, data collection and analysis. PJC, CM, SM, AS and THM assisted with the structuring and editing of the manuscript.

Abstract

Global visions of environmental change consider gender equality to be a foundation of sustainable social-ecological systems. Similarly, social-ecological systems frameworks position gender equality as both a precursor to, and a product of, system sustainability. Yet, the degree to which gender equality is being advanced through social-ecological systems change is uncertain. I use the case of small-scale fisheries in the Pacific Islands region to explore the proposition that different social-ecological narratives: (1) ecological, (2) social-ecological, and (3) social, shape the gender equality priorities, intentions and impacts of implementing organizations. I conducted interviews with regional and national fisheries experts (n=71) and analyzed gender commitments made within policies (n=29) that influence small-scale fisheries. To explore these data, I developed a 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' gender assessment typology. I find that implementing organizations aligned with the social-ecological and social narratives considered social (i.e., human-centric) goals to be equally or more important than ecological (i.e., eco-centric) goals. Yet in action, gender equality was pursued instrumentally to achieve ecological goals and/or shallow project performance targets. These results highlight that although commitments to gender equality were common, when operationalized commitments become diluted and reoriented. Across all three narratives, organizations mostly 'Tinkered' with gender equality in impact, for example, including more women in spaces that otherwise tended to be dominated by men. Impacts predominately focused on the individual (i.e., changing women) rather than driving communal-to-societal level change. I discuss three interrelated opportunities for organizations in applying the 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' assessment typology, including its utility to assist organizations to orient toward intrinsic goals; challenge or reconfigure system attributes that perpetuate gender inequalities; and consciously interrogate discursive positions and beliefs to unsettle habituated policies, initiatives and theories of change.

5.1 Introduction

Gender equality is now accepted as integral to achieving global sustainability (Biermann et al., 2012; Leach et al., 2018; Raworth, 2017). Novel conceptual sustainability paradigms, such as the 'Doughnut for the Anthropocene' (Raworth, 2017) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs), confront the dual challenges of social equity and ecological sustainability by promoting gender equality as one of the key targets. At the highest level, these paradigms direct humanity toward an "ecologically safe and socially just space" to thrive (Raworth, 2017, p. e48). In this space, the inclusion of gender equality is considered a prerequisite for, and determinant of, social-ecological sustainability (Kawarazuka et al., 2017; Locke et al., 2014; Raworth, 2017). The realization of gender equality refers to "the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls' and boys'" (UN Women, 2017). However, there has been disquiet about whether and how gender equality is being realized (i.e., prioritized, interpreted and actioned) within social-ecological systems practice. Specifically, questions remain about the extent to which different social-ecological narratives, defined by different world views about the relationship between people and the natural environment (Hutton et al., 2005; Mace, 2014), are able to advance gender equality (Kawarazuka et al., 2017; Leach et al., 2018; Locke et al., 2014).

Gender equality and social-ecological system changes are, in some contexts, positively correlated and self-reinforcing (Locke et al., 2014; Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2009). As an example, gender equitable decision-making and access to and control over natural resources can enhance agricultural productivity (FAO, 2011), reduce economic and productive losses (Cole et al., 2018), increase food and nutrition security (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2012), and improve the compliance and effectiveness of environmental management (Leisher et al., 2016; McDougall, 2015). The corollary is that gender inequalities can inflame environmental issues, and also be exacerbated by environmental change. Threats and pressures upon the environment, such as resource scarcity, climate instability and disasters, can amplify gendered vulnerabilities to environmental changes and shocks, intensify (predominately women's) productive labour and increase the incidence of gender-based violence (Castañeda Camey et al., 2020; Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2009). In the aftermath of two tropical cyclones in Vanuatu in 2011, for example, where 16,000 people were left without access to food or clean water, a 300% increase in new cases of domestic violence was recorded (Kilsby & Rosenbaum, 2012). In our highly connected world, the possibility for such challenges to escalate into 'systemic risks' is growing (Spijkers et al., 2019).

The increasing conviction that gender equality is a powerful and inherent determinant of human and environmental experiences in social-ecological systems extends beyond academia. There has been a proliferation of written commitments to gender equality in the environment and development arena

(e.g., IUCN, 2018; UN ESCAP, 2017). A prominent example is the global Convention on Biological Diversity (1992), which in establishing a Gender Plan of Action, recognized gender considerations as being important to achieving biodiversity targets (CBD, 2020). These developments are consistent with the uptake of human-centric narratives within traditional biodiversity preservationist and conservationist agendas (Hutton et al., 2005; Mace, 2014). However, there is a lack of convincing evidence suggesting conservationist and environmentalist agendas are achieving gender equality outcomes (James et al., 2021; Mangubhai & Lawless, 2021; Stacey et al., 2019). Little is known about how gender equality commitments and outcomes are influenced by the institutional priorities of implementing organizations (i.e., regional agencies, national governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society), obscuring the robustness of the coupled 'gender equality'– 'social-ecological system' proposition. Rather than being prescriptive, the universal applicability of gender equality commitments (i.e., SDG5) serve as a 'template' for local (re)interpretation and (re-)articulation within sectoral, national and local contexts (Razavi, 2016). As such, rationales and pathways for pursuing gender equality commitments can vary considerably (Lawless et al., 2021). Gender equality can become diluted, tokenistic or fail to take a practical form (Lawless et al., 2020; Razavi, 2016). Consequently, there may be stark differences in how different organizations seek to tackle gender issues, and how they measure and perceive success. Without gaining insights into this discursive connection, achieving gender equality to satisfy the goals of social-ecological systems sustainability may continue to falter.

In this study, I seek to understand how different social-ecological narratives shape gender equality approaches and impacts. My investigation is guided by the notion that differences in the social-ecological narratives of implementing organizations will affect how they address issues, and measure and perceive successes (Fabinyi et al., 2014; Lawless et al., 2020; Morrison et al., 2020). I use the case of small-scale fisheries as a critical example of an interconnected social-ecological system characterized by diverse and dynamic resources, resource users and governance actors (Berkes, 2003; Jentoft & Chuenpagdee, 2009; Ostrom, 2009). Through examining the policies and practices that influence small-sale fisheries, I assess the efficacy of gender equality priorities, intentions and impacts. By 'policy' I refer to written binding and non-binding regional, national and organizational gender equality commitments made to small-scale fisheries. By 'practice' I refer to the actualization of commitments, for instance via extension services, development projects or investments offered by regional agencies, national governments, NGOs, the private sector, and/or civil society, henceforth, 'implementing organizations'. I first aim to identify and situate the narratives of implementing organizations along a social-ecological spectrum. I then seek to understand how gender equality is prioritized in their work; including the intentions of gender approaches they use. Finally, I assess the impacts that respondents perceive to have been achieved through the use of these gender approaches. My objective is to critically reflect on organizations' efficacy in pursuing gender equality, and to develop a framework for self-

reflection and adjustment that can be used in small-scale fisheries and other sectors to improve gender equality outcomes.

5.2 Methods

5.2.1 Study context

5.2.1.1 Case justification

Social-ecological systems thinking has generally been deficient in capturing social dynamics, particularly the intricacies of social difference and power (Brown, 2014; Cote & Nightingale, 2012; Fabinyi et al., 2014). Small-scale fisheries have served as a case to highlight the nature and relevance of these blind spots. For instance, small-scale fisheries research and policy have shown how the scope of social-ecological systems governance can be expanded to better account for gender inequalities, including the influence of gender norms and power relations (e.g., Cohen et al., 2016; Kawarazuka et al., 2017; Locke et al., 2014). I consider the case of small-scale fisheries a useful social-ecological system to explore, building on the rich social science foundations, and to bring a deeper level of reflection on gender equality.

Gender inequalities persist in small-scale fisheries, as they do in most environmental sectors. Men tend to hold greater influence in decisions related to access, use and management of productive assets (including, but not limited to, fishing grounds and stocks), and are more likely to capture and control a disproportionate share of the social and economic benefits (de la Torre-Castro et al., 2017; Harper et al., 2013; Lawless et al., 2019). Women's participation in small-scale fishing and contributions to economic and food security are high in all regions of the world, yet women continue to be undervalued, underrepresented and marginalized in the both formal and informal sector activities (de la Torre-Castro et al., 2017; Harper et al., 2020). The degree, pace and depth to which gender inequalities are challenged is set by the policy landscape. There have been few attempts to examine gender in the policies that govern, and the practical approaches taken, in the small-scale fisheries sector (see for exception Lawless et al., 2021; Mangubhai & Lawless, 2021) and the extent to which these policies and practices lead to impacts.

5.2.1.2 Pacific Islands small-scale fisheries

Our geographic focus is the Pacific Islands, a region supporting remarkably high biodiversity in coastal ecosystems (SPREP, 2020). These coastal ecosystems are an integral source for food and nutrition security, livelihood opportunity, and the wellbeing of the predominantly coastal populations (Andrew

et al., 2019; Sulu et al., 2015). In this study I focus on commitments to gender equality in both fisheries policy and practice made at the regional level, and national levels for Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. These countries were chosen as they have the highest density of small-scale fisheries investments and agencies working on fisheries in the region.

Social-ecological systems thinking has been strongly influenced by this region (Bell et al., 2017; Jupiter et al., 2017a). In this context, social-ecological systems are defined by close functional ties to coastal and oceans spaces (Andrew et al., 2019), the plurality of national and customary governance frameworks (Foale et al., 2011; Rohe et al., 2018a; Sloan & Chand, 2016), and sensitivity and responsiveness to climate and demographic changes (Bell et al., 2017). These systems are also characterized by concurrent environmental development initiatives supported by government, NGOs and overseas development assistance (Rohe et al., 2018a; SPREP, 2020). In the context of small-scale fisheries, examples of these initiatives (i.e., policy or management measures) include periodic marine closures or 'taboo' areas, and regulation of marine resource use and harvests and gear controls (Cohen et al., 2015; Foale et al., 2011). However, there is some debate about the ability of these initiatives to lead to both effective and equitable social-ecological outcomes (Bell et al., 2017; Fabinyi et al., 2013). For instance, separate studies of community-based fisheries in Solomon Islands found that compliance with management measures are weakened due to inequitable decision-making processes whereby authority rests largely with powerful (predominately male) individuals (Blythe et al., 2017; Rohe et al., 2018b).

Over several decades, research from the Pacific Islands region has sought to establish the crucial role of women in fisheries production (Bliege Bird, 2007; Chapman, 1987), their contributions to the economy (Harper et al., 2013) and food security (Kronen & Vunisea, 2009; Thomas et al., 2021). Research at local levels has illustrated the gender norms (Lawless et al., 2019), power relations (Locke et al., 2017) and social structures (Foale & Macintyre, 2000) that can contribute to women's marginalization. There has been a proliferation of commitments to gender equality in regional small-scale fisheries policy and development investments throughout the region (i.e., ACIAR, 2016; PEUMP, 2019; SPC, 2015). However, institutional research has highlighted the limited capacities of fisheries managers and practitioners, and the efficacy of gender and fisheries policies across the region, to adequately consider and respond to these gender issues (Lawless et al., 2021; Mangubhai & Lawless, 2021; Song et al., 2019). These capacity constraints, coupled with the persistently slow progress in overturning gender inequalities in the fishing sector, point to a need for a deeper examination into how implementing organizations are prioritizing gender and what can be done to help achieve gender policy goals.

5.2.2 Analytical frameworks

5.2.2.1 Social-ecological narratives

Our study is based on the premise that gender equality priorities, intentions and impacts are influenced by different social-ecological narratives about the relationship between people and the environment (Hutton et al., 2005; Jones et al., 2016; Mace, 2014). I focus on three broad narratives – ecological, social-ecological and social. The ecological narrative views humans as protectors (or destroyers) of biodiversity, species and eco-system function (Tilman, 2012). The social narrative sees humans as beneficiaries of ecosystem goods and services (Daw et al., 2011). The social-ecological narrative views humans and the environment as interconnected, and both inherently part of social-ecological systems (Berkes et al., 1998). Using the literature articulating these three narratives, I propose that the ecological, social-ecological and social narratives pursued by implementing organizations shapes their gender equality priorities, intended aims, and impacts (Figure 5-1).

Unpacking this further, these narratives together reflect a range of instrumental and intrinsic values placed on gender, affecting the depth of engagement with gender as a concept (e.g., Lau, 2020; Lawless et al., 2021). I define instrumental values as those that prioritize gender equality as a means to achieve or enhance non-gender goals, for instance, to enhance environmental outcomes, or the productivity of small-scale fisheries (e.g., Cook et al., 2019; Leisher et al., 2016), and thus trend toward the ecological narrative. By contrast, I consider intrinsic values as those oriented towards justice and fairness as outcomes in and of themselves (e.g., Murunga, 2021), and thus trend toward the social narrative. I argue that the social-ecological narrative presents a more evenly weighted prioritization of both intrinsic and instrumental values, as this narrative is focused on adaptation, feedback and connectedness to achieve synergistic social and ecological outcomes (Keck & Sakdapolrak, 2013; Ostrom, 2009). Yet, the social-ecological narrative is akin to a "balancing act", whereby there are conceptual and practical limitations and tension to achieving this synergy (Locke et al., 2014; Song et al., 2018, p. 380). Specifically, although the social-ecological narrative pre-empts a more integrated approach to natural resource management and research, there are still only few reported successes in actually integrating gender considerations (Kawarazuka et al., 2017; Locke et al., 2014).

I introduce a 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' gender assessment typology (detailed in section 5.2.2.2) to predict and assess the type of impacts gender commitments in policy and practice are likely to achieve when pursued via different social-ecological narratives. I explore the proposition that when gender is pursued with the goal to drive human development outcomes, gender is likely to be valued intrinsically, and generate approaches, impacts and measures of success that are likely to 'Transform' gender inequalities (i.e., displace unequal gender norms, relations, structures and systems) (Locke et al., 2014;

Rees, 1998; Squires, 2005). At the opposite end of the spectrum, where priorities are oriented toward ecological outcomes, gender is likely perceived as instrumental to this aim. As such, the ways in which gender equality is approached and measured are, at best, likely to 'Tinker' with gender (i.e., include women in spaces occupied or dominated by men) with limited potential to make meaningful advancements toward gender equality (Rees, 1998; Squires, 2003).

Although I identify three main social-ecological narratives, I acknowledge these are neither clear cut nor bounded. Research concerned with food security or poverty reduction objectives may, for instance, appear to be aligned with a social narrative, supporting human-centric goals and intrinsic values (e.g., Cole et al., 2015b). However, there are also instances whereby gender equality visions may be conceived instrumentally, for example, to achieve nutritional outcomes (e.g., Meinzen-Dick et al., 2012). Therefore, these narratives should be seen as heuristic in nature rather than definitive.

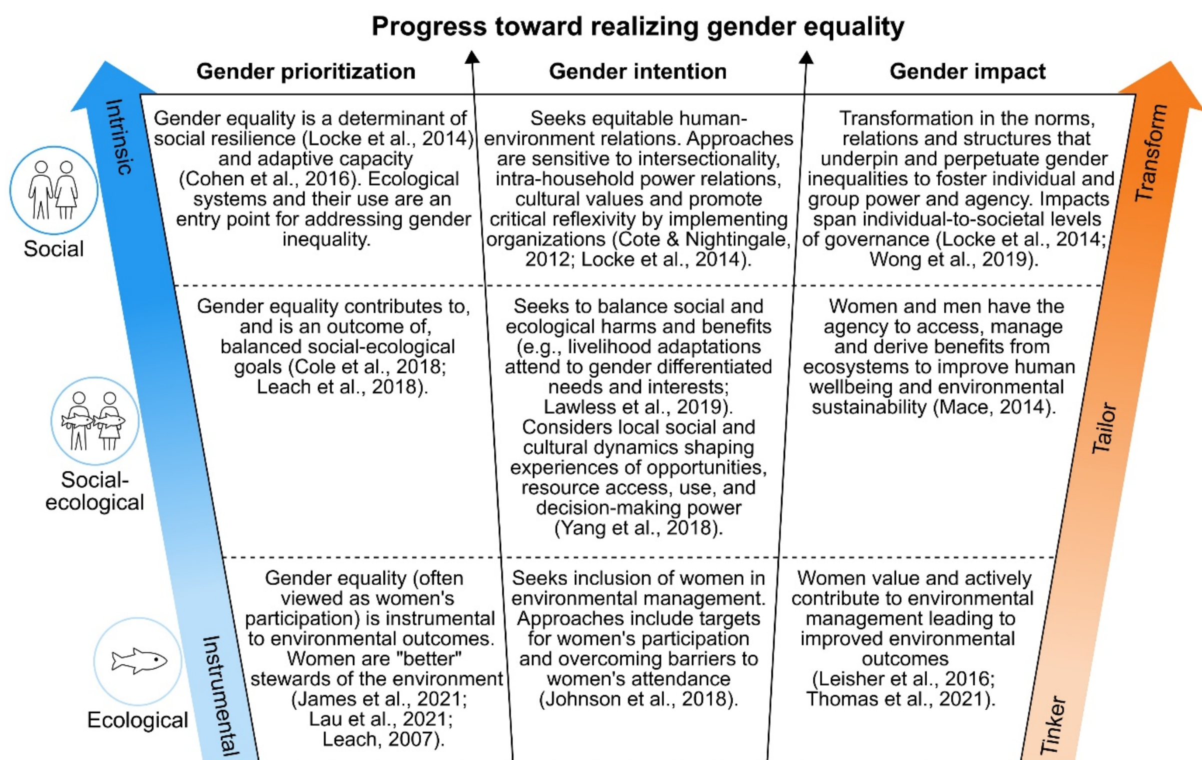

Figure 5-1. Social-ecological narrative proposition based on (1) three social-ecological narratives about the relationship between humans and the environment, (2) their intersection with organizational priorities, intentions and impacts for gender equality, (3) their alignment with instrumental (i.e., non-gender) and intrinsic (i.e., socially just and fair) goals, and (4) the type of impacts they are likely to achieve (Tinker-Tailor-Transform).

5.2.2.2 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' gender assessment typology

I developed a 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' assessment typology (Table 5-1), adapted from gender policy analysis frameworks (i.e., Rees, 1998; Squires, 2003; Squires, 2005), and indicators for gender best

practice applied in fisheries and agricultural development contexts (i.e., IGWG, 2017; Johnson et al., 2018; Kleiber et al., 2019a). The 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' assessment typology represents a tool for deepening understanding of the rationales for pursuing gender equality and assessing the intentions and impacts of gender investments. To 'tinker' is an attempt to repair something by working at the margins, often in an ad-hoc manner. In our case the 'Tinker' classification represents efforts for incremental change, those that are the most easily achieved with narrow measures of success, for instance to increase the number of women attending a meeting, and assuming women and men face the same barriers and opportunities. To 'tailor' means to alter something to suit a particular need or situation. In my case the 'Tailor' classification may recognize differences between women and men and directly respond to these differences. These actions and measures of success accommodate, but not necessarily challenge, gender disparities whereby the social conditions, norms and relations in which inequalities are embedded remain in place. To 'transform' means to radically change form and function. In my case, the 'Transform' classification reflects efforts that challenge and displace the underlying configurations perpetuating gender inequalities. The distinction between these three classifications is that 'Tinker' approaches tend to treat women and men the same, assuming they face the same barriers and opportunities. 'Tailor' approaches tend to address the symptoms of gender inequality, by addressing women's comparative disadvantage to men, and 'Transform' approaches tackle the root causes (McDougall et al., 2021). These terms and their meaning share some similarity to other well-established frameworks used to understand the potential impacts of different gender approaches (e.g., IGWG, 2017; Johnson et al., 2018). While the 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' assessment typology also has a focus on impacts, it extends these existing frameworks to place greater analytical emphasis on the rationales and intentions of gender equality commitments. Contextualized explanations and application of the assessment typology as an analytical rubric are detailed in Sections 5.3.2.2 and 5.3.3.2.

Table 5-1. 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' gender assessment typology.

Typology	**Rationale for gender equality**	**Indicators to assess gender intentions and impacts**
Tinker	Gender equality is the inclusion of women in spaces occupied or dominated by men, and all people conforming to dominant masculine norms. This rationale assumes gender neutrality, whereby women and men have the same opportunities, are autonomous, and therefore should be treated the same. This typology is also referred to as 'inclusion'.	1. Increased number of women attending and/or participating (i.e., meetings, initiatives, decision-making bodies), or with access to different aspects of an initiative (i.e., extension services). 2. Women have adopted stereotypical masculine roles or traits (i.e., participating in activities such as spear fishing or women espousing assertiveness)
Tailor	Gender equality is accounting for the different needs and interests of marginalized groups. This rationale acknowledges that identities are gendered and influence opportunities and different	1. Gender differences (i.e., needs, constraints and interests of women and men) are acknowledged and accounted for in initiative design and implementation.

	constraints of women and men. This typology is also referred to as 'integration', 'reversal' or 'establishing difference'.	2. Initiatives are explicitly tailored to women's needs, wants and interests. 3. Opportunities to access, participate in and benefit from initiatives are gender balanced.
Transform	Gender equality is the displacement of unequal gender norms, relations, structures and systems. This rationale is sensitive to intersectional differences and views women and men as active participants in examining, questioning, and transforming the beliefs, values, attitudes and power relations that perpetuate gender inequalities. This typology is also known as 'displacement'.	1. Gender norms, relations and structures that contribute to gender differences and inequalities have been critically examined and understood. 2. Equitable gender norms and relations, structures or systems that foster gender equality are created or strengthened. 3. Inequitable gender norms, relations, structures or systems that perpetuate gender inequalities are displaced.

5.2.3 Data collection and analysis

The growing number of gender equality commitments made to small-scale fisheries policy and practice across the region over the past decade (e.g., ACIAR, 2016; PEUMP, 2019; SPC, 2015) present a rich case to examine how gender equality is prioritized, what changes are sought and achieved. To do this, I applied a mixed methods approach consisting of key informant interviews and a policy review. Key informant interviews allowed us to examine gender equality discourses in use, specifically, to explore how regional and national gender equality commitments were prioritized and then actualized (i.e., through extension services, development projects or investments). My examination of regional and national policy instruments enabled the exploration of written discourses around gender equality.

5.2.3.1 Key informant interviews

I conducted interviews with key informants who (a) self-identified as a small-scale fisheries and/or gender and fisheries expert; and (b) worked in, or with a focus on, Fiji, Solomon Islands or Vanuatu and/or the broader Pacific Islands region. I identified key informants via consultative discussions with fisheries actors during a regional workshop in Fiji in November 2017, combined with purposive and snowball sampling of fisheries actors in-country. I sought the inclusion of both females (n=42) and males (n=29) in my sample. Key informants (n=71 total) included fisheries officers or NGO staff, and consultants who worked on fisheries management (n=28), government officials and policymakers (n=19), executives of regional agencies, NGOs or private organizations (n=13), applied researchers (n=9) and academics (n=2). These informants had an average of 11.9 years of experience working on small-scale fisheries in the Pacific Islands region (a combined 809 years), and 9.8 years of experience working on gender (a combined 695 years). I considered key informants to have had influence over, or been influenced by, the conceptualization of gender in small-scale fisheries. I ensured the range of implementing organizations (non-governmental (n=28), regional (n=18), governmental (n=16), and advisors to these organizations (n=9)) operating at regional and national levels of governance were

represented in the sample through a process of stratification. The geographic focal areas of work for informants included the Pacific Islands region (n=22), Fiji (n=21), Vanuatu (n=15) and Solomon Islands (n=13).

Interviews were conducted face-to-face (n=69) or via teleconference (n=2) between August 2018 and February 2019. More than half the interviews (58%) were conducted with two interviewers present to reduce interpretation bias, clarify any discrepancies, and enable validation of responses. In these cases, interviews were recorded independently and jointly transcribed into an excel database. Independent transcription by the two interviewers were compared to identify discrepancies in interpretation and then discussed and resolved. The lead author then completed the analysis. Interviews included open and close questions to elicit both descriptive and evaluative data. All questions required key informants to reflect on the priorities and values of their own organizations, or if they worked independently, their own values. Interviews were structured according to my research questions.

First, to determine the social-ecological goals of implementing organizations, I asked informants to rate between 0–100% the extent to which their organization (or as individuals if working as an advisor to these organizations) prioritized social and ecological goals. To clarify my meaning, I provided broad examples of social goals and outcomes such as livelihood development, poverty reduction, improving food and nutrition security or health. Examples of ecological goals I provided were the protection of biodiversity, ecosystem function and/or keystone or iconic species.

Second, I asked informants to select one statement from a pre-defined list that best illustrated the main reason their organization considered gender in their work. The statements included: (1) Because it is something our donor requires us to do; (2) To increase the number of women in our organization; (3) To increase the number of women participating in our programs; (4) To increase the likelihood of sustainably managed fisheries; (5) To increase the profitability of coastal fisheries; (6) To increase the productivity of coastal fisheries and; (7) Because I recognize gender equality as a fundamental human right. These statements were developed based on examinations of how gender equality had been prioritized in other governance contexts with diverse political actors (e.g., Lombardo et al., 2010; Nazneen & Hickey, 2019), as well as reflect the potential range of instrumental and intrinsic values for gender (e.g., Lawless et al., 2021).

Third, I sought to understand the changes implementing organizations pursued by integrating gender equality commitments. I asked informants to select one small-scale fisheries initiative (i.e., a project, policy, research or technology) that they were familiar with that had integrated a gender approach. All 71 informants were asked to describe the initiative and gender approach in detail (therefore total initiatives n=71). Questions sought to elicit what the overall initiative aimed to achieve; the reasons

why gender was considered and integrated; and the details of the gender approach used. I later combined these data with the results of my review of regional and national small-scale fisheries policy instruments (n=29) through which I found 147 policy statements describing types of gender approaches proposed (described in section 5.2.3.2). I then grouped the gender approaches thematically and assessed the intended changes of these approaches based on my 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' assessment typology (Table 5-1).

Finally, to understand the practical influence of the gender approaches, including whether the intentions were actualized, I asked informants to describe any changes they perceived had occurred from the implementation of the gender approach and to provide an example. I assessed these data in two ways. First, I applied the 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' assessment typology (Table 5-1) to assess the impact data, which I then compared with the intention data. Second, I evaluated the types of impacts and positioned them in the framework developed by Rao and Kelleher (2005, Figure 1, p.60). Impact types are organized according to (1) the level of governance (i.e., individual-to-societal) in which changes occurred and; (2) the types of social rules they influenced. For instance, whether they were formal (i.e., accounted for gender in formal spaces such as through laws, policy or in management committees, employment and data collection) or informal (i.e., influenced equitable decision-making, enhanced the productive capacities of women, or challenged values, attitudes and beliefs of people related to gender).

5.2.3.2 Policy document review

At the conclusion of the interviews I asked key informants to identify and share via email any policy instruments that: (a) informants determined useful in integrating gender within their work; (b) provided details of their organization's gender related programming; and (c) regional and national small-scale fisheries commitments in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Additional instruments interviewees cited during interviews were added to the sample (total sample n=76). Through a systematic analysis and coding of these instruments, I then excluded any documents that did not provide adequate detail on the types of gender approaches proposed in order to apply my 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' assessment typology, which reduced the sample to 29. These 29 policy instruments included organizational program guides (n=12), research reports (n=6), organizational strategies (n=4), national fisheries policies or corporate plans (n=2), annual reports (n=2), promotional material (n=2), and a regional fisheries policy (n=1). The publication dates of these instruments ranged from 2008 to 2018. The authors and titles of the policy instruments are not referenced due to confidentiality agreements. These instruments are reflective of the formal gender commitments made to small-scale fisheries in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and the Pacific Islands region.

I used discourse analysis to systematically examine the 29 policy instruments for statements indicating the gender equality approaches proposed or in use (n=147). Coding of these policy instruments and statements was undertaken using NVivo 12 Plus qualitative data analysis software. I applied attributional coding to determine the attributes of the policy instruments including instrument type, country or region of focus, author(s), organization type of author(s), and publication date. I then used predetermined coding to code the gender approaches into three categories; 'Tinker', 'Tailor' or 'Transform' based on the indicators introduced in Table 5-1.

5.2.3.3 Analysis of social-ecological narratives

To elicit general trends about how gender equality is pursued amidst social-ecological narratives (according to my proposition in section 5.2.2.1), I disaggregated my analysis according to individual informant responses as these responses reflected the goals and values of implementing organizations. For each informant (n=71), I traced the link between social-ecological narratives (determined by rating of social-ecological goals); prioritization of gender (determined by gender priority statements); gender intentions and impacts (based on the Tinker-Tailor-Transform gender assessment and a contextual analysis of examples provided by informants).

5.3 Results

5.3.1 Prioritization of gender equality amidst social-ecological goals

5.3.1.1 Locating social-ecological goals

I determined the prioritization of social and ecological goals by implementing organizations using rating data (Figure 5-2). Responses spanned the entire spectrum. Only 8% of responses indicated organizations pursued predominately ecological goals; 67% of responses suggested organizations balanced social-ecological goals; and 25% of responses indicated organizations primarily pursued social goals. The most frequent response (28%) was that social and ecological goals were valued evenly by implementing organizations. Yet, overall, I found implementing organizations tended to lean more toward social than ecological goals (see the distribution of responses in Figure 5-2). For example, an Advisor to a regional agency indicated that social goals accounted for 60% of their work focus and ecological goals 40% (thereby falling into the social-ecological goal range), “It's fairly even … we do work on coastal fisheries science and management measures in relation to status of stocks and ecosystems [and also] livelihood development and policy work on gender and social inclusion”. Responses indicated that some implementing organizations had shifted their priorities away from explicit biodiversity conservation agendas of the past. For example, a Program Manager for an international NGO working regionally reported that “Traditionally [name of organization] was firmly conservation focused. Now we've re-directed our focus to ‘people need nature’ as our moto”. Similarly, a Director of an international NGO based in Solomon Islands reported “[We are] a conservation organization with a focus on biodiversity protection. But because of social impacts on the environment relating to human development, [name of organization] has expanded its focus to deal more with human development issues”.

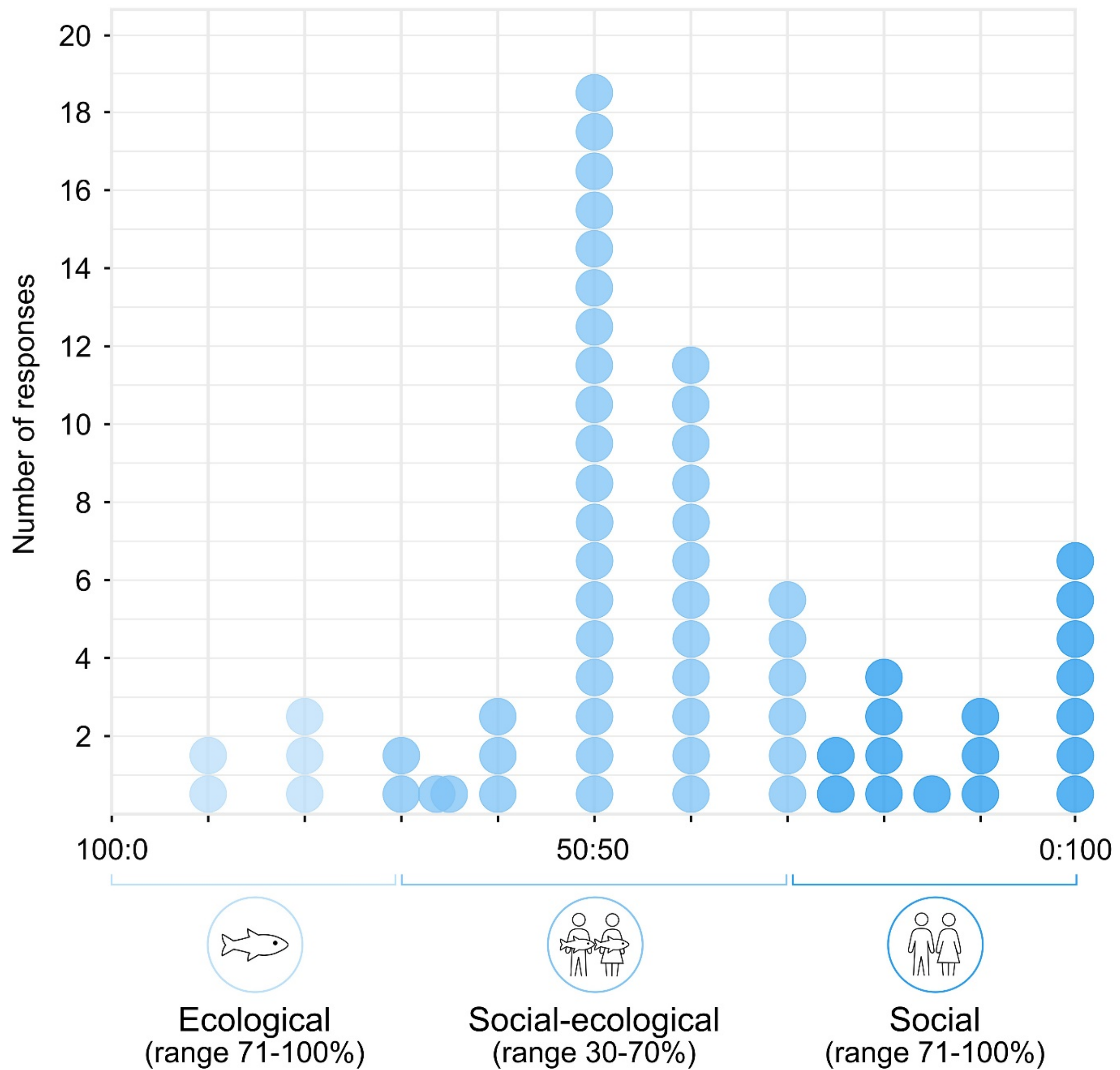

Figure 5-2. Rating of the goals implementing organizations (n=66) along a social-ecological spectrum. Each circle represents a single informant response and the percentage they allocated towards social or ecological goals. The x-axis provides ratios of goals (ecological:social), with those to the left of the 50:50 midpoint having a greater focus on ecological goals (ranging from 71-100%), and those on the right focused more on social goals (71-100%). No response was provided by five of the 71 informants.

5.3.1.2 Situating gender equality priorities

Informants selected statements to best explain the reason their organization prioritized gender (Figure 5-3). The most frequent response was to increase the likelihood of sustainably managed fisheries (28%), signifying a leaning "more on the environmental side of things" (Project Coordinator, international NGO, Vanuatu) and to "increase the success of conservation initiatives" (Program Manager, international NGO, Pacific region). The second most frequent response was to increase the number of

women participating in fisheries programs (26%). A Country Coordinator for a regional agency reported "It's often the best bang for buck to work with the women and youth. Working with the *Nakamal* [Chiefs and leaders] is difficult".

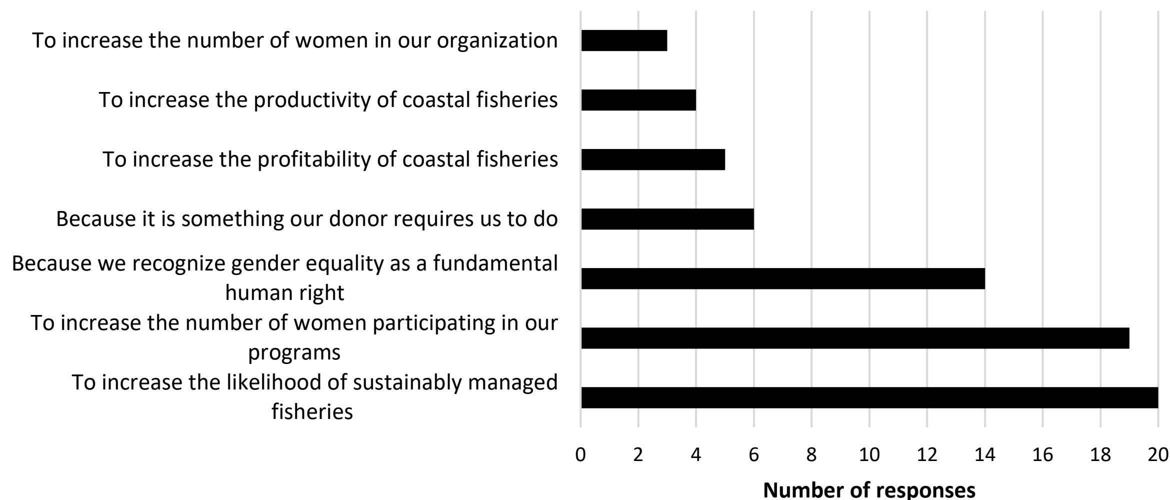

Figure 5-3. Statements best representing why gender is prioritized by implementing organizations according to informant responses (n=71).

5.3.2 Gender intentions

5.3.2.1 Overview of gender approaches

I identified 218 gender approaches applied in fisheries policy and practice (Table 5-2). These 218 approaches included those used within each fisheries initiative described by informants (n=71), and those articulated in policy statements (n=147). A more detailed summary of these approaches are located in Table B1 (Appendices section 8.2).

Table 5-2. Gender approaches (n=218) identified in small-scale fisheries policy and practice, aggregated into seven approach types indicating whether their intention aligned with the 'Tinker', 'Tailor' or 'Transform' typologies.

		Classification		
Gender approach type	**Examples of gender approaches**	Tinker	Tailor	Transform
Gendered identity targeting (n=49)	Women-targeted fisheries initiatives	✓	✓	
	Ensuring women's project participation	✓		

	Engaging men in gender change		✓	✓
Enhance women's agency (n=42)	Capacity building of women fishers		✓	
	Linking women to markets and value-adding to marine products		✓	
	Building women's collectives or networks		✓	
	Promoting women as leaders	✓	✓	
Gender research and evidence generation (n=38)	Sex-disaggregated data collection	✓		
	Quantification of women's contribution to fisheries	✓	✓	
	Women's participation indicators	✓		
	Assess gendered impact of initiatives	✓	✓	
Gender sensitive community facilitation (n=31)	Presence of women extension officers, trainers or facilitators	✓		
	Focus-group discussion conducted separately with women and men	✓	✓	
	Consultation of women regarding fisheries initiatives	✓	✓	
	Theatre used to highlight and challenge harmful gender norms and relations			✓
Gender sensitive organizational environments (n=32)	Organizational gender policies (e.g., recruitment and sexual harassment)	✓	✓	✓
	Gender budgets	✓	✓	
	Female employee professional development	✓		
	Gender focal points within organizations	✓		
	Monitoring and reporting of gender impacts	✓	✓	
	Assessment of the attitudes and will of staff to integrate gender	✓	✓	
Gender considered in regional, national or organizational fisheries policy or guidelines (n=15)	Recognition of women and/or gender in fisheries policies and guidelines	✓	✓	
	Endorsement and/or implementation of organizational gender strategies	✓	✓	
Increase gender knowledge and capacity (n=11)	Access to expert knowledge or partnerships to share lessons and best practice	✓	✓	
	Employee gender capacity building	✓	✓	✓
	Availability and access to gender tools or resources	✓	✓	

Although I identified the same type of approaches in both policy and practice, my analysis revealed differences in their intended purpose. In these cases, I recorded the gender approach types under multiple classifications. For example, I classified 'women-targeted fisheries initiatives' as both 'Tinker'

and 'Tailor'. Referring to the inclusion of women in a pearl farming initiative, a Fisheries Advisor reported "we felt that women were better technicians [and participating in the initiative] gave them more to do than cooking or gossiping". I considered this a case of 'Tinkering' because the inclusion of women for reasons of improved technical outcomes, did not also acknowledge or challenge the gendered barriers to their participation. In other cases, I found the motive for targeting initiatives toward women to be more closely aligned with the 'Tailor' classification. For example, training women as community facilitators of sustainable natural resource use sought to "support a new generation of women leaders… to increase their involvement in decision-making about national resources" (promotional material, international NGO, Solomon Islands). This particular approach was accompanied by efforts to facilitate access to networks and learning opportunities otherwise inaccessible to women, more consistent with a 'Tailor' approach.

5.3.2.2 Gender intention assessment: Tinker, tailor or transform?

I assessed the descriptions of each approach listed in Table 5-2 according to the indicators in the Tinker-Tailor-Transform gender assessment typology (Table 5-1) to determine their intention. My analysis revealed 51% (112 of 218) of the gender approaches 'Tinkered' with gender equality in that they either focused on bringing women into spaces occupied by men or advocated for women to conform to masculine norms (e.g., via research, organizational policies/practice or targeting initiatives toward women). For example, to overcome the dominance of men in community level fisheries discussions and decision-making, a common approach proposed in policy was to "ensure that equal numbers of men and women are invited to meetings and workshops" (program guide, international NGO, Fiji). I also found evidence of approaches that sought to encourage women into roles traditionally undertaken by men. For example, a program guide produced by an international NGO working in Solomon Islands reported that "involving community members, particularly women, in data collection and assessment helps them understand problems of overfishing, prepares them to implement appropriate management strategies, and allows them to monitor and obtain direct feedback on management actions". Similarly, a coastal fishery monitoring project in Vanuatu sought to "promote data collectors to be females [previously a role only undertaken by men]" (Fisheries officer, national government).

I found 44% (95 of 218) of gender approaches were 'Tailored' to work around gender inequalities. These approaches intended to enhance women's status in the sector, for example, through improved understanding of women's contribution to fisheries value-chains, and the development or enhancement of productive and profitable livelihood opportunities for women. These approaches acknowledged

differences in women's and men's needs and interests. A scientist from an international NGO in Fiji reported that "mud crabs were identified as a flagship species as they are mainly caught by women. This program sought to bring visibility to women's role in the fishery". Another informant reported "we tailor livelihood options [because] women's interests might be different [to men's] … women have different habitat target areas [for fishing] like nearshore and mangroves…" (Senior Official, national government, Solomon Islands).

Only 5% (11 of 218) of gender approaches intended to 'Transform' the norms, relations and social structures that perpetuated gender inequalities. For example, a Regional Program Manager for an international NGO reported that they offer gender-transformative training to their staff through "a series of activities to help the staff apply a gender lens to their own lives". These activities were intended to generate self-reflection on internal assumptions about gender roles and participate in activities that challenged power relations.

5.3.3 Gender approach impacts

5.3.3.1 Gender approach impact types

Informants were asked to describe whether and how application of the gender approaches led to any impacts. My analysis showed that 81% of impacts (71 of 88, see circles 1-5, 7-11) were focused on women (Figure 5-4). In Figure 5-4, the individual formal and informal quadrants show that 27% of impacts (24 of 88, see circles 3, 4 and 9) brought more women into spaces predominately occupied by men (i.e., attending and participating in fisheries related meetings, initiatives and committees or employed in implementing organizations). In the individual-formal quadrant, 17% of impacts (15 of 88, circles 7, 10, 11) responded to women's relative structural disadvantages, for instance, by providing greater assistance to women in obtaining commercial fisheries licenses; the establishment of women's business collectives; and more women employed or occupying higher positions in the formal sector. There was also a reported increase in women's incomes in 7% of cases (6 of 88, circle 8).

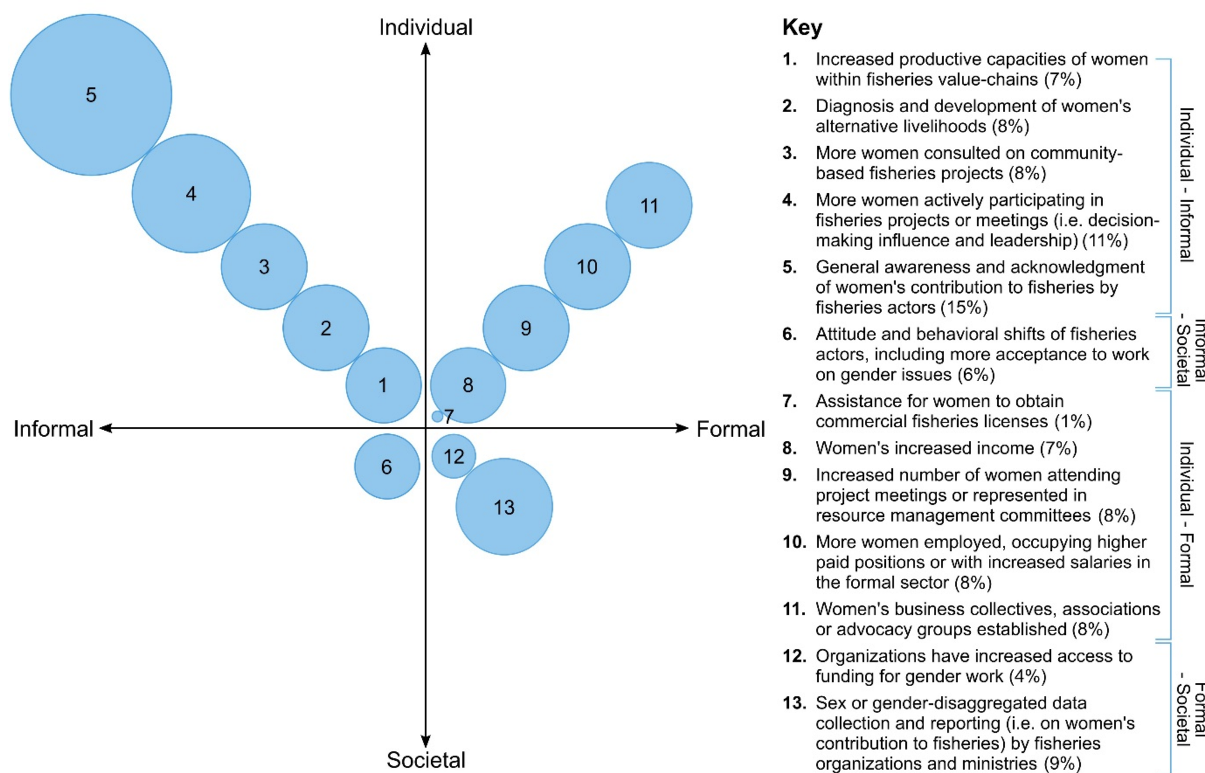

Figure 5-4. Gender approach impact types achieved from small-scale fisheries initiatives.

In the individual-informal quadrant, 15% of impacts (13 of 88, circle 5) were reported to generate greater awareness of women's contribution to fisheries by regional agencies and national fisheries ministries. For example, a Regional Fisheries Advisor commented of a gender training they attended, "at the start of the workshop we asked the fisheries extension officers who was involved in aquaculture, and they all said only men. With analysis tools they realized that women are doing most of the work". Other impacts included more women consulted in fisheries initiatives in 8% of cases (7 of 88, circle 3); and an increased productive capacities of women in 7% of cases (6 of 88, circle 1).

Access to gender related funding was one of the few impacts in the formal-societal quadrant (4%) (4 of 88, circle 12). A Program Manager for an international NGO in Fiji reflected on the need "to stay relevant in our work and our organization" citing shifts in "donor requirements and development more generally" that pushed for a greater focus on gender in their work. A Director of an international NGO in Solomon Islands reported that working with women's church groups to raise awareness of environmental threats, such as logging and mining, "attracts donors because it's unique. For example, [donors] are asking us to do more community awareness". Gender- or sex-disaggregated data collection and reporting (9%) was the only other impact I found in this quadrant (8 of 88, circle 13), however there was limited evidence of the planned uses of these data. For example, when referring to the inclusion of gender indicators in annual report cards, an Advisor to a regional agency reported "I admit that the

indicators are not that transformative, there is always scope to improve and measure things more meaningfully. People do support them though, but it's just how they implement them… Less than half of countries responded to the gender indicators … I don't know if the report card has that much power [to change anything on the ground]".

Impacts within the informal-societal quadrant included how women were "valued" and the attitudes of individuals within implementing organizations (6%) (5 of 88, circle 6). Similarly, a Regional Fisheries Advisor reported that "Getting middle-aged Fijian men engaged in gender [through a gender training workshop] was nothing short of a miracle. We saw changes in men's attitudes after the training. This led to better inclusion of women". A Senior Technical Aid within an international NGO in Solomon Islands reflected on his involvement in a community gender research project, "It helped us think about gender. We started to realize that women have a lot of knowledge they were sharing out. We learned the value of women's voice and knowledge… It changed me a lot. It changed me with the work I do on the ground". However, I also found evidence of negative attitudes toward gender work, "Gender still receives sniggers and non-helpful feedback. But it's still on the agenda, but more work is to be done to shift this attitude" (Advisor, regional agency).

5.3.3.2 Gender approach impact assessment: Tinker, tailor or transform?

My assessment did not indicate any approaches that 'Transformed' gender inequalities in impact. Instead, 42% of approaches led to women's greater inclusion ('Tinker'), 31% led to increased recognition of women's needs and a rebalancing of opportunities ('Tailor'), 17% led to no changes, and for 10% of these approaches informants reported they did not know, or it was too early to determine what changes had occurred (see Figure B1 and Table B2 in Appendices section 8.2 for detailed evidence of approach impacts).

The 'Tinker' approaches that intended to increase the physical presence of women in implementing organizations, fisheries projects or within community management bodies were able to achieve such changes, however women's agency to influence change in these spaces was limited. A Fisheries Officer in Vanuatu reported "… [name of organization] has taken more women onboard [in terms of employment]. There is more of a gender balance [in staff], but they [women] are mainly doing data entry". Similarly, in the Solomon Islands, a Fisheries Officer reported that "there is an observer program, and women are now included [as observers on fishing vessels]. But [women] still need permission from their husbands [to do so]".

Impacts of the 'Tailor' approaches included greater recognition and reporting of both women's and men's contributions to the fisheries sector (i.e., sex-disaggregated data that illustrated gender nuances

of fishing activities, habitats and species targeted). A Fisheries Officer in Fiji reported "when we created a database to capture women's roles in fisheries, we realized that we [previously] had not captured it very well. So [this new data and reflection] led to the Division Heads thinking about gender in their research". There was also more attention to the differential needs of women related to fisheries livelihoods, for instance, "By helping both men and women look at livelihood options [after a tropical cyclone] using the skills and resources they had… [which] empowered the women. Women set up their own livelihoods" (Project Manager, national government, Vanuatu).

Over a third (35%) of gender approaches had poorer impacts than anticipated in that they met a lower assessment criterion than originally intended or led to no changes. Some informants attributed this inability to reach intended goals to a lack of willingness by individuals within implementing organizations to engage with gender issues. For example, a Gender Focal Point who was embedded within a fisheries ministry to "deal with issues inside the ministries including equal opportunity [and] issues with sexual harassment" reported they did not generate any changes in their role because "gender is the last priority" when working with more senior staff. In other cases, limited impacts corresponded with a lack of knowledge and capacity to work on such issues. A Regional Fisheries Policy Specialist reported that "…we don't know how to do it [gender]. We've never been trained … we don't know how to integrate it into our work… National fisheries officers don't know what gender is. In fisheries policies from 5 years ago you wouldn't even see the word 'gender'". A Fisheries Advisor also expressed this sentiment when explaining the integration of gender within regional fisheries policies and roadmaps, "gender is largely seen as a tick box … No one is really sure how to talk about gender in these forums or how to do it productively… We just insert a phrase here and there. The depth of the discussion is not really there".

5.3.4 Gender equality amidst social-ecological narratives

Through a disaggregated analysis of each informant's interview (n=71) (described in section 5.2.3.3), I detected general trends about gender equality priorities, intentions and impacts of implementing organizations based on three social-ecological narratives (Figure 5-5). My application of the 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' gender assessment typology highlighted the dominant use of 'Tinker' approaches by implementing organizations aligned with the ecological narrative. This finding is consistent with the proposition that social-ecological narratives shape the way gender equality goals become operationalized. However, for organizations oriented toward the social-ecological narrative, intention and impact fell short of articulated priorities, breaking away from the broad proposition. This disparity became even more evident in my findings under the social narrative. For instance, only two approaches were considered to 'Transform' (i.e., seek the displacement of unequal gender norms, relations,

structures and systems), and there were no changes deemed transformative in impact despite my proposition. These results suggest the rhetoric about valuing gender equality for intrinsic reasons is not matched with depth of action. In fact, I found 17% (n=10) of gender approaches led to no changes. Of these approaches, almost all (8 of the 10) were applied within initiatives aligned with the social-ecological narrative, suggesting that there is a lack of impetus around the directive for gender equality under this narrative. Further analysis revealed that external donor or project requirements may prompt gender 'box ticking'. For example, a Regional Fisheries Advisor reported "We are influenced by donors, [as] they have more requirements for gender. We need to show donors that gender issues are being addressed". A Fisheries Officer in Fiji reported "Gender is not really considered [within a pearl farming initiative]. But we had to report back to the Ministry of Fisheries on how many women are involved in the programs".

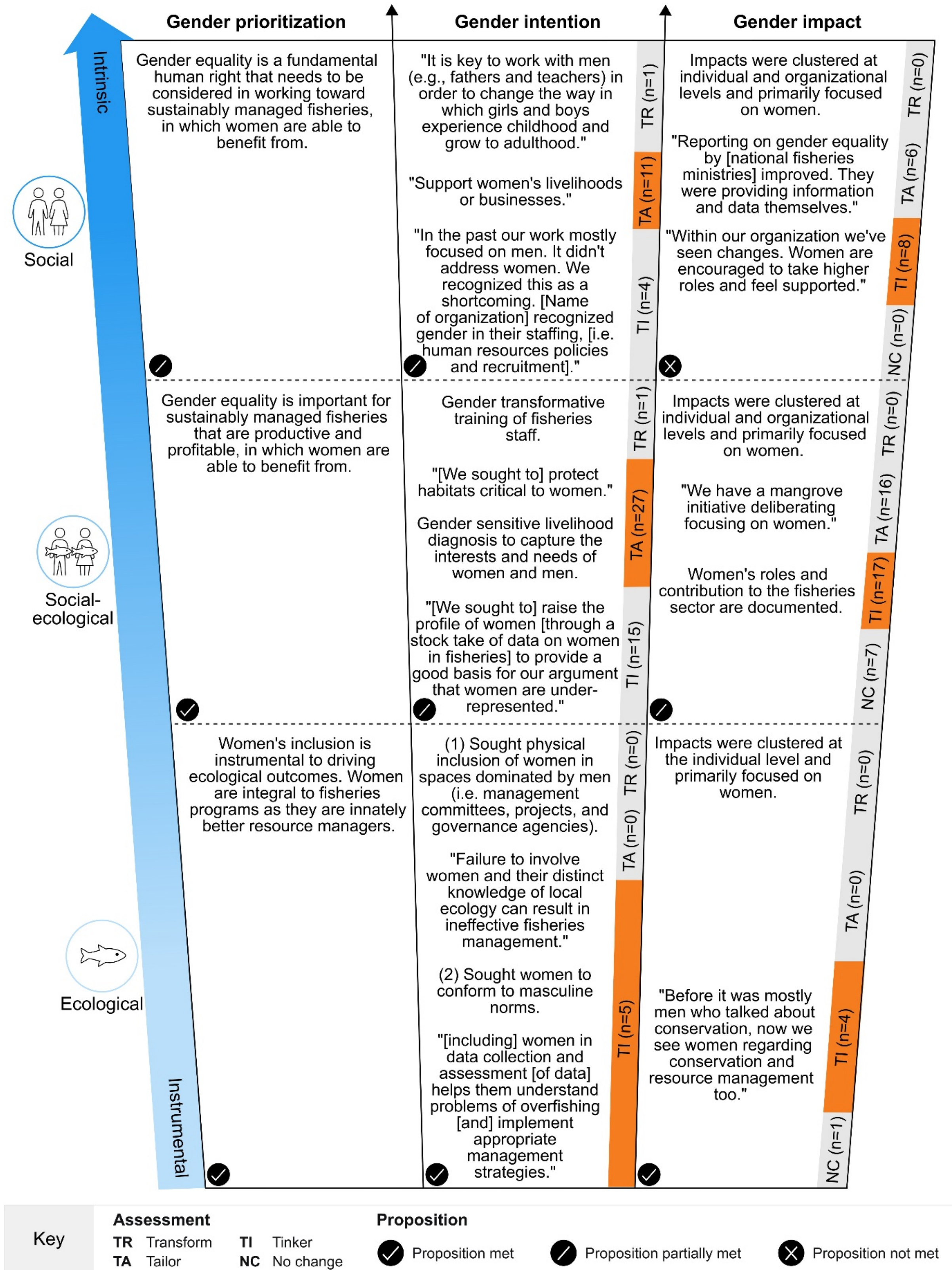

Figure 5-5. Evidence of trends in gender equality priorities, intentions and outcomes of small-scale fisheries implementing organizations along a spectrum of social-ecological narratives. Ecological narratives tended to prioritize gender for achieving instrumental (i.e., non-gender) goals, social narratives tended to prioritize gender for intrinsic (i.e., socially just and fair) goals, and social-

ecological narratives sought to balance both goals. Gender intentions (middle column) and impacts (right column) were assessed using the 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' assessment typology (n=number of approaches), with illustrative examples provided. The orange bars indicate approaches most commonly 'Tinkered' with gender in intention and impact within the ecological narrative, and that gender intentions were predominately 'Tailored' around gender, and 'Tinkered' with gender in impact under the social-ecological and social narratives.

5.4 Discussion

Gender equality is a powerful determinant of human experiences and environmental outcomes in social-ecological systems (Leach et al., 2018; Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2009). As this recognition permeates through environmental governance and development realms, gender equality features more prominently in the visions and commitments of organizations working within social-ecological systems (e.g., IUCN, 2018). Gender equality is increasingly accepted as integral to the narratives of environmental agendas, particularly as they espouse more human-centric objectives (Brown, 2014; Jones et al., 2016; Mace, 2014). However, little is known about how the articulation of social-ecological narratives has actually advanced (or hindered) progress toward gender equality. My study has generated a range of insights into the type and depth of priorities, intentions and impacts toward gender equality, in this case, by organizations implementing actions that impact upon small-scale fisheries in the Pacific Islands region.

I explored the proposition that when gender equality is prioritized and pursued with the goal to drive human development outcomes in social-ecological systems, gender is likely to be valued intrinsically, and implement approaches, impacts and measures of success that are likely to progress gender equality (Locke et al., 2014). In contrast, when priorities are oriented toward the ecological, gender is perceived as instrumental to this aim. As such, the ways gender is approached and measured are, at best, likely to lead to gender balanced management processes, with limited potential to make meaningful advancements toward gender equality (Rees, 1998; Squires, 2003). My results illustrate that priorities and intentions alone are insufficient in making progress toward gender equality. Even in cases where the intrinsic goals of gender equality were prioritized (notably in the social-ecological and social narratives), the approaches used were shallow and tended to 'Tinker' with gender in impact. In the following sections, I discuss the areas of convergence and divergence with my proposition (section 5.4.1). Next, I discuss the shortcomings of current engagement with gender equality across social-ecological narratives (section 5.4.2). I round out the discussion by highlighting three opportunities for small-scale fisheries implementing organizations to orient more toward intrinsic visions of gender

equality, embrace more robust measures of impact, and interrogate their own discursive positions (section 5.4.3).

5.4.1 Coherence of social-ecological narratives with gender priorities, intentions and outcomes

There is a mosaic of environmental, development and fisheries-focused organizations implementing initiatives that impact upon small-scale fisheries. These organizations differ in the degree to which they align with ecological, social-ecological or social narratives. The few implementing organizations I found to identify more strongly with the ecological narrative described their priorities, intentions and impacts for gender equality as instrumental to accelerating or improving the efficacy of environmental outcomes (i.e., biodiversity conservation or sustainable resource management). Literature sympathetic to these pragmatic goals has perpetrated this as a legitimate rationale, for instance by suggesting that women are innately better stewards of the natural environment than men, and that ascribing responsibility to women would lead to more sustainable natural resource use (e.g., Cook et al., 2019; Leisher et al., 2016). My analysis revealed approaches sought to increase the attendance of women in initiatives, activities, meetings, committees or agencies, often achieved via participatory targets or quotas (see also 'reach' strategies described by Johnson et al., 2018). My typology positions this as ‘Tinkering’, given there is little evidence that this rationale or associated approaches alone will lead to greater gender equality or women’s empowerment.

Under the social-ecological narrative, I found evidence that gender equality was valued intrinsically and instrumentally and prioritized for both social and ecological reasons (i.e., to ensure sustainably managed fisheries and productive and profitable benefits). This notion is consistent with Leach et al. (2018) who articulate the complex interplay between addressing rising inequalities whilst maintaining a stable and resilient planet. The literature prescription supporting the social-ecological narrative highlights the need to consider the norms, beliefs and formal regulations in which gender inequalities are embedded and perpetuated (Cole et al., 2018; Yang et al., 2018). Consistent with this proposition, I found almost all examples of gender approaches under the social-ecological narrative aligned with the ‘Tailor’ typology in that they sought to accommodate the different roles and needs of women and men (i.e., related to livelihoods or capacity building opportunities including enhancing women’s productive capacities, income earning potential, and links to different nodes of fisheries value-chains). These approaches indicate there is recognition among implementing organizations that driving equitable social change requires working around existing gender inequalities (IGWG, 2017). However, accommodating the different roles and needs of women and men, also requires attending to the social and cultural environments in which individuals are embedded. Specifically, these environments refer to the

unwritten and invisible social expectations or norms about how women and men should behave and their associated power relations. These norms and relations operate and are maintained at multiple levels, including within the household, community, institutions and society, and determine an individuals' ability to access, use and benefit from development initiatives (Cornwall, 2003; McDougall et al., 2021; Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2009). Yet in impact, I found that the majority of approaches did not account for these influential environments, and instead, focused on the individual (predominately women) and their representation, consultation or participation in fisheries initiatives, agencies and data, which is likely explained by the presence of strong social and cultural norms that are not easily 'worked around' (see for example MacIntyre & Spark, 2017).

Those organizations that aligned with the social narrative indicated that gender equality was valued intrinsically and perceived as fundamental to upholding human rights. However, in contrast to the literature projections (Cote & Nightingale, 2012; Locke et al., 2014), the main impetus for the work described by informants was to improve the ecological sustainability of fisheries more so than using fisheries as an entry point to govern for socially equitable outcomes. Despite the social narrative being dominant amongst this group of implementing organizations, their actions in policy and practice did not translate with the degree of social nuance anticipated for this position in the typology. For instance, I did not find evidence of, or intentions for, shifts or transformations in the norms, relations and structures that underpin and perpetuate gender inequalities characterized within the 'Transform' classification (IGWG, 2017). Gender approaches were predominately 'Tailored' to work around gender inequalities in intention and tended to focus on women. Despite intrinsic values being evident in the type of gender impacts (i.e., increased number of women working within fisheries agencies, and increased commitment to reporting on gendered impacts of initiatives), the approaches used were narrow and only 'Tinkered' with gender in impact. The majority of changes were also at the individual level, rather than spanning household, communal and societal domains (Locke et al., 2014; McDougall et al., 2021). My results suggest a disconnect between the socially-oriented ambition by many implementing organizations, their actions and the impacts that ensue. Whilst this disconnect is likely unintentional, I discuss some potential reasons in the following section.

5.4.2 The shortcomings of engagement with gender equality across social-ecological narratives

Broadly, I found the impacts of gender equality efforts were clustered, pursued via narrow approaches and instrumental priorities. In this section I discuss each of these shortcomings in turn. My use of quadrants (adapted from Rao & Kelleher, 2005) revealed gender approaches led to both formal changes (i.e., women were included in management committees, fisheries data collection or received benefits

from employment) and informal changes (i.e., enhanced the productive capacities and livelihoods of women, more women were consulted and participating in fisheries initiatives). However, across all three narratives, gender approaches and impacts were predominately clustered at the individual level and targeted women as primary beneficiaries. A women-only focus can often be explained by organizations and their staff holding the (naïve) view that women are individual objects whose agency operates autonomously to their social environments, rather than embedded within, and impacted by, dynamic social systems (Rao, 2017). For example, our results pointed to an increase in the number women employed in fisheries agencies, yet informants indicated these women were often in lower level positions (i.e., data entry). Women's inclusion within male dominated spaces alone does not equate to gender equitable outcomes, particularly if women's agency is curtailed by gender differentiated decision-making power (Cornwall, 2003). Whilst I do not discount that these efforts for women's greater inclusion may be a precursor to more gender-inclusive management processes, the approaches pursued by implementing organizations pay insufficient attention to how individuals are differentially affected by existing or changed social-ecological systems configurations (de la Torre-Castro, 2019; Fabinyi et al., 2014). Similarly, Rao and Kelleher (2005) caution that changes in one quadrant area will not necessarily lead to change in another. For example, I found changes in the formal-individual quadrant included an increase in women's attendance and participation in fisheries meetings, initiatives or committees, yet this does not mean that their contributions, and rights are automatically reflected in the policies that govern this social-ecological system.

Consistent with other gender and fisheries analyses from the Pacific Islands (Lawless et al., 2021; Mangubhai & Lawless, 2021), and those undertaken in other geographies and environmental sectors (de la Torre-Castro et al., 2017; James et al., 2021; Lau, 2020; Stacey et al., 2019), the vast majority of approaches are neither meeting nor advancing gender best practice frontiers. The 'Tinker' approaches can be understood in terms of implementing organizations intentionally or unknowingly aiming for and measuring how many women are 'reached' (i.e., included or represented) (Johnson et al., 2018), and assuming this is equal to gender equality or women's empowerment (Cornwall, 2018). The strong prioritization of social goals, and intrinsic value of gender equality within both the social-ecological and social narratives, suggests that perhaps inadvertently, implementing organizations are setting the bar low (see also Mangubhai & Lawless, 2021). This could be a result of the non-prescriptive nature of the concept leading to subjective metrics of what successful gender goals might mean and look like (see Lawless et al., 2020; Lombardo et al., 2010). As such, among implementing organizations there may be a genuine belief that they are addressing gender issues. For example, a related study found a mismatch between perceived versus actual capacity to work on gender, whereby fisheries managers and practitioners ranked their organizations' gender capacity as high despite practical evidence suggesting capacity was low (Mangubhai & Lawless, 2021).

In other cases, the use of 'Tinker' or 'Tailor' approaches may be pursued as they are perceived as more culturally appropriate, applied in ways that do not disrupt existing social and cultural systems. 'Transform' approaches by design seek to challenge the structures that underpin and perpetuate gender inequality (IGWG, 2017). Social and cultural structures influence gender norms and identities in different contexts, and therefore, to fully contribute to progressing gender equality, efforts need to go 'below the surface' to tackle the deeper normative and structural barriers (McDougall et al., 2021). Without doing so, the risk is that gender approaches may be applied without substance, lacking the potential for effective influence (Wong et al., 2019). In fact, I found several instances where gender approaches did not lead to any impacts, the majority being within the social-ecological narrative. My deeper analysis revealed that external donor or project requirements to work on gender may lead to approaches that 'Tinker' with gender equality. In these cases, gender approaches tend to quantify women's roles and contribution to small-scale fisheries or monitor their physical inclusion in fisheries projects, meetings and workplaces. These approaches may be appealing as they are the easiest to achieve because they do not require significant alteration to plans for project implementation, or heavy adjusting of project goals (IGWG, 2017; Johnson et al., 2018).

I found 'Tinker' approaches were also commonly used in cases where gender equality was framed instrumentally. The instrumentalization of gender equality is a tactic often used to facilitate or accelerate progress toward non-gender goals (Cornwall, 2018; Lombardo et al., 2010). A common instrumental proposition is that "If women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20–30 percent. This could raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5–4 percent" (FAO, 2011, p. 5). This type of framing essentially promotes the 'investment return' of making progress toward gender equality (Cornwall, 2018, p. 3). Gender equality as a concept is essentially made more palatable to those working in sectors without a history of working on gender, aiding integration of the concept into policy agendas (Nazneen & Hickey, 2019). Similarly, within the ecological narrative women were depicted as innately connected to the environment. This 'connectedness to nature' assumption positions women as responsible for, and natural saviors of, the environment (Lau et al., 2021b; Leach, 2007). My findings, similar to others (e.g., Lombardo et al., 2010), highlight the risks of such a purely pragmatic orientation in that the intrinsic qualities of gender equality are depoliticized and diluted. In these cases, gender equality is only valued based on whether it leads to the achievement of other goals (Nazneen & Hickey, 2019).

5.4.3 Forging dynamic new pathways

If driving sustainable and equitable social-ecological change is the crux of a globally sustainable future (Biermann et al., 2012; Leach et al., 2018; Raworth, 2017), then the small-scale fisheries sector needs

new ways of thinking and acting. Specifically, I provide three recommendations for small-scale fisheries implementing organizations to play a role in achieving more robust and meaningful gender equality impacts.

First, implementing organizations need to question and potentially reorient their theories of change. For example, under the ecological narrative, gender approaches may be perfectly executed to increase the attendance (i.e., physical presence) of women in environmental management efforts, and this may indicate progress toward more gender-equal participation. However, without commitment to intrinsic outcomes (i.e., justice, equity or empowerment), these efforts are only likely to achieve the ecological narratives' (limited) visions and ambitions for gender equality (Lau et al., 2021b; Lawless et al., 2021). Reorientation toward the intrinsic value of gender equality is important because when fundamental human rights, including gender equality are secured, *all* people are far more able to benefit from natural resources and efforts to manage them (Allison et al., 2012). A first step would be situating and scrutinizing the goals of implementing organizations, and then using the 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' typology I develop to assess the extent proposed gender approaches are likely to progress gender equality. This requires opening up framings to make more room for plurality of knowledge, and avoiding the propensity to reduce problems to observable phenomena (e.g., the numbers of women attending or participating) (see for example Lau, 2020; Locke et al., 2014).

Second, gender approaches need to move away from a narrow focus on reaching greater numbers of women, to multiple dimensions of empowerment (Johnson et al., 2018; Malapit et al., 2015). This step may require reimagining what gender equality 'success' looks like and how it should be measured. To do so, well-established and tested frameworks including the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (Malapit et al., 2015), the 'Reach, Benefit, Empower, Transform' framework (Johnson et al., 2018; Kleiber et al., 2019a) and the gender integration continuum (IGWG, 2017) offer guidance. To move toward deep and sustained social change, these approaches need to challenge and reconfigure system attributes that perpetuate gender inequalities (McDougall et al., 2021). For example, efforts must also be directed across all levels of governance, and influence the informal (e.g., values, attitudes, beliefs and skills) and formal (e.g., laws and policy) domains (Rao & Kelleher, 2005). This degree of change involves addressing inequalities in gender power relations at all levels (e.g., Morrison et al., 2019; Murunga, 2021; Wong et al., 2019).

Finally, implementing organizations need to consciously interrogate their own discursive positions and beliefs to unsettle habituated ways of thinking and acting (Lau, 2020; Locke et al., 2014). My analysis revealed instances where fisheries officers came to 'realize the value' of gender work when given the opportunity to engage with external experts, trainings or undertake gender research. This form of self-reflexivity (or internal process of inquiry) is an opportunity for people to see the world differently,

adjust their frames and openness to gender sensitivities (Lombardo et al., 2010). My case provides initial evidence that this process may lead to deepened engagement with gender, embracement of different forms of knowledge and critical reflection. The tools and methodology I use in this paper may be useful in further facilitating this process. Although our methodology was designed for a scientific exploration of the gender approaches applied by multiple organizations working in ways that influence small-scale fisheries, there is an opportunity to test its utility for assessing programming and implementing organizations themselves. Specifically, such use could include application and/or adaptation of the 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' assessment typology to examine and enhance gender priorities, intentions and impacts across the varied dimensions of individual organizational operations and initiatives.

5.5 Conclusion

I explored the proposition that differences in social-ecological narratives shape gender equality engagement and impact. To perform this task, I developed the 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' gender assessment typology, and used it to analyse policy and practice impacting upon small-scale fisheries in the Pacific Islands region. Respondents indicated a range of successes in progressing gender equality across ecological, social-ecological and social narratives. This progress tended to be related to the greater inclusion of women and consideration of their needs and interests. Accounts from this research, and broader evidence, suggest that this type of progress may make certain experiences of livelihoods, management and governance efforts linked to small-scale fisheries more equitable, and provide important precursors to deeper social change. However, I found most approaches and impacts to be modest relative to what I know from gender and development literature to be possible and needed. The modesty of progress and approaches was surprising given the surrounding dominant rhetoric about the importance of social change (i.e., human development) in the social-ecological and social narratives. The methodology I apply, including the 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' typology I develop, offers a critical tool for implementing organizations to engage in more self-reflexive processes, reorient toward more intrinsic visions of gender equality, embrace more ambitious (and current) theories of change, and measure and assess progress against more robust indicators of impact. Such shifts are essential to adequately confront the dual social-ecological challenge of reversing rising social inequality and maintaining a stable and resilient planet (Leach et al., 2018).

6 Discussion and conclusion

6.1 Introduction

Gender equality is considered a fundamental principle for achieving both effective and equitable environmental governance (Biermann et al., 2012; Leach et al., 2018; Raworth, 2017). Yet, whether and how gender equality is being advanced in environmental governance is uncertain. The premise of this thesis was to understand; *how does the governance principle of gender equality influence environmental policy and action?* To answer this research question, I undertook a multi-level governance case analysis. I used small-scale fisheries, a complex and dynamic social-ecological system, in the Pacific Islands region as my environmental governance case. The surge in gender equality commitments made to the small-scale fisheries sector across the region, and in the nations of Fiji, Solomon Isalnds and Vanuatu specifically, offered the opportunity to investigate their influence, and potential for impact. In undertaking this multi-level analysis, I first developed a theoretical understanding of the different mechanisms enabling and hindering the global-to-local spread of gender equality (Chapter Two). I then generated a contextualized understanding of gender (Chapter Three), and established how gender equality commitments are conceptualized within regional and national policy (Chapter Four) and implemented in practice (Chapter Five). In taking this multi-level approach, I was able to elucidate some of the dynamics influencing how the global principle of gender equality percolated through the regional, national and local level operating spaces of small-scale fisheries governance.

In this final chapter I outline how I addressed the key objectives of this thesis to answer my overarching research question. In doing so, I highlight the key contributions of each chapter and opportunities for future research. I then discuss the cross cutting contributions from these chapters by drawing on the diagnostic developed in Chapter Two to empirically verify the different drivers and responses influential in the diffusion and impact of gender equality through small-scale fisheries governance. In rounding out this chapter, I provide a brief comparative summary of the commitments made to gender equality in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, and I acknowledge some of the limitations of this research.

6.2 Contribution summary: gender equality in environmental governance

Objective a) Synthesize the mechanisms shaping the spread of gender equality in environmental governance

In Chapter Two, I applied and extended norm diffusion theory in the context of environmental governance, a limited study area of norm diffusion. The literature review I undertook revealed a

shortage of studies exploring the spread of gender equality in environmental governance. As such my investigation explored the diffusion of other social meta-norms including human rights, equity and justice. Through this examination, I have added to the growing number of studies using norm diffusion theory to trace the spread of social meta-norms in different fields of governance (e.g., Krook & True, 2010; Roggeband et al., 2014; Zwingel, 2012). By synthesizing theoretical and empirical knowledge about norm diffusion, the main contribution of this chapter was the development of a diagnostic to explore social-meta norm diffusion in environmental governance. Formulating this diagnostic required bringing together conventional, discursive, and relational strands of diffusion literature, which had been considered in isolation prior to this research (Cortell & Davis, 2000; Meyer et al., 1997; Wiener & Puetter, 2009). The combination of insights from these different strands generated a more complete picture of the norm diffusion process, and most significantly, highlighted the influence of discursive factors, which have been conventionally under-valued and overlooked, especially in environmental governance.

My analysis suggested that ‘successful’ norm diffusion was determined by the extent norms are internalized, a process reliant on the degree in which norms resonate with individual actors (Krook & True, 2010; Zimmermann, 2016). This is critical, as conventional norm diffusion theory and research tends to emphasize the diffusion process as complete once norms are formally adopted into policy (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). Newer strands of diffusion literature, grounded in social constructionism and sociological institutionalism, highlight how an absence of coercive mechanisms may be more effective in promoting diffusion (Krook & True, 2010; Lombardo et al., 2010). These scholars argue that opening up opportunities for norm negotiation and contestation increases the likelihood of the diffusion of ‘new norms’, for instance gender equality, in sectors that have had a history of integrating such principles, such as small-scale fisheries. Similarly, my synthesis suggests that if social meta-norms are universally imposed, seen to be foreign in conception or treat actors as passive recipients of norms, there is a likelihood such norms may be resisted and perceived as enforcing neo-colonial agendas (Kardam, 2004). These insights are also prevalent in research from the fisheries sector, which has shown that imposing regulations can lead to management failure if they ‘clash’ with cultural and normative values of individual fisheries actors, and can lead to situations where regulations are completely ignored (de la Torre-Castro & Lindström, 2010). Such findings stress that avoiding resistance and rhetorical adoption of social meta-norms means embracing norm contestation and the uptake of an adjusted or interpreted variation of the norm.

The theoretical insights from this chapter have the potential to support future explorations of the spread of gender equality in environmental governance contexts. The diagnostic I developed presents opportunities to empirically verify the different drivers and responses in different fields and scales of environmental governance. Further empirical testing could explore the diffusion of social meta-norms

enshrined in global goals (i.e., the Sustainable Development Goals) or those within environmental policies or agreements. Other areas of inquiry could include examining the spread of social meta-norms within diverse environmental governance agencies, projects and contexts. Particular areas of focus include studying norm negotiation and contestation processes, and whether the flexibility and adjustment of norms risks dilution (i.e., where the interpreted version of the norm is weakened and no longer resembles or is able to achieve the original intent). These studies could investigate the cause and effect interactions or potential tensions of promoting particular drivers over others, and the implications this may have for norm responses.

Objective b) Explore a locally-contextualized example of how gender shapes social equity and ecological sustainability, including the domains of gender difference that environmental initiatives need to consider

In Chapter Three, I provide a local level analysis of gender in three coastal communities in Solomon Islands. Through my adaptation and application of the GENNOVATE methodology (Badstue et al., 2018; Petesch et al., 2018), I demonstrate how local gender norms and relations are influential in shaping divisions in labour, physical mobility, livelihood diversification, and capacity to exercise choice in communal and household decision-making domains. The identification of these different domains offers insights into the types of gender differences that environmental initiatives need to consider, and the gender inequalities, in which they can seek to address. For research and practice, these insights are useful in shifting focus away from merely understanding the different roles of women and men (i.e., via sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis), to attending to how gender differences are shaped by social expectations, norms and power relations.

In this chapter I stress that whether gender is intentionally or explicitly engaged with or not, environmental initiatives will influence and interact with local constructions of gender (as cautioned by others such as Buvinić, 1986; Okali, 2006). These interactions have the potential to reinforce, or alternatively, shift existing gender norms and relations underpinning inequalities, with different implications for individuals. My findings support the notion that initiatives are more likely to achieve equitable and effective outcomes if they are designed, delivered and monitored with gender considerations in mind (Stacey & Govan, 2021). In fact, I find initial evidence that engagement with externally introduced initiatives has the potential to lead to gender transformation, for example, in cases that increase women's and men's openness to new or altered roles and responsibilities within the community and the household. However, considerable scope remains to investigate the manner in which environmental initiatives can apply this knowledge to challenge the underlying norms and relationships that perpetuate gender inequality.

Objective c) Analyse how and why gender equality is represented, rationalised and actioned within written environmental governance commitments

In Chapter Four, I analysed small-scale fisheries policy instruments to understand the type and depth of gender equality commitments made to the sector. On the surface, the sheer number of commitments suggested progress toward gender equality. Yet, my deeper analysis illustrated these commitments to be narrow and outdated. In representation, I found a strong tendency to equate 'gender' with a focus on 'women' (consistent with Chant & Sweetman, 2012; Cornwall, 2007), for instance, through ensuring inclusion of women in initiatives or meetings, or with a focus on the delivery of fisheries projects to women. This diluting of gender as a concept erases men and the influence of masculinities in the conceptualization of gender and gender inequality, meaning unequal norms and power relations between women and men are likely to continue unchallenged (Chant & Gutmann, 2002; Lombardo et al., 2010). This also reinforces simplistic understandings of how gender shapes what women and men can or cannot do or should or should not be, and how they relate to each other (Boudet et al., 2013). In rationalization, gender equality was prioritized as an accelerant for improving environmental or project oriented outcomes. The instrumental values placed around gender indicated a preference for immediate and measurable changes or impacts, and simultaneously, compromised equitable benefits to human well-being. My analysis of gender strategies found that the majority of proposed actions were clustered at individual and organizational levels, highlighting household, communal and societal spheres as untapped opportunities or entry-points for change. Without attending to the gender norms, relations and structures at these different levels, the delivery of projects, assets of natural resources, to individuals without substantive strategies to address the gender dimensions of access, use, distribution or uptake may compromise the intended goals (Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2009).

My analysis revealed that a number of critical shifts in discourse are urgently needed. The most obvious shift requires moving away gender being a one dimensional focus on women. This shift may entail building the capacity and capability of governance organizations tasked with integrating or mainstreaming gender within policy. Another shift also necessitate striking a greater balance between instrumental and intrinsic goals for gender equality, a process that may require renegotiation of the social-ecological priorities within the sector, and more specifically, organizational normative ideals about the gender-environment relationship. Further research warrants an investigation into the conditions and mechanisms to foster these shifts.

Objective d) Critically examine the priorities, intentions and impacts of practical applications of gender equality commitments within environmental governance

In Chapter Five, using a social-ecological lens, I explored the extent gender equality was being advanced within small-scale fisheries governance. Specifically, I examined the practices of organizations involved in implementing fisheries initiatives to understand the priorities, intentions and impacts of gender equality. I found the priorities for gender equality were predominately oriented toward achieving social or human-centric goals. Yet in action, gender equality was pursued instrumentally to achieve ecological goals and/or shallow project performance targets. My application of the 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' gender assessment typology revealed that the majority of approaches 'Tinkered' with gender in that they predominately sought to include more women in spaces occupied by men. These results showed that the vast majority of approaches are falling well short of meeting gender best practice, but are also being applied without substance, lacking potential for effective influence (also cautioned by Wong et al., 2019). This shallow engagement with gender has been described elsewhere as serving "ceremonial" purposes where these approaches merely promote surface level engagement, without driving equitable outcomes (Fejerskov & Cold-Ravnkilde, 2019, p. 122).

I argue there are significant opportunities for the small-scale fisheries sector to enhance the gender approaches in use. Future approaches need to capture more robust and multiple dimensions of gender equality (i.e., those that go beyond reaching greater numbers of women), including those that work on addressing systemic inequalities. Changing how gender is approached also requires governance organizations to engage in self-reflexive processes to situate, and shift, their gender priorities (e.g., Bacchi, 2009). Social-ecological systems frameworks position gender equality as a product of, and precursor to equitable and effective change (Biermann et al., 2012; Leach et al., 2018; Raworth, 2017). Yet, the predominant instrumentalist pursuits for gender equality by governance organizations suggests there may be a lack of conviction about the relationship between gender equality and social-ecological systems outcomes. As such, a deeper exploration of the link between social equity and ecological sustainability is an important research endeavour, not only to re-affirm this notion in the small-scale fisheries context, but to provide assurance to governance organizations that progressing gender equality will lead to multiple and intersecting social-ecological outcomes. Specifically, a reorientation toward the intrinsic value of gender equality is important because when gender equality, a fundamental human right, is secured, all people are more able to benefit from natural resources and the management of them (Allison et al., 2012).

Objective e) Identify the deficiency of theoretical, empirical and methodological case studies and tools exploring gender equality commitments made within environmental governance, and opportunities for improvement

As previously outlined (see contribution summary under *Objective a*), my development of the norm diffusion diagnostic based on a synthesis of theory has the potential to support future empirical

explorations of the spread of gender equality in environmental governance contexts. This is critical because despite years of research and best practice guidance, many environmental governance initiatives still proceed as gender blind (OECD, 2020), or persist with a narrow focus on targeting women as primary problems and beneficiaries (Mangubhai & Lawless, 2021; Stacey et al., 2019). To date, the ways in which environmental initiatives have engaged with gender has been limited, for instance, the tendency to merely collect sex-disaggregated data on roles or livelihoods of women and men. Methodologically, there are few tools that governance actors can apply to critically reflect on, and subsequently enhance, how these initiatives engage with gender, including within the internal operations of environmental actors themselves. The methodologies I developed and applied in Chapters Three, Four and Five to closely examine multi-level gender equality commitments contribute to improving the quality of these commitments and outcomes across and within environmental governance sectors.

In Chapter Three, my application and adaptation of the GENNOVATE methodology generated data about values, norms, and relations that set the rules of play for different women, different men and their communities (Badstue et al., 2018; Petesch et al., 2018). This methodology was useful in illuminating the domains of gender difference that governance actors may need to consider and address when working with local communities. Specifically, GENNOVATE was shown to be a readily accessible analytical tool to assess the relevance of community-level initiatives in project design and evaluation phases. Such analysis is useful to illuminate the more invisible gender inequalities and areas of gender difference for consideration in the design of environmental initiatives. Further, in Chapter Four, I developed a three stage analysis process to produce an understanding of how gender equality was represented, rationalized and strategized in written commitments that influence environmental governance. This tri-level analysis provides a methodology to measure and then reflect upon the quality and depth of gender commitments in written form. Finally, the 'Tinker-Tailor-Transform' gender assessment typology introduced in Chapter Five offers an opportunity for organizations to critically reflect on their own internal priorities, gender intentions and strategies, as well as predict the depth of initiative impacts at all levels of governance. This analytical tool holds value for implementing organizations (as well as those within other environment and development sectors) to critically examine their own practices, and subsequently enhance, commitment toward gender equality. Ultimately, these various analytical processes and tools provide an enhanced and accessible means with which to critically reflect on, adjust and improve the likelihood that environmental policy and practice will move away from rhetoric, and make meaningful progress toward gender equality.

6.3 Empirical evidence: drivers and responses influencing gender equality diffusion

Drawing on the driver-response diagnostic developed in Chapter Two, in this section I provide empirical evidence of the drivers and responses found to be influential based on my results in Chapters Three, Four and Five (Figure 6-1). I detail how these different drivers and responses shaped the diffusion and impact of gender equality in the governance of Pacific Island small-scale fisheries. There were several drivers and response types that I did not find compelling evidence to suggest they were influential, including *'compliance mechanisms'* and *'societal temper'* drivers, and overt *'resistance'*, *'implementation'* and *'internalization'* responses. For example, in Chapter Four, my analysis of national fisheries policies and legislation in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu found that all were gender blind (with the exception of one policy from Vanuatu), suggesting the influence of formal *'compliance mechanisms'* (i.e., formal regulations, laws or sanctions) for gender equality were virtually non-existent. However, I do acknowledge that empirical verification of these drivers and responses were an indirect focus of my research in Chapters Three, Four and Five. Therefore, there is significant opportunity for dedicated studies to verify or challenge the driver-response diagnostic.

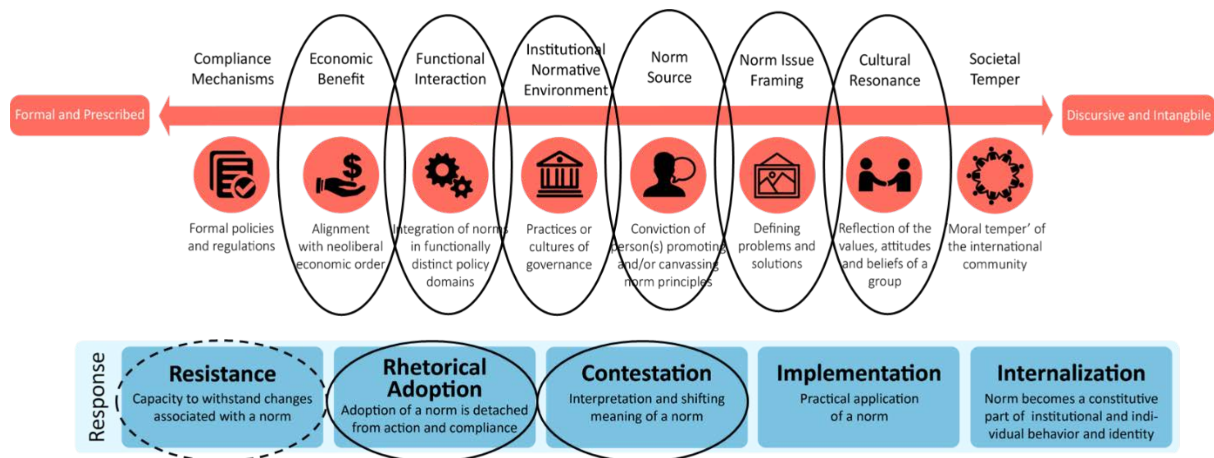

Figure 6-1. Empirical evidence of the drivers and responses influencing gender equality norm diffusion in Chapters Three, Four and Five. The circles indicate empirical evidence, or partial evidence (dashed circles), of the drivers (orange) and responses (blue).

6.3.1 Gender equality is contested in meaning and relevance

Evidence from across my chapters suggests that the diffusion of gender equality in small-scale fisheries governance is nonlinear, dynamic and open to interpretation. This diffusion process is largely shaped by *'contestation'* as a norm response, whereby governance organizations negotiate the meaning and content of gender equality. This process of negotiating meanings around gender equality resulted in

different manifestations in small-scale fisheries policy and practice. I found evidence of contestation processes shaping how gender equality was conceptualized (i.e., defined and problematized), constructed (i.e., aligned with organizational objectives, priorities, and pre-existing social-ecological narratives) and actioned (i.e., designed and implemented via various strategies and approaches). For example, in Chapter Four, I found 13 distinct rationales for pursuing gender equality expressed within Pacific Island small-scale fisheries policy instruments. Such diversity suggests that gender equality is considered important to many different goals, yet also stresses how these different rationales can shape engagement with the principle, for instance, how approaches are designed and how success may be measured (Locke et al., 2014).

In its very conception, the meaning of gender equality was contested. In Chapter Four and Five, my analysis indicated that rather than attending to the role of men, masculinity, gender norms and relations within the policies and the actions of organizations, gender and the goal of gender equality, was largely taken as a focus on 'fixing' women. Similarly, in Chapter Four, I found the nature of gender issues targeted within small-scale fisheries policy overlooked men and gender relations in problem and solution identification, and did not explore issues at household, and societal levels.

The high degree of contestation I found occurring around the meaning and relevance of gender equality, suggests that regional-to-national level interpretation processes (i.e., translating globally-conceived ideas about gender equality into locally relevant forms) are lacking sufficient space and attention. Studies from other environmental sectors suggest that realizing equitable and effective outcomes, requires opening up suitable spaces for governance organizations to question and adapt current gender priorities and approaches (e.g., Dawson et al., 2018). Future research could investigate the particular attributes of these enabling environments, and subsequently, examine the influence of contestation processes in terms of diffusion and impact of gender equality and/or other social goals. This may also involve investigating the link between norm responses and gender equality impacts. For example, in cases where there is more resonance for a norm among governance organizations, are impacts more transformative, and vice-versa?

6.3.2 Gender equality is re-conceptualized to be compatible with sectoral, cultural and organizational ideals

The contested, and subsequently diluted, meanings around gender could be explained, in part, by *'functional interaction'*. The small-scale fisheries sector is guided by a range of principles, of which gender equality is one, in support of the global Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (FAO, 2015). Yet, meaningful implementation of the array of principles set out in the

Voluntary Guidelines has proven difficult (Jentoft, 2014), particularly in cases where governance organizations need to prioritize some principles over others, or do not have the expertise to apply certain principles (Jentoft & Chuenpagdee, 2009; Song et al., 2019). Studies exploring how functionally distinct policy domains or principles interact (Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen & Kok, 2002; Visseren-Hamakers et al., 2011), highlight that when principles are similar or complement an existing set of ideals, they are more likely to be embraced and integrated (Merry & Levitt, 2019). In other words, the more compatible gender equality is to existing (or more widely accepted and applied) governance principles, the more likely the principle will be adopted. These insights are useful in understanding why the principle of gender equality was often diluted or adjusted to fit more instrumental objectives in Chapters Four and Five. This notion, and need for convergence, was apparent in my exploration of gender equality commitments through a social-ecological systems lens in Chapter Five. My analysis revealed that gender equality was prioritized and pursued in terms of how the principle could best support the social-ecological narratives in which fisheries organizations were aligned.

I found '*norm issue framing*' particularly influential in how gender equality was promoted, and the type and depth of gender issues targeted by governance organizations. Chapter Four and Five presented evidence to suggest gender equality was predominantly framed and pursued as accelerant to instrumental goals, including improved environmental management or project related outcomes. This framing can improve the likelihood of norm spread, for instance, by accelerating the integration of gender equality within sectors that do not have a history of engaging with this governance principle (Nazneen & Hickey, 2019). This need to present gender equality as instrumental to other goals is what Merry and Levitt (2019, p. 150) term the "resonance dilemma" where they suggest that principles "fare better when they are familiar, but to make change, they fare better when they are less familiar". Consistent with this notion, I found types of changes catalysed from the instrumental framing of gender meant that the root causes of gender inequalities were rarely challenged.

To be 'familiar', a principle needs to be compatible with existing organizational priorities, ideologies or practices (Fejerskov, 2017; Merry & Levitt, 2019). In cases where a principle is unfamiliar, the principle may be re-conceptualized to 'fit' those normative ideals. As such, I find *'institutional normative environments'* (i.e., the priorities, ideologies and practices of organizations) in particular are influential in gender equality norm (re)construction. This flexibility and adjustment of gender equality to fit organizational contexts, goals or priorities could potentially explain why I did not find evidence of overt *'resistance'* to gender equality by governance organizations. However, I found evidence that some strategies sought to deliberately mask or dilute gender equality (i.e., using 'inclusive' language so as not to be off-putting, and diluting gender to only focus on women). This masking of gender essentially sought to make the concept more palatable to governance actors who may not fully support the principle.

Whether intentional or not, the engagement of individuals or communities in externally delivered initiatives means interacting with local constructions of gender in some way (Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2009). In Chapter Three, my local level gender analysis suggested that unless local norms, roles and aspirations of individuals are understood and carefully considered, externally introduced initiatives may unintentionally intensify the time and labour burdens of women, risk family or community backlash and undermine external efforts for equitable improvements to women's livelihoods. I therefore found *'cultural resonance'* was an important mechanism in determining the degree of compatibility between local and external articulations of gender equality. External ideals of what gender equality means may differ from local conceptions of what is deemed culturally fair and just by individuals and communities (see also Fabinyi et al., 2013; Lau et al., 2021a).

6.3.3 Commitments to gender equality are more rhetorical that impactful

The shallow and relatively non-transformative nature of policies and actions suggest that, whether intentional or not, the vast majority of gender equality commitments made to the small-scale fisheries sector are more rhetorical than impactful. For example, in Chapter Four I found that the most common gender strategy proposed related to gender research, monitoring or other evidence generation, much of which included the quantification of women's roles in, and contributions to, fisheries. Despite this focus, reporting was detached from efforts to ensure data contributed to gender or social change. Data from my key informant interviews in Chapter Five suggested that gender equality commitments were sometimes included in policies without any strategy or expertise related to how to enact them. In these cases the inclusion of gender was reported merely as a 'box ticking' exercise. These examples of the rhetorical adoption of the principle was further reinforced by the shallowness of the intended and actual impacts of practical gender approaches analysed in Chapter Five.

My research pointed to a number of potential explanations for the *'rhetorical adoption'* of gender equality in the sector. I found several instances where gender mandates had been imposed upon organizations, particularly in cases where donor requirements pushed for a greater gender focus in small-scale fisheries work. Both my policy document review and key informant interviews pointed to donors being considered a prominent *'norm source'* by organizations working in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. I found that in instances where the principal rationale for pursuing gender was 'to adhere to donor requirements', approaches tended to 'Tinker' with gender, for example by quantifying the number of women participating in projects or meetings for donor reporting requirements (similar to the findings of others e.g., Mangubhai & Lawless, 2021; Nazneen & Hickey, 2019). Relatedly, my key informant interview data suggested governance organizations could see the *'economic benefit'* of

investing in, and working with women. The economic incentive for investing women was also prevalent in cases where donors were prepared to fund initiatives that targeted women specifically.

In cases where gender requirements or mandates are imposed, or there are alternative financial incentives to integrate the principle, scholars argue there is very little potential for transformative change (Acosta et al., 2019; Zwingel, 2012). This is particularly apparent in cases where governance organizations feel obliged or pressured to adopt gender equality as a principle, but also lack the willingness, skills or resources to translate these principles into practice (Fejerskov & Cold-Ravnkilde, 2019; Zimmermann, 2016). With these rhetorical and shallow impacts in mind, in Chapter Four, I acknowledge that it can be easy to simply argue governance organizations are not doing enough to address gender inequality. This argument needs to be balanced with consideration to other bureaucratic constraints, including power imbalances within workplaces, or lack of willingness, capacity, access to expertise, or funding, to work on gender issues within these organizations (Ferguson, 2015). As such, merely trying to build the capacity of those implementing gender approaches alone, is likely to be an insufficient strategy to avoid rhetorical gender equality commitments.

6.4 Comparison of gender equality commitments in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu

Although an in-depth comparative analysis of gender commitments in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu was not the analytical focus on this research, there were some clear similarities and differences observed across these three nations. In terms of policy, I found that national fisheries legislation was almost entirely gender blind in these countries. In terms of practice, the type and depth of gender approaches applied, and subsequent impacts, in all three countries were fairly consistent. Most approaches were clustered at the individual level, oriented toward the inclusion of women in projects, activities or within fisheries agencies, and predominately 'Tinkered' with gender in impact. These similarities were despite a larger presence of fisheries organizations (including donors and international NGOs) with headquarters in Fiji, likely having greater access to financial resources and gender expertise than national NGOs and civil society organizations. Private governance organizations working in the small-scale fisheries sector were also more prominent in Fiji, for instance, those supporting women's marine resource based enterprises. These organizations conveyed a stronger economic rationale for gender equality pursuits, including a greater focus on improving value-chains and women's networking opportunities, which were less evident in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. In cases where gender equality policy commitments and practical approaches were proposed or achieved greater impact (i.e., were tailored around gender differences, or sought to transform gender inequalities), they were largely

pursued within the bounds of a social-ecological narrative (i.e., to reconcile productive livelihoods within sustainable natural resource management objectives).

These comparative insights suggest gender equality policies, approaches and impacts are less influenced by national contexts, or by regional policies or guidelines related to gender and/or fisheries, and instead, are largely determined by individual organizational priorities and objectives. Put simply, the principle of gender equality is pursued in ways that complement organizational narratives and goals. This suggests the prevailing need to investigate how these narratives and goals can be adjusted to better account for and pursue the intrinsic qualities of gender equality.

6.5 Critiques and caveats

While I suggest there are lessons, methodologies and analytical tools that could be shared or replicated in different environmental governance sectors and geographies, my findings in Chapters Three, Four and Five are specific to the small-scale fisheries sector, and geographically to the Pacific Islands region. As such, this particular case study is not representative of how other social meta-norms may be engaged with in different settings.

In measuring the impact of gender approaches applied within small-scale fisheries initiatives in Chapter Five, I relied on key informant perceptions and observations of changes that had occurred. My research scope and thesis time constraints limited my ability to pursue more time-intensive methods to explore such impacts. Future research could integrate temporal and longitudinal evaluation criteria to more definitively determine practical impacts. Useful methods to explore these impacts could include desktop initiative evaluations (e.g., Stacey et al., 2019), practical gender project assessments (e.g., Danielsen et al., 2018) and/or gender investments evaluations (e.g., Grabowski & Essick, 2020). Such explorations could integrate the ‘Tinker-Tailor-Transform’ assessment typology developed in Chapter Five, or could apply a range of already established gender assessment frameworks such as the ‘Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index’ (A-WEAI) (Malapit et al., 2015); the ‘Reach, Benefit, Empower, Transform’ framework (Johnson et al., 2018; Kleiber et al., 2019a), or the ‘Gender Integration Continuum’ (IGWG, 2017).

My own subjective position as a Western scholar may have influenced my interpretation of the data in Chapters Three, Four and Five. Where possible, I sought Pacific Island voices in the verification of these data, often in the form of co-authorship. Although I have professional working proficiency in speaking Solomon Islands *Pijin*, for data collected in Chapter Three, specific efforts were made to ensure facilitators of focus-group discussions were Solomon Islanders, had knowledge of the languages

of communities, and were involved in the data transcription, verification and publication processes. For key informant interview data used in Chapters Four and Five, I conducted more than half the interviews (58%) with another interviewer, a Fijian national, who had experience working on fisheries in all three countries. This process helped to reduce interpretation bias, clarify discrepancies, and validate responses.

6.6 Conclusion

Gender equality is a critical guiding principle in the governance of the environment. The integration of this principle is underpinned by the assumption that when progress toward gender equality is made, people are more able to benefit from, and enhance the outcomes of environmental management efforts (Leach, 1992; Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2009; Rocheleau, 1995). In this thesis I explored the influence of pursuits for gender equality in environmental governance, using the case of small-scale fisheries governance in the Pacific Islands region. I found the way in which gender equality diffuses is nonlinear, dynamic and open to interpretation. Through this diffusion process, meanings and priorities around gender equality are contested and negotiated, often to fit within pre-determined goals or priorities within the sector. In terms of impact, my results pointed to a range of successes around women's inclusion in fisheries organizations, projects and activities. These efforts can promote more equitable small-scale fisheries practice and provide some important precursory steps toward deeper social change. However, I found most approaches and impacts to be modest relative to what the gender and development literature indicates to be possible and needed.

As gender inequality rises (World Economic Forum, 2021) and environmental challenges mount, how I navigate toward more equitable futures has never been a more pressing concern. I argue that critical shifts in dominate frames, narratives and approaches are essential to embrace the intrinsic values of gender equality, to ultimately drive socially equitable and ecologically sustainable improvements. My ongoing research will continue to be a passion fuelled attempt to ground understandings of gender equality in the practices of environmental governance organizations. Here, I have sought to plant some seeds of hope for charting a course for more effective and equitable governance - founded on the belief that gender equality is an attainable goal if I are all genuinely committed and enabled.

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8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A. Supplementary Material for Chapter Four

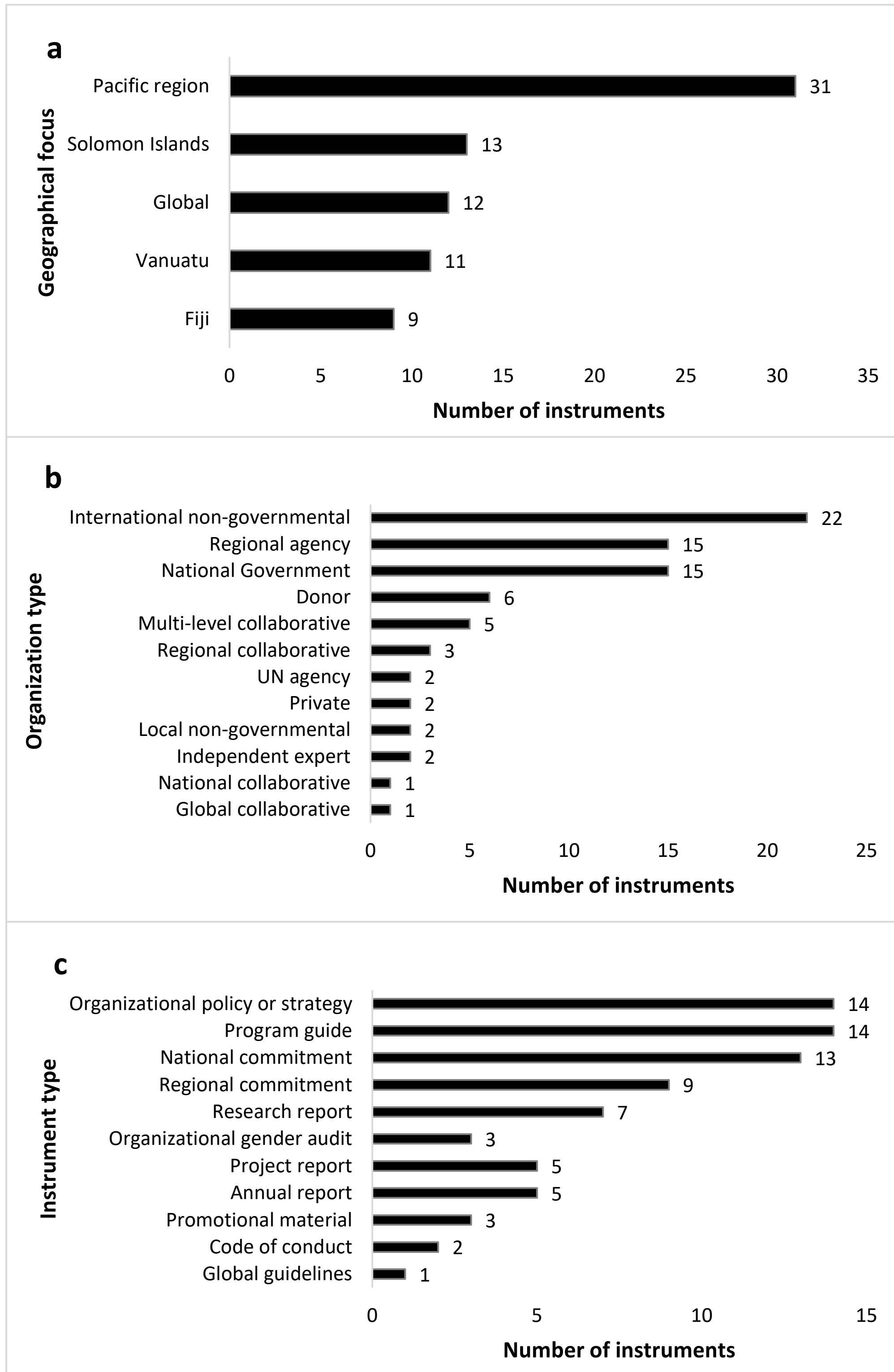

Figure A1. Attributes of the policy instrument sample identified by key informants indicating (a) geographic focus determined according to targeted level of audience or end user; (b) organizational type determined according to author(s) or producer(s) of the instrument; and (c) instrument type determined by both the purpose and format of the instrument.

Table A1. Strategies to address gender inequalities in small-scale fisheries. Here 'n' refers to the number of statements in policy instruments.

Category	Strategy	n
PROCESS STRATEGIES		
Gender research and evidence generation (n=61)	Assess gendered impact of programs and projects	26
	Data on the contribution of women in fisheries	12
	Collection of sex or gender-disaggregated data	10
	Women's participation indicators (related to decision-making, fisheries enterprise, boards or committees)	7
	Benefits of gender for conservation outcomes	4
	Organizational experiences of integrating gender into projects	2
Gender-sensitive organizational environments (n=56)	Organizational gender policies (related to recruitment and sexual harassment)	22
	Accountability and responsibility for gender mainstreaming	6
	Gender-sensitive work environments	6
	Reporting progress on gender outcomes and incidents	6
	Gender budgets	5
	Assess willingness and attitudes of staff to integrate gender	5
	Female employee professional development	4
	Assess gender mainstreaming capacity	2
Gender knowledge and capacity building (n=46)	Access to expert knowledge or partnerships to share lessons and best practice	18
	Employee capacity building	16
	Availability and access to gender tools or resources	12
Gender policy integration (n=7)	Recognition of women in fisheries policy	4
	Avoiding gender language	3
PROJECT STRATEGIES		
Enhancing women's agency (n=35)	Capacity building of women fishers	14
	Linking women to markets and value-adding to marine products	8
	Building women's collectives or networks	7
	Promoting women as leaders	6
Gendered identity targeting (n=30)	Women targeted fisheries projects	21
	Vulnerable group targeting	7
	Engaging men	2
Community facilitation (n=17)	Gender-sensitive community facilitation techniques	14
	Presence of women extension officers, trainers or facilitators	3

8.2 Appendix B. Supplementary Material for Chapter Five

Table B1. Evidence of gender approach intentions in small-scale fisheries policy and practice.

Tinker: seeks (1) the inclusion of women in spaces dominated by men or (2) for women to conform to masculine norms	**Tailor:** seeks to place women's needs and wants at the center, and acknowledges gender in shaping opportunity	**Transform:** seeks to challenge underlying norms, relations and structures that perpetuate gender inequalities
(1) Women's inclusion in spaces dominated by men: - "In the past our work mostly focused on men. It didn't address women. We recognized this as a shortcoming. [Name of organization] recognized gender in their staffing, [referring to human resources policies and recruitment]" (Advisor, regional agency) - "Attendance at participatory environmental monitoring is at least 30% women" (Program guide, international NGO) - "By having a consultative process, we have opened ourselves up to women's lobbying groups and their expertise" (Advisor, national government, Fiji) - Gender was included in a sea grape value-chain analysis "to verify our thoughts about it [the sea grape fishery] being dominated by women, and to get a better picture of what was going on" (Academic, Fiji) - "[We sought to] raise the profile of women [through a stock take of data on women in fisheries] to provide a good basis for our argument that women are under-represented based on solid data" (Executive, NGO, Fiji) - "Women take part in the discussions [related to conservation of dugong populations], as men often blame the women for digging up the seagrass" (Executive, NGO, Vanuatu) - "Ensure that equal numbers of men and women are invited to meetings and workshops" (Program guide, international NGO, Fiji) - "We included women in inception meetings, training and planning. It was important to get women's perspectives and also identify 'key' women to help the men in the planning of activities" (Manager,	- "Mud crabs were identified as a 'flagship species' as they are mainly caught by women. This program sought to bring visibility to women's role in the fishery" (Scientist, international NGO, Fiji) - "We tailor livelihood options [because] women's interests might be different [to men's] … women have different habitat target areas [for fishing] like nearshore and mangroves… We also ensure women's voices are represented in the plans… [through this process we are] ensuring women are empowered" (Executive, regional agency) - "I would like to see a secure place for women to sell fish where they are protected" (Executive, NGO, Vanuatu) - "We wanted to know how many women were in business, understand their challenges, their success stories" (Executive, private agency, Fiji) - "Protect habitats critical to women" (Project officer, NGO, Fiji) - "To support the [disaster] recovery process of communities, by helping both men and women look at livelihood options, using the skills and resources they had" (Project officer, national government, Vanuatu) - "… women had their own issues, they need to be addressed with women individually and not with men. We learnt we need to open up and listen to everyone's story, not just hearing one side of the story [referring to community disaster recovery]" (Fisheries officer, national government, Solomon Islands) - "Women's business councils were set up… This was to ensure women's representatives are the voice for the private sector… to share their experiences and … their challenges" (Executive, private agency, Fiji)	- "We do a series of activities to help the staff apply a gender lens to their own lives [referring to gender-transformative training of organization staff]" (Program Manager, International NGO, Pacific region) - "Engaging boys and men in gender-equality efforts is critical to lasting social change... Gender is about the relationships between and among women and men, and girls and boys; transforming these relationships requires the involvement of all of these groups of people, not just half of them. ...Because gender norms are created and perpetuated from birth onward by families, communities, schools and other social institutions, it is key to work with men (e.g., fathers and teachers) in order to change the way in which girls and boys experience childhood and grow to adulthood" (Program guide, International NGO, Pacific region)

international NGO, Solomon Islands **(2) Women to conform to masculine norms:** - "Promote data collectors to be females [previously a role undertaken by men]" (Fisheries officer, national government, Vanuatu) - "Involving community members, particularly women, in data collection and assessment helps them understand problems of overfishing, prepares them to implement appropriate management strategies, and allows them to monitor and obtain direct feedback on management actions" (Research report, international NGO, Solomon Islands) "We recognized women as good managers in homes, and women could play good role [using a monitoring toolkit to record conservation outcomes]. They also use [the natural] resources and so need to be involved. Women are better at sharing with each other, as they cannot rely on men to share with them" (Coordinator, international NGO, Vanuatu)	- "We need to have male and female teams to do separate discussion groups with women, men and youth and also consider their different needs" (Executive, national government, Solomon Islands)	

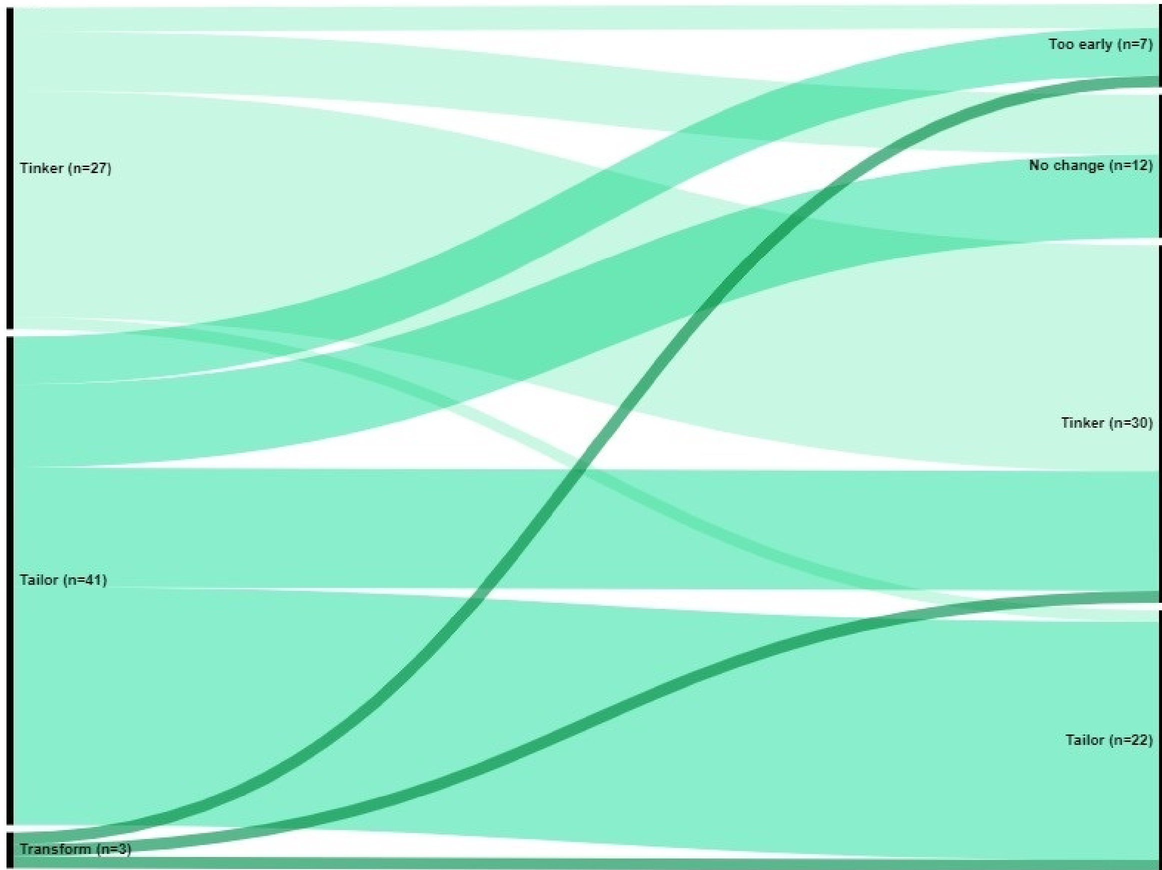

Figure B1. Gender approaches used in small-scale fisheries categorized based on whether intentions seek to 'Tinker', 'Tailor', or 'Transform' gender equalities (left) and their correspondence with impacts (right).

Table B2. Examples of gender impacts in small-scale fisheries practice.

Tinker: (1) women were included in spaces dominated by men or (2) women conformed to masculine norms	**Tailor:** women’s needs and wants were central, and gender was acknowledged as influential on opportunities and challenges	**Transform:** challenged underlying norms, relations and structures that perpetuate gender inequalities
(1) Women included in male dominated spaces: - “…the Department of Fisheries has taken more women onboard [in terms of employment]. There is more of a gender balance [in staff], but they [women] are mainly doing data entry” (Fisheries officer, national government, Vanuatu) - “Within [organization name] there is an observer program, and women are now included [as observers on fishing vessels]. But [women] still need permission from their husbands [to do so]” (Project coordinator, national government, Solomon Islands) - “We have seen more women's representatives on committees.” - “We tracked the changes in the number of women in management, and have a more comprehensive set of indicators [of women’s participation] now” (Coordinator, NGO, Fiji) - “Fisheries extension officers started meeting with women directly. They only talked to the Chiefs before” (Advisor, regional agency) - “We have seen more women's representatives on committees… It's been very positive to get them more independent and using their traditional roles and linking to the environment” (Coordinator, NGO, Fiji) - “Within our organization we’ve seen changes. Women are encouraged to take higher roles” (Fisheries officer, national government, Vanuatu) - “We worked with women prawn and crab fishers to get them collecting information on their catches and [to help them become] legally licensed [to meet fisheries laws in Fiji]… Women are now more empowered to fish and sell their seafood, [we have] given them more livelihood security” (Fisheries officer national government, Fiji) - “Our steering committee is mostly women” (Coordinator, NGO, Vanuatu) - “One of the MPAs that was implemented, the men designated the area, but women recommended in a soft tone to change the area due to it being important for their use. And the women were heard” (Program manager, international NGO, Fiji) - “All new recruits are women due to us having a female as the Director” (Program manager, international NGO, Fiji) - In establishing a marine and terrestrial protect area, “we set up community committees which were 50/50 men and women, predominately	- “When we created a database to capture women's roles in fisheries, we realized that we [previously] had not captured it very well. So [this new data and reflection] led to the division heads thinking about gender in their research” (Research officer, national government, Fiji) - “Reporting on gender equality by [national fisheries ministries] improved. They were providing information and data themselves. Regional agencies now have gender equality policies in place” (Gender officer, regional agency, Fiji) - Women in fisheries program established and funded (Executive, international NGO, Fiji) - “By helping both men and women look at livelihood options [after a tropical cyclone] using the skills and resources they had… Empowered the women. Women set up their own livelihoods” (Project manager, national government, Vanuatu) - “We have a mangrove initiative deliberating focusing on women [mangroves are typically a dominant fishery for women]” (Executive, international NGO, Pacific region) - After undertaking community-based gender research “I learned the value of women's voice and knowledge… It changed me a lot … It changed me with the work I do on the ground [referring to ensuring more equitable divisions of labour] (Technical officer, international NGO, Solomon Islands)	- No evidence

under 30, which was fully supported by the Chiefs" (Coordinator, regional agency, Vanuatu)		
(2) Women conformed to masculine norms: - "Before it was mostly men who talked about conservation, now we see women regarding conservation and resource management too" [referring to women attending fisheries management workshops and having women on community fisheries committees]" (Fisheries officer, international NGO, Fiji) - "The number of women doing spear fishing has increased as men were not catching enough" (Program manager, international NGO, Fiji) - "[We undertook a] review of pay and everyone's got lifted higher, especially the women [working in an INGO]" (Program manager, international NGO, Fiji) - "There is a better gender balance within staff compared to other ministries. All our activities in MFMR can be done by men and women. Even in management positions" (Coordinator, national government, Solomon Islands) - "One important change was the recognition of the role women play in decision-making, for example, in deciding how a project is run. [This] recognition meant that [women] were less overshadowed by men's decision-making. Men recognized women as important players" (Manger, international NGO, Solomon Islands) - "The women's business clusters were able to address issues by identifying challenges specific to women and youth, and then collectively lobby government to solve issues… like land ownership" (Executive, private agency, Fiji)		