



# **Who is the Farm Manager? Women's Land Ownership and Decision-making in Ecuador, Ghana and India**

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**The Gender Asset Gap Project**



# Smallholders and Food Security

Basic Questions:

1. Who owns the land?
2. Who makes the agricultural decisions?
3. Who does the work?

Surprisingly little information on the first two of these variables in developing countries

# The Problem

- Persistent bias in data collection towards “head of household”
  - Culturally, almost always the man
- Agricultural censuses: “landholder”
  - In households with a principal couple, often conflated with the head
  - Don’t ask about who owns the land
  - Don’t ask about who makes or participates in the myriad of decisions required for agricultural and livestock production

# Consequences

- Gender disaggregated analyses on farming systems generally based on female vs. male heads or sex of the landholder
- Ignores participation of women in male-headed households
  - May be the landowners
  - May be the ones making the decisions, either alone or jointly



# The Gender Asset Gap Project

- Three-country comparative study: Ecuador, Ghana, and Karnataka, India
- Initially funded by the Dutch Foreign Ministry MDG3 Fund; currently by the Vanguard Group and UNWomen
- Involved six months of qualitative field work in each country
- Nationally representative household asset surveys carried out in 2010

# Qualitative field work: Focus Groups



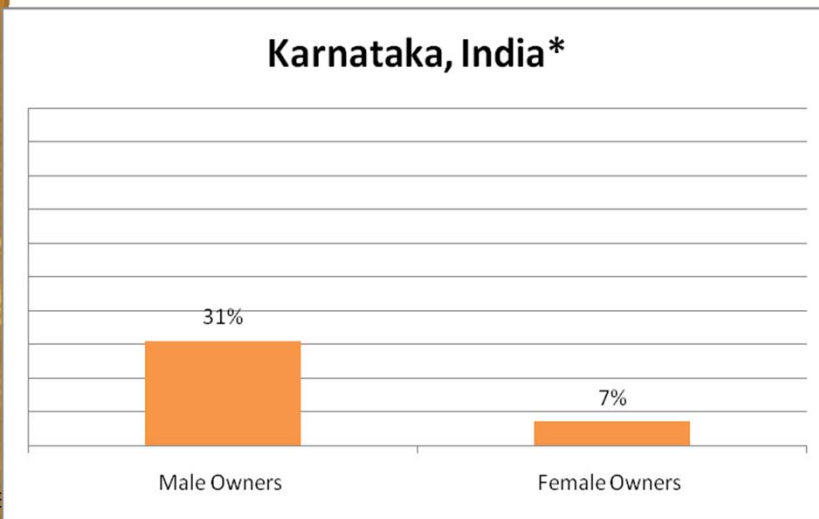
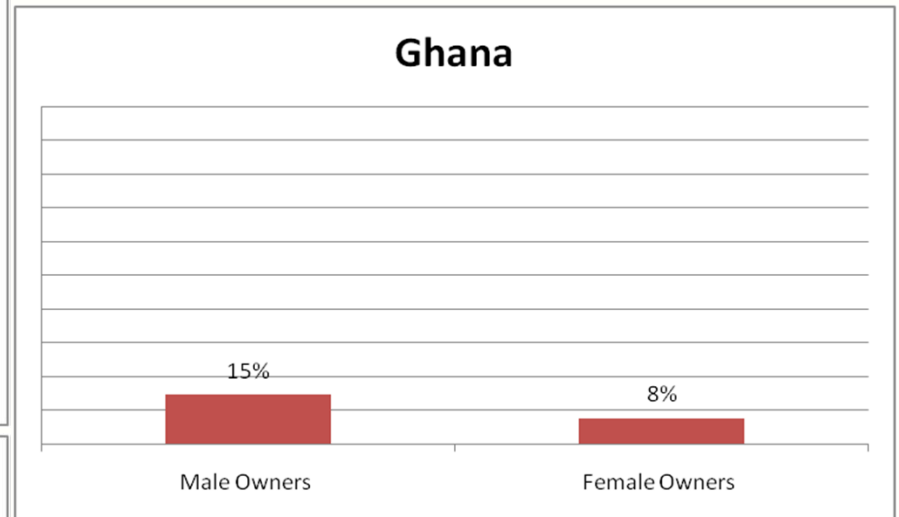
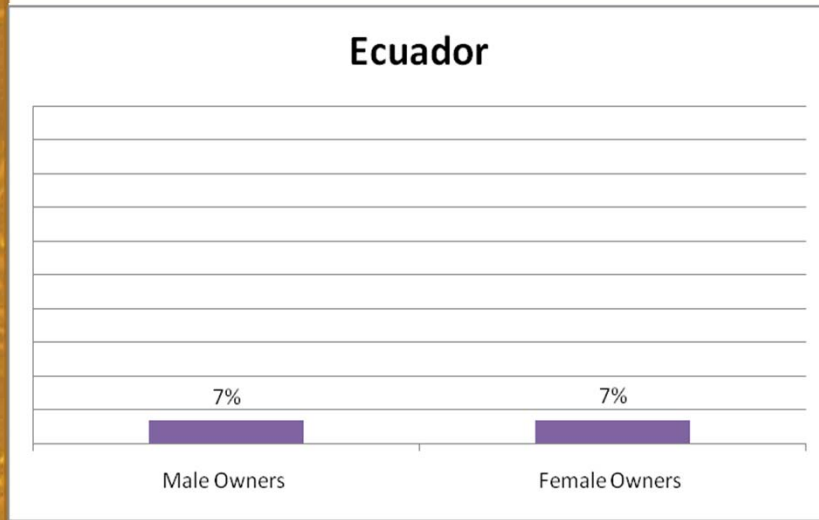
The Gender Asset Gap Project

# The Household Asset Surveys

- Main objective: collect individual level asset ownership data suitable for gender analysis
- Nationally representative surveys (state level in India)
  - Ecuador (n=2892)
  - Ghana (n=2170)
  - Karnataka, India (n=4110)
- Rural & urban areas
- Employed two instruments: Household and Individual questionnaires
- Aimed to interview two principal adults in each household

# The Setting

## Incidence of Ownership of Land Parcels

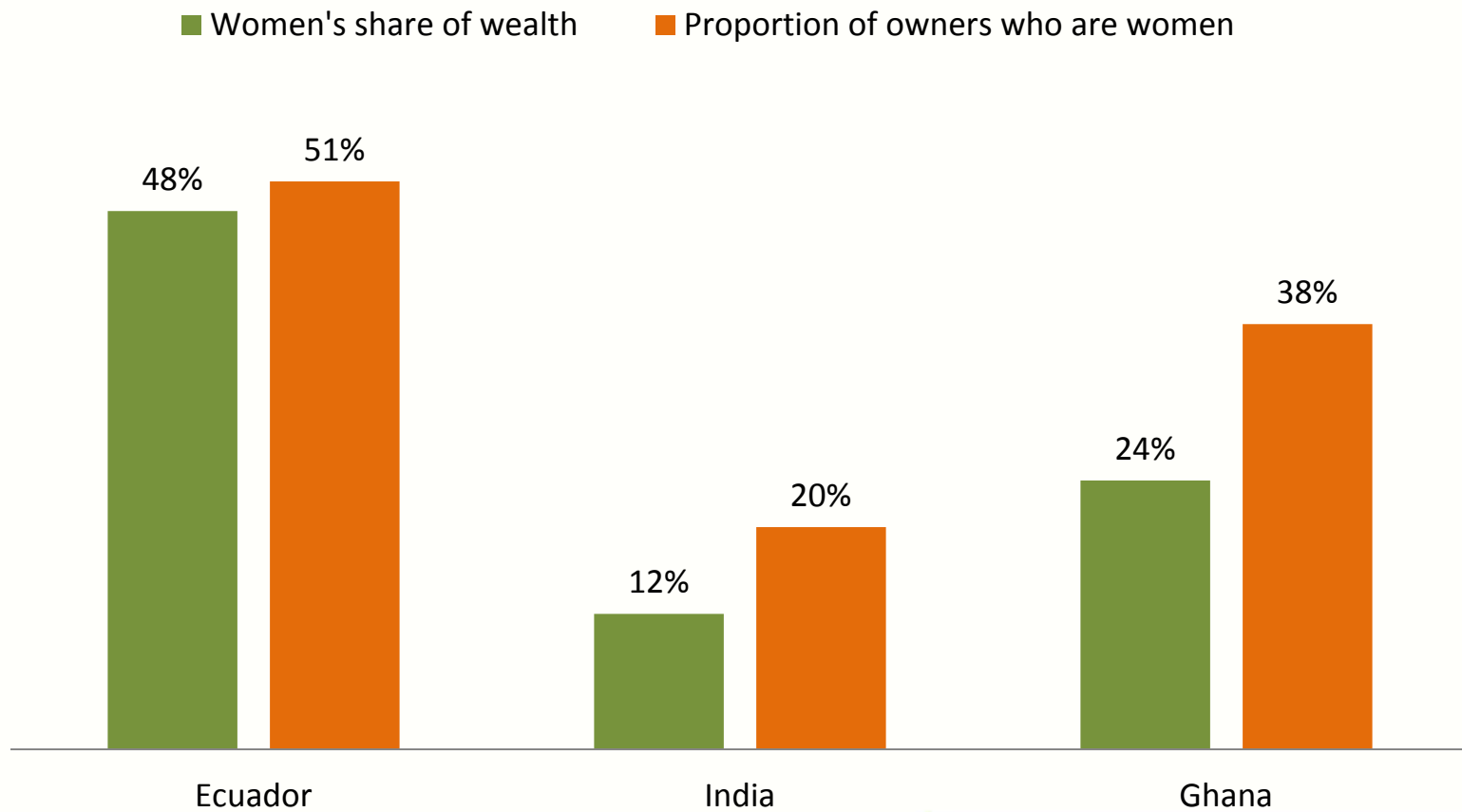


(population 18 & over)

•Excludes E



# The Share of Women Landowners and Women's Share of Land Wealth



# Main Question

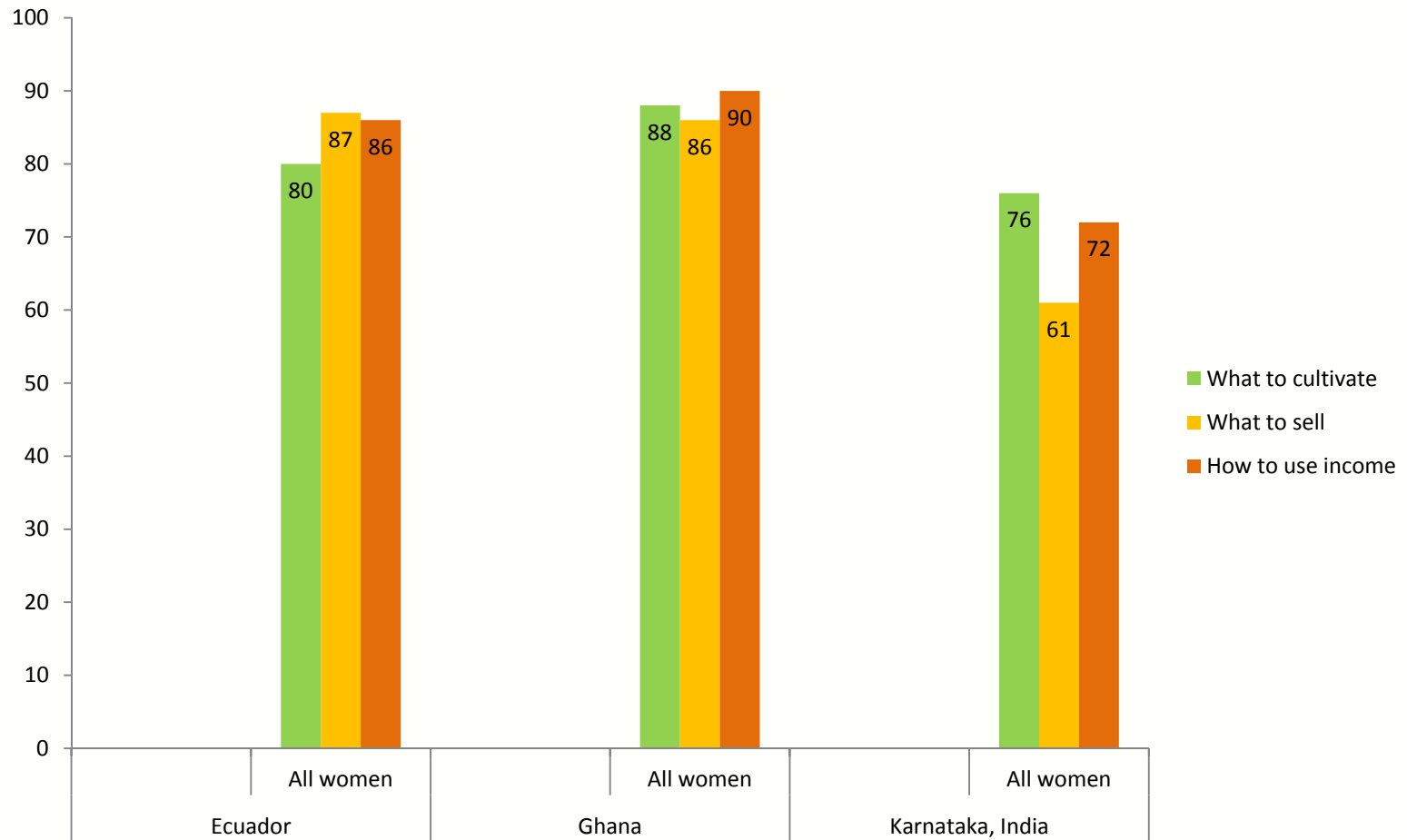
**Do women landowners participate in decision-making on their own land parcels?**

We show that varies by:

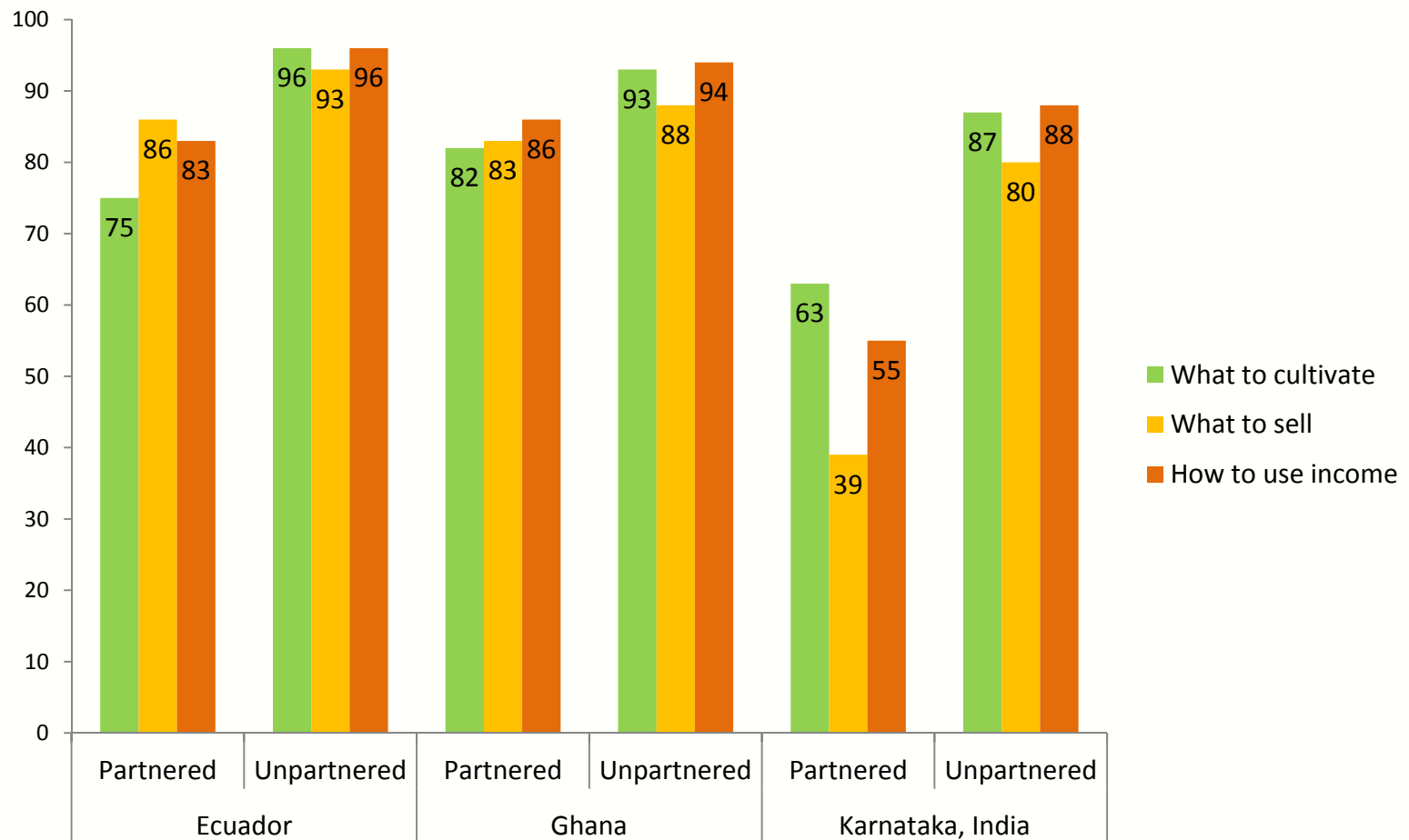
1. Country
2. Marital status
  - Partnered vs. unpartnered
3. Form of land ownership
  - Individual vs. joint
4. Specific decision
  - What to cultivate
  - Whether & how much to sell
  - Use of income generated from sales

(Deere et al 2013)

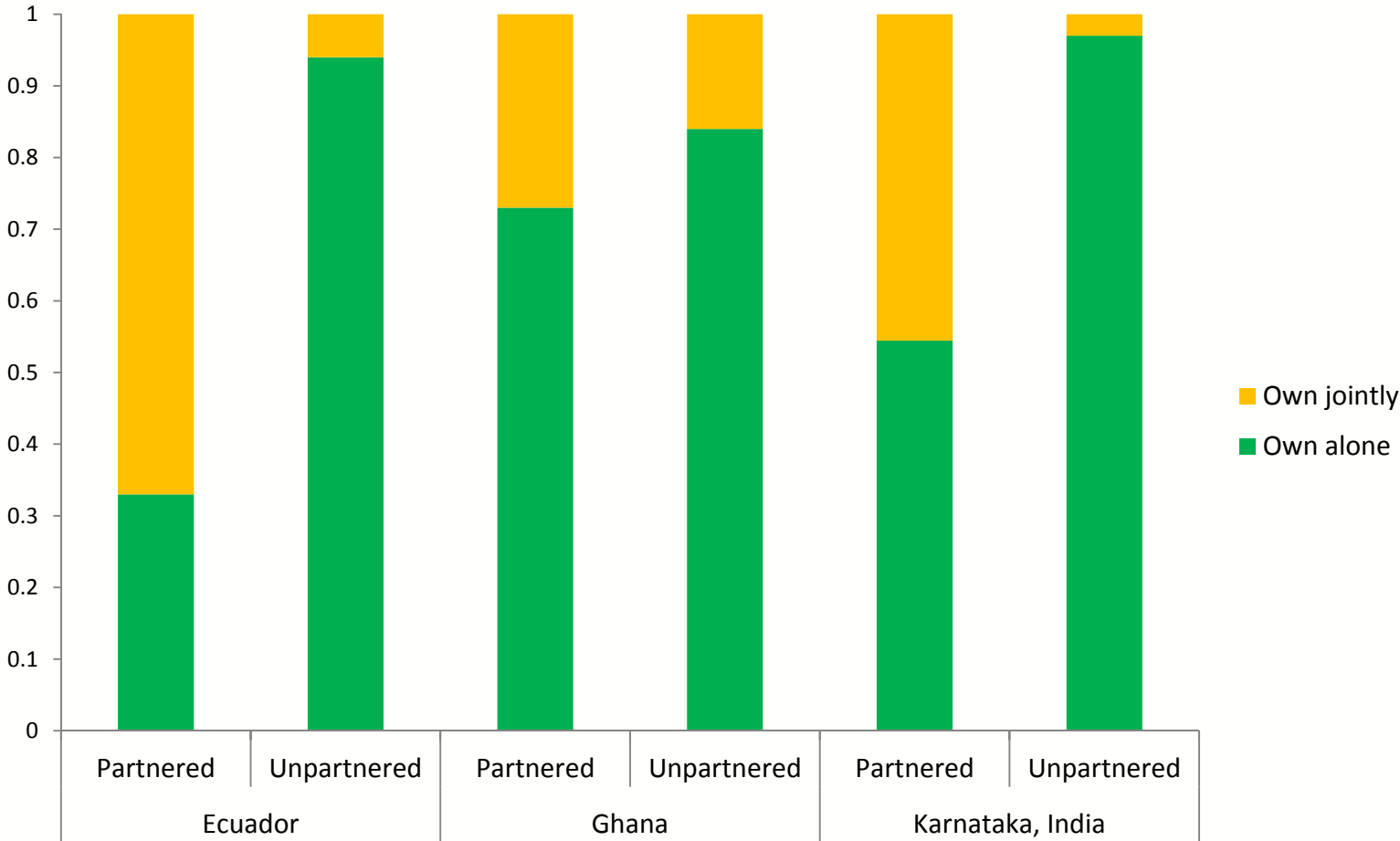
# Incidence of cultivated parcels on which women landowners engage in decision-making




# Incidence of cultivated parcels on which women landowners engage in decision-making by marital status

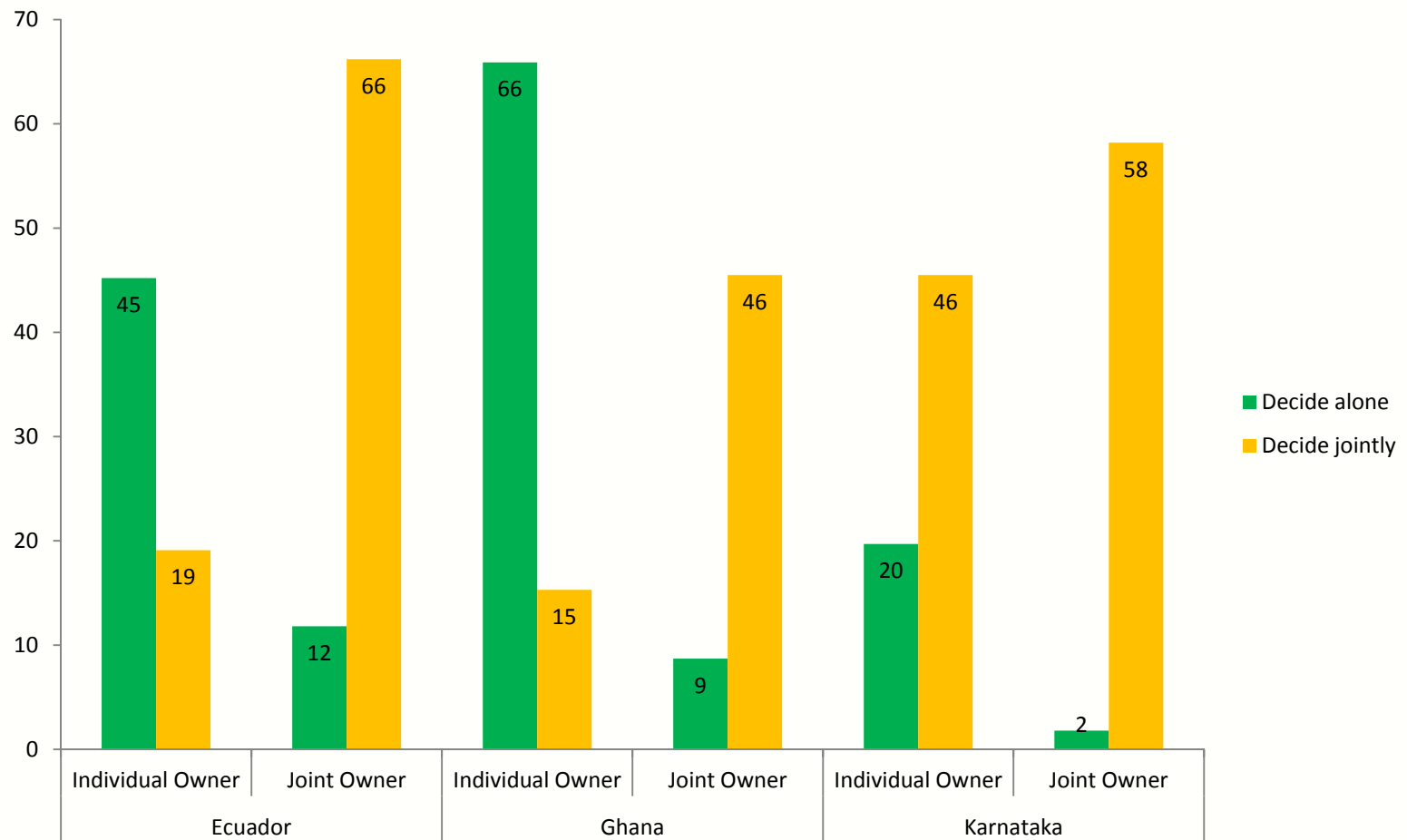


# Distribution by form of ownership and marital status

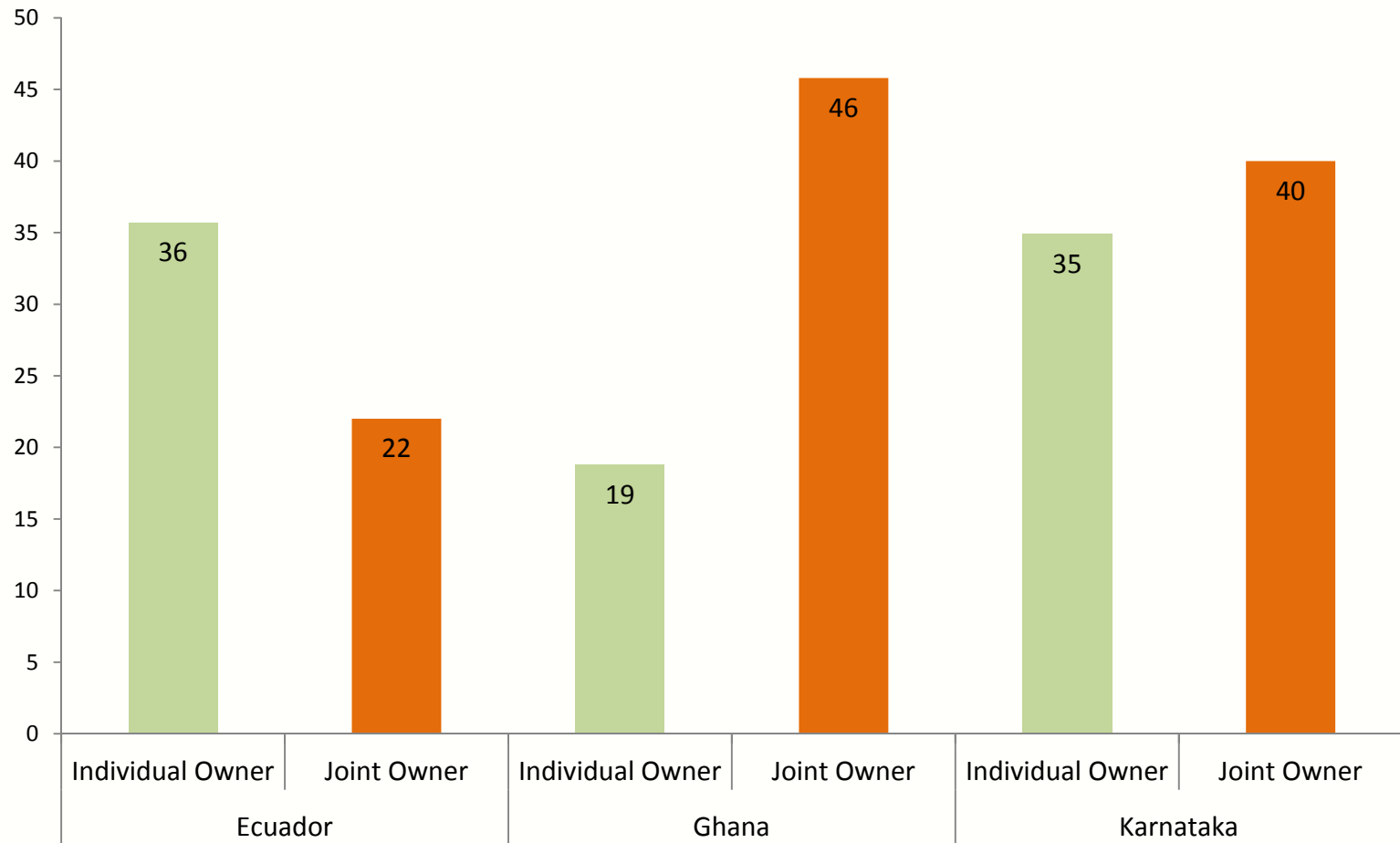


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- Focus now on partnered women and on how form of ownership (individual vs. joint) conditions participation in decision-making (alone vs. joint)
  - Cultivation decision

## Participation of partnered female landowners in cultivation decision by form of ownership and type of decision-making



## Partnered female landowners who **do not** participate in the cultivation decision by form of ownership







## Male and Female Perceptions of Women's Participation in Decision-making

- Up to now only considered landowning women's reports of their participation
- For partnered women, have similar information provided by their spouse
- For Ecuador have constructed an index based on 4 decisions
  - cultivation, inputs, sales, control of income

# Gendered Perceptions

Index of women's participation in agricultural decision-making as reported by landowning women and their spouses, Ecuador

	Distribution of Index	
	Partnered women	Partnered men
<b>No participation - 0.00</b>	10.4	13.2
<b>0.25</b>	7.1	8.8
<b>0.33</b>	1.7	2.8
<b>0.50</b>	12.1	13.7
<b>0.67</b>	3.3	1.1
<b>0.75</b>	4.4	8.2
<b>Full participation - 1.00</b>	61.0	52.2
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	173.6***	

Note: paired sample; both spouses report agricultural decision-making; n=182

# Conclusions

1. It matters who you interview
  - Husbands and wives don't always agree
2. Participation of women landowners in agricultural decision-making conditioned by their marital status and the form of land ownership
3. In the 3 countries, great majority of unpartnered women are sole owners, and make the key decisions themselves regarding their plots
4. Partnered women who are sole owners more likely than joint owners to make decisions alone
5. Partnered women who are joint owners more likely to engage in joint decision-making or (in Ghana and India) not participate in decision-making at all

## Conclusions

6. Provided evidence that partnered women landowners are actively involved in agricultural decision-making

- ❖ Cannot assume that male household heads are the managers of the plots owned by their wives or owned jointly by both of them



# Implications

- Household surveys should not assume that only one person is the landholder
  - Need to interview both husband and wife
  - Need to ask questions about decision-making in disaggregated fashion to decide who is the farm manager and recognize the possibility of joint management
- Programs aimed at enhancing food security through technological change in agriculture, adaptation to climate change, etc., need gender disaggregated data which reflects realities on the ground

## Thank you!

### References:

C.D. Deere, L. Boakye-Yiadom, C. Doss, A.D. Oduro, H. Swaminathan, J. Twyman & Suchitra J. Y. (2013), "Women's Land Ownership and Participation in Agricultural Decision-making: Evidence from Ecuador, Ghana and Karnataka, India." The Gender Asset Gap Project Research Brief Series No. 2.

J. Twyman, C.D.Deere & P. Useche (2013), "Gendered Perceptions of Land Ownership and Agricultural Decision-making in Ecuador: Who is the Farm Manager?" Working Paper, University of Florida.

For the country studies & reports see:

<http://www.genderassetgap.org>

