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Brewing a more Balanced Cup: Supply Chain Perspectives on Gender Transformative Change within the Coffee Value Chain

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ABSTRACT

Shifts in global agriculture have led more women into formal roles in the coffee industry as small-holder producers and cooperative members. Inclusion of women in these institutions, however, does not guarantee a change in historical power relations, or the benefits that might flow from this. A transformative change in gender relations not only requires changes in women's attitudes and capacities and in the relationships between men and women, but also progress at the institutional and structural levels, a topic which has been infrequently studied. To address this gap, this paper explores institutional perspectives of stakeholders in the supply chain of a fair-trade organic coffee federation located in the western highlands of Guatemala. Major themes emerged from the interviews regarding women's inclusion in the industry, gender sensitization, women's empowerment, and supply chain support. The study finds that empowering women as productive cooperative members requires not only technical assistance and support, but also creation of an inclusive social and political environment that supports expanded choices for women and men. The paper expands our understanding of the historical context and current institutional dynamics that are fueling gender transformative change in the coffee industry. The conclusions find that this type of approach may lead to more than just superficial gender integration, and has the potential to result in the genuine integration of women into previously male-dominated organizations and the eventual percolation of society-wide shifts in gender norms, moving towards a more equitable society.

*Keywords:*Fair trade; gender; coffee; supply chain; agricultural cooperatives

1   Introduction

Women coffee producers have long been marginalized as invisible labor in the coffee production process. However, in the last few decades they have been taking on formal roles in the coffee supply chain as cooperative members and leaders. While men have historically been involved in cash crop agriculture, a combination of factors has led to a 'feminization of agriculture' within coffee and in other cash crop industries (Food and Agriculture Organization 2010; Lastarria-Cornheil, 2008; Lyon, Bezaury, and Mutersbaugh, 2010). This trend has been defined in the literature by an increase in women's participation rates in the formal agricultural sector, either as self-employed producers or as agricultural wage workers, increasing the percentage of women who are economically active in rural areas. This also represents an increase in the percentage of women in the agricultural labor force relative to men, due to either more women working and/or fewer men working in agriculture (World Bank, 2006). The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that while the proportion of the labor force working in agriculture began to decline during the 1990s, the proportion of women working in agriculture increased, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (FAO, 2010).

The feminization of agriculture has been fueled by a variety of national and transnational phenomena. In some instances, internal conflicts due to civil wars, drug trafficking, and genocide have left women widows in charge of their land. In other instances, unemployment and the search for better opportunity elsewhere has led to the migration of male family members to cities or outside the country, leaving women to tend to the family's land. In the context of Guatemala, both of these trends have led to an increase in women's formal participation in cooperative associations (Lyon et al., 2010). While women have arguably been involved in agricultural production since it's advent, over the last few decades, women's contribution in the formal agricultural sector has become more visible, partially due to research and data collection aiming to measure this topic, and partially due to their actual increased involvement in the sector (FAO, 2010).

As women step into formal roles as producers and cooperative members they continue to have less access to productive resources such as land, inputs, information, credit and technical assistance, which has resulted in the 'gender gap' in agriculture (FAO, 2010; Rocheleau,1988). A variety of studies and reports have demonstrated that closing this gap could not only benefit agricultural production and lead to economic growth and increased food security, but that it could accelerate the powerful multiplier effect of community development through women's empowerment (Fair trade, 2015; Malapit et al, 2015).

Research has shown that addressing the gender gap in agriculture requires more than just a focus on improving women's access to enhanced economic opportunities and material goods and services. It is also essential to concurrently address the underlying socio-cultural and political phenomena that perpetuate gender inequality and constrain women's capabilities (Apothekar, Pyburn and Laven, 2012; International Food Policy Research Institute, 2012; Kirk, 2012). This requires a culturally sensitive multilevel approach that includes women and men.

Historically, women's inclusion in agriculture was operationalized through the Women-in-Development agenda of the 1970s, and then the Gender-in-Development agenda of the 1980s and early 1990s. Since the 1990s there has been a shift in focus towards gender transformative approaches to women's involvement in development, and more specifically in agricultural growth in developing countries (Cole et al, 2014; Razavi and Miller, 1995).

The conceptual framework of gender transformative change has been articulated conceptually since the 1990's, and embraces a more complex understanding of gender as a social construct, embedded in how societies define gender roles (Martin, 2004; Morgan, 2014; Young, 1993). This framework has evolved out of gender theory, which focuses on analyzing and understanding gender inequality, predominantly through qualitative and participatory research. It is also concerned with the linkages between gender and race, ethnicity, and other groups that have experienced discrimination or oppression (Risman, 2004; Wharton, 2011). Gender transformative approaches address not only gender roles and power dynamics, but also institutional and legal exclusion as key barriers to equality, justice, and the achievement of global development outcomes. A main goal of gender transformative approaches involves the creation of an enabling social environment and more equitable inclusion in formal and informal institutions that support expanded choices for women and men. Key characteristics that distinguish gender transformative approaches from other efforts to integrate gender into agricultural development include:

- Development of an understanding of people in their context, particularly the way social inequalities affect choices and outcomes
- Engagement with both women and men, as both have a role and stake in gender transformative change
- Commitment to addressing unequal power relations and to challenging oppressive norms, behaviors, and structures
- Engagement with different actors across levels in response to how the power relations and norms underlying gender and social inequality are distributed (Cole et al, 2014).

Gender transformative approaches in agriculture can be framed as seeking to foster change at multiple levels. Based on this nested framework, gender transformative approaches focus simultaneously at the level of the individual with individual capacities, attitudes, agency and actions; at the relational level with the expectations that shape relationships between people in the home, in groups and in organizations; and at the structural level with institutional rules and practices. Theoretically, shifts at each level can lead to a greater number of enhanced options for resource-poor women and men, for equitable norms and institutions, and finally for an expansion in women's and men's potential to contribute to and benefit from development.

While there is currently a growing body of literature that assesses gender transformative change through women's participation in coffee cooperatives at the individual and relational level, limited research has explored the dynamics of this process at the institutional and structural levels. A recent study by Lyon, Bezuary, and Mutersbaugh in 2009 looked at gender equity in fair trade-organic coffee producer organizations in southern Mexico and Guatemala. The results of their mixed methods study show an increase in the proportion of women registered as 'farm operators' alongside the significant impacts of this trend in three areas whereby women's organizations have greater access to network benefits, women gain greater control over farm practices, and women enjoy increased access to financial resources (Lyon et al, 2010). Other publications that explore gender equity at the individual and relational level showcase similar findings (Hoebink, Ruben, Elbers, and Van Rijsbergen, 2014; Lyon et al, 2010; Smith, 2013). This study has been motivated by the gap in research on the institutional dynamics of gender transformative change within agricultural cooperatives. The central research question of this paper asks how supply chain stakeholders in the global coffee value chain perceive the role of women's empowerment in agriculture and value the agricultural products created from women producers. This paper utilizes a case study approach to explore this research question through the global value chain of a coffee federation based in the western highlands of Guatemala. The coffee federation was selected for the case study as they represent a growing number of producer organizations that produce and market a line of coffee called 'Woman Grown'. While not a formal certification program, this branding represents a growing trend in the specialty coffee industry originally initiated by an organization called 'Café Feminimo' that seeks to address the previously 'invisible' work of women coffee producers by acknowledging their contribution (Heiliger, 2013). In addition, the federation is actively focused on institutionalizing gender sensitivity programs and policies. The overall goal of this paper is to understand the critical role that the global agricultural value chain plays in supporting women in agriculture as producers and leaders.

2   Study Population and Methods

A total of 20 individuals were recruited from the global supply chain connected to the coffee federation. Expert purposive sampling was employed to select the representatives at each stage of the supply chain connected to the cooperative and federation. Participant selection was conducted in collaboration with the federation, and was based around identifying the individuals at each level of the value chain. Informed consent was granted for all of the participants in the study. These supply chain actors represented exporters, importers, retailers, and roasters, in addition to institutional representatives from government and non-profit support agencies. Approximately half of the participants were based in Guatemala, and the other half were based in the United States. The demographics of the supply chain actors and institutional representatives are listed in Table 1, shown below.

Table 1.
Supply Chain and Institutional Representative Demographics (n=20)

Category	Type	Men	Women	Total
Occupation	Retailer	2	3	5
	Exporter	2	3	5
	Importer	1	2	3
	Technical Assistance	3	4	7
Nationality	Guatemalan	7	5	12
	American	2	6	8
	Total	8	12	20

The semi-structured interviews with the supply chain actors were conducted by the primary investigator in person and via video conferencing technology. The interviews lasted 45-90 minutes and were conducted in either English or Spanish, based on the preference and comfort level of the research participant. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed by the primary investigator. When translation into English was necessary, the primary investigator conducted the translation and then had the translation checked over by a Spanish translator to ensure for accuracy.

Interviews were composed of five content areas: (1) demographics and general association with the federation (2) perception of the feminization of agriculture (3) perception of the inclusion of women producers in the cooperative (4) perception of 'woman grown' coffee (5) perception of the organization's role in the supply chain. In the content area of *demographics and general association with the cooperative*, interviewee demographics and standard questions regarding residency, language, identity and the nature of and business history with the cooperative were asked. In *perception of the feminization of agriculture* interviewees were asked about their perception of the inclusion of women in the formal agricultural sector. In *perception of the inclusion of women producers in the cooperative,* interviewees were asked about how they *'woman grown'* coffee. In the final content area, *perception of their role in the supply chain*, interviewees were asked about how they view their organizations role in the supply chain, supporting the federation's products and values. Per semi-structured interviewing methods, which emphasizes an evolving series of questions, certain topics were delved into in more detail, and questions were tailored to the individual participants' expertise, knowledge, and interest.

Upon completion of the interviews, the data were translated and transcribed. The transcriptions were then uploaded to a cloud-based data management system and were coded using a data-driven approach, where major categories were created based off of the content from the transcripts. As the coding process evolved, these categories were delineated into more specific subcategories. The codes were reviewed, refined, and merged where necessary based on the original framework of the semi-structured interview guide.

3   Results

Upon completion of the coding process, the variation in the data from the subcategories was explored and analyzed. The multiple rounds of coding allowed for the distillation of the relationship amongst codes, yielding a deeper understanding of the underlying phenomena (Birks and Mills, 2015; Saldaña, 2016). A total of 300 excerpts from the supply chain interviews were coded to yield results in four major categories: 91 were associated with Women in Coffee, 114 with Gender Sensitization, 55 with Women's Empowerment, and 36 with Supply Chain Support. The subcategories for each of these major categories are listed below in Table 2.

Table 2.
Major categories of supply chain perspectives from semi-structured interviews on
women's formal participation as coffee producers

Major Categories	Subcategories
Women in Coffee	Changes in the coffee industry Women's Hidden Role Land Ownership
Gender Sensitization	Traditional Gender Norms Working at the Relational level Change through Cooperatives Men's Awareness and New Masculinity
Women's Empowerment	More than Participation Institutional Integration
Supply Chain Support	Doing the Right Thing Supporting Women & Small farmers

Women in Coffee

Changes in the coffee industry. Many of the participants working in Guatemala reflected on the historical context in which women have become involved as coffee cooperative members. This first theme provided a broader context for understanding recent shifts in the global coffee industry, and within the context of Guatemala. Participants described the specific conditions that have led women to become involved in cash crop coffee production, a historically male-dominated domain. Many of the participants working in Guatemala reflected on the historical context in which women have become involved as coffee cooperative members. One coffee exporter observed that:

> During the armed conflict there were many men coffee producers who were killed, especially the zone of intense conflict, such as Quiche and Huehue. That's why *women's coffee* comes from there, because many lives were lost, mostly men, and the women remained. So, in this situation, if your husband died, the whole land is yours, and if you are a woman and you are in a position where you need to take care of your family, and that you have children, and then, well you become the main coffee producer. (P20)

This quote recounted the unfortunate circumstances that has resulted in 'coffee widowhood' a term that has been used to describe thousands of women across countries in the coffee belt that have experienced conflict and survived civil war. One of the program managers of the coffee federation shared a specific example of women's groups that have given rise to women's participation in organizations and cooperatives as a result of the situation in areas such as Huehuetenango, in Guatemala. This historical backdrop has paved the way for women's participation in cooperative associations.

Women's hidden role. Regardless of this historical background, there was consensus around the idea that women have always been involved in the coffee production process, but as unpaid labor. A wide range of respondents noted that women's work in coffee has been 'invisible', and taken for granted as part of what they are required to contribute in their domestic roles at the household level, especially in the context of small-holder coffee production, which relies heavily on family participation. The director of a technical assistance organization that works with coffee producers confirmed that:

> I do think that the role of women in coffee is hidden. In some areas, they take more part in the harvest and after the harvest. They do all of the washing of the coffee, the de-pulping, and the drying. That role is not recognized in the decision-making of the coffee organization, or in the selling of the coffee or in the using of the money of the coffee. Women are not given a lot of space or recognition. (P14)

This commentary about the hidden role of women in coffee has been seen in other agricultural supply chains as well. As household labor, historically women have been conscripted into the most labor intensive part of the process, without compensation or recognition, a reality in agriculture in developing countries that has long been documented (Boserup, 1970; Dixon, 1982; Donahoe, 1999; Verrick, 2014).

A few participants also observed that the trend of women's involvement as members in cooperatives is not 'something new', but rather that it has always been the situation that women have been involved in cooperative associations, due to the democratic and inclusive nature of these types of organizations. However, other respondents clarified that through fair trade certification, inclusion of women has been accelerated. A representative from a supply chain certification organization reflected that:

> There have been organizations that already existed before fair trade that have always been organic and included women. But fair trade has encouraged more participation, because it requires that there are women in every organization. (P12)

The majority of interviewees were aware of this trend of the 'feminization of agriculture', specifically within the context of the coffee industry, whereby more women are becoming formally involved in coffee, in Guatemala, and across the globe.

Land ownership. In addition to discussing the context in which many women are involved in coffee as producers and the situation in which they become cooperative members, various respondents also mentioned the issue of land ownership as being both a prerequisite for membership, and also a critical barrier or challenge for women due to structural laws reinforced by socio-cultural norms. Even in situations where women are widowed, structural and legal barriers may constrict their ability to assume ownership of their family land. A Guatemalan exporter described this situation more broadly within Guatemala:

> In some regions, one of the problems is land ownership, because to be in a cooperative, one of the requirements is that you need is land. So, to participate in a cooperative, a person has to have their own crop, and this requires that you are going to have land. And in some parts this depends on whether or not you can own land as a woman. Women may have land in some regions, but there are some places where women are not legally allowed to own land…Access to land is important. It is very important, and because of this there are barriers for women to have access to the land and to become members. (P20)

As this quote reflected, land ownership rights are variable even by region, which can complicate the situation for women who oversee their land and looking to join a cooperative association to benefit from membership, especially in the case of widowhood or inheritance (Melville, 1971; Krznaric, 2006).

Gender Sensitization

Traditional gender norms. Within the category of gender sensitization, participants described traditional gender norms and the importance of working at the relational level to address gender issues. Linked to this was the key role that cooperative organizations play as conduits for facilitating gender sensitization workshops and trainings. There was broad consensus amongst participants regarding the patriarchal nature of traditional gender norms in Guatemala. However, many felt that these norms were shifting. An exporter working closely with cooperative associations described this shift as a result of women's institutional inclusion in cooperatives. He observed:

> The inclusion of women in any social environment is new, partly because Guatemala, by culture and history, is a very macho country. Especially in this region [the western highlands], near Mexico, we are in the center of 'macho' culture. But this is also changing with the inclusion of more equitable organizations. We are in a transition through women's participation. (P2)

Working at the relational level. Around the topic of relational gender norms and gender sensitization, key observations were made around the importance of simultaneously creating space for women, while educating women and men together in an inclusive and culturally relevant way. Other participants discussed the importance of not only providing a formal structure for including women, but of educating women and men separately, and then together in a culturally sensitive way about gender issues. Born from the experience of working directly with coffee growing communities 'at origin', the best practice process for gender sensitization acknowledges the current "macho" cultural context in Guatemala but provides room for them to grow and develop independence by educating them in separate groups.

Change through cooperatives. Democratic and inclusive cooperatives are serving one vehicle for social change, as women in positions to join become members and participate alongside men in their community. Although participants readily concurred that in general, Guatemala is still governed by traditional gender norms, the majority of them also described change happening within the cooperative organizations. One supply chain stakeholder working in Guatemala providing technical assistance to cooperatives noted that:

> For us here in Guatemala and from the technical assistance perspective, it is through producer organizations where women's participation occurs. And this participation has allowed us to open up spaces for even more enhanced participation. (P6)

The idea that it has been through cooperatives that women's roles have begun to shift was consistent throughout the interviews, but there was also concern about the quality of this integration.

Men's awareness and new masculinity. As part of this process, various respondents relayed the importance of men's awareness of gender-related issues. There was discussion around the importance of working with men directly, alongside the critical process of providing dedicated space for women to develop their self-confidence and self-awareness. A facilitator of gender sensitization workshops for the cooperative shared their approach around incorporating men into this process:

> Part of the training component has to do with men's roles and work. The aim is also to raise men's awareness with regard to roles and work and at the same time, working on the development of women. (P15)

Another technical assistance provider confirmed the critical importance of women and men working together on addressing gender norms around masculinity. She shared:

> "Now, women are working together with men to help train them about new masculinity. So, men are getting sensitized of the importance to give more space to women, and from there, to be sensitive within their own families" (P44).

While a significant amount of work is aimed towards women to help them build their self-confidence and encourage their active participation, men's involvement in the process of gender sensitization is also critical. Through this process, participants describe men coming to an awareness around their own subconsciously held assumptions of gender roles at the household level, that have limited them and their female relatives into a distinct division of labor. Participants also noted that it is through gender sensitization work with women, men, and women and men together, there has been a gradual change in how cooperative members view that gender roles are beginning to shift.

Women's Empowerment

Meaningful participation. Another key theme that arose from the interviews centered on women's empowerment through more meaningful participation and leadership within organizations. Various subcategories within this theme include the importance of authentic participation and the provision of women's leadership opportunities within the organizational structures. Many participants commented on the importance of women producers not only being included in cooperatives as members, but also commented on the quality of their inclusion and the importance of empowerment. One of the most significant challenges mentioned was overcoming 'inclusion for inclusion's sake', and ensuring that institutions support a shift in power dynamics, allowing women to have space, decision-making power and leadership opportunities. In response to this situation, where women may be cooperative members, but still not have any institutional power, various respondents noted the importance of formal organizational structures to address this power imbalance, coupled with technical training and education at the organizational level in the form of gender sensitization. One respondent commented that:

> It's not only women's participation in the coffee industry that is important, but how they participate. How much decision-making power they have, what types of roles they have, and so on. Training is also important, and helping them to develop entrepreneurial skills…in addition to providing access to microcredit for women so that they can really be able to develop financial literacy and leadership and to be able to choose, to the extent that a choice exists, what they want to do. Not just sit on a line and pick coffee beans (P10)

Institutional integration. In addition, direct observations from the cooperative workshops and meetings and analysis from organizational documents illustrated the importance of the federation's efforts to establish inclusive policies and a social environment with the intentional goal of gender inclusivity and women's empowerment. An analysis of the federation's executive organizational structure from online documents and internal documents produced for their annual general meeting highlight a commitment to formalized pathways for gender transformative change through a women's committee. Listed on the federation's website is a structural diagram of the organization's decision-making bodies, of which there is a Women's Committee dedicated to gender equity, which enables women leaders in the cooperative to share the perspectives of women cooperative members from the communities that they represent. In addition, the federation has intentionally included a gender equity program as part of the technical assistance and training programs that it offers to women and men cooperative members. Figure 1 below diagrams the coffee federation's organizational structure.
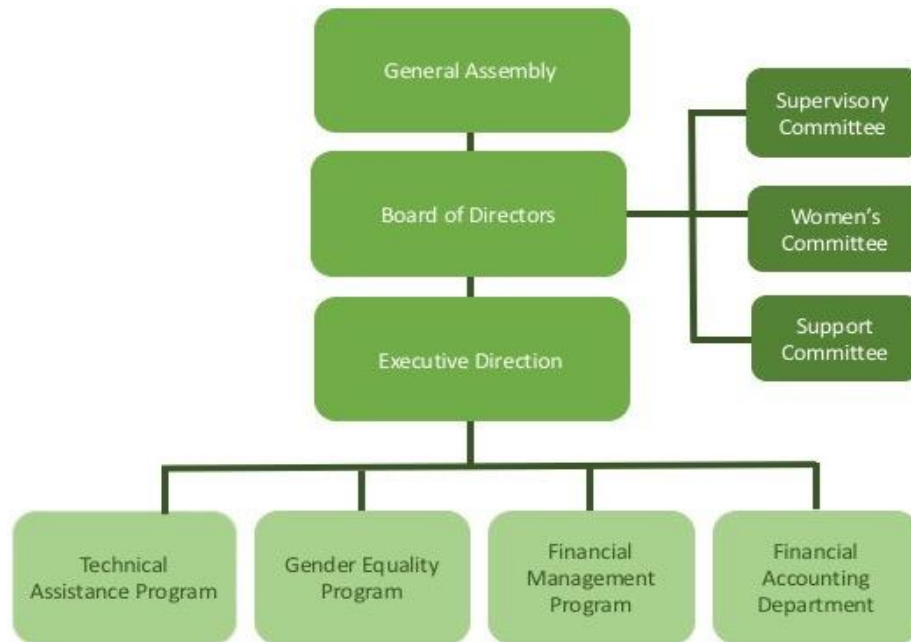
Figure 1. The Coffee Federation's Organizational Structure
Source: Adapted from the federations' website, 2016

In addition to sharing their concerns and ideas with the federation through the committee of gender equity, women are also encouraged to participate in the executive board and as active leaders and meeting facilitators. At the annual meeting of the federation in 2017, one of the female members of the executive board facilitated the event, modeling leadership to the group as a whole. A representative from the coffee federation in Guatemala described the innovative creation of the women's committee as part of their executive board structure, which gave women involved in the cooperatives an avenue for expressing their opinions and ideas to the executive board. She narrated:

> In 2012 the women's committee was formed, and the intention was for there to be a formal structure of a trained group of women representing each of the partner organizations. So that they could come and express or tell what their needs were because each group is very different, right? We also implemented a rule that when two representatives come to the annual assembly each year, that at least one of them need to be a woman, because otherwise only men would be sent…and thanks to this new rule we have managed to have more women on the board. We've been looking for opportunities to get women into those management posts, right? Now, we have 12 women in the women's commission. (P2)

Creating a formal structure within the organization for women has been critical in this early stage of gender sensitization to ensure that women can voice their concerns, a structure that was not previously available. While this gender commission represents an important institutional advance for women, it also reflects on the work that lies ahead to create a truly enabling social environment where women have the confidence and freedom to express themselves, share their ideas, and collaboratively make decisions.

Information on the organization's commitment to gender equity has also been conveyed through the federation's other organizational documents. A colorful illustrated pamphlet produced by the federation and originally published in Spanish entitled "Institutional Gender Policy", individuals are educated about gender equity. Readers are delivered a message that suggests: "All men and all women should participate in creating a better world with gender equity". In this same pamphlet, the federation describes that:

> Our policy is meant to enable coffee producing families to build strategies that allow them to develop and live well, knowing that it is necessary to build conditions of equity at all levels and structures of our organization, and within our families, giving special interest to empowerment of women.

The pamphlet further goes on to describe the various strategies for achieving these long-term goals, including capacity building through gender sensitization, integrating women into the decision-making boards of the organization, providing equal access to financing for production and development, training women in financial management, strengthening gender equity at the institutional level, and providing workshops to help women and men members work together.

Although there are no evaluation results to confirm the effects of this campaign, anecdotal evidence from direct observation from the federation's annual general meeting demonstrated the federation's dedication to integrating women into the decision-making body of the organization. At this meeting, one role in the financial management committee was up for election, and the group nominated two women and one man to be elected for the vacant position. During this process, one member of the federation rose to speak, and reminded the group of the importance of considering women for leadership positions in the organization. Of the three individuals nominated, one of the women was elected. The whole room stood up and applauded.

Supply Chain Support

Doing the right thing. Different supply chain actors including exporters, importers, roasters, and retailers commented about what they think motivated different actors in the supply chain to support coffee marketed as 'Woman Grown'. There was broad consensus around the idea of ethical purchasing, and pressure from various parts of the supply chain, from consumers to importers *to do the right thing* through their purchasing. When probed about why they, or others they knew in the supply chain supported fair trade and women grown coffee, participants echoed the response that it was about *doing the right thing*. The idea of *doing the right thing* was attached to supporting organic producers, small producers from fair trade certified organizations, and within these two categories, particularly women coffee producers. One roaster commented about why buying organic and supporting fair trade producers is important to buyers, and why it motivates them:

> They are simply bound by doing the right thing and truly ethical relationships. If we had crappy coffee, it would be challenging. Quality is a pay to play...but our coffee is good because its organic, and fair trade keeps us with the best producers. Quality, small batch roasted, they know we are working directly with our trading partners. (P11)

This idea of *doing the right thing* is just as much about supply chain transparency as it is about social and environmental justice and agricultural sustainability. These conditions are bound together and inherently connected to the concept of quality. Participants stated that the coffee is of the highest quality, because it has been produced using organic agricultural methods, and because it is organic, the producers perceive themselves to be healthier and believed that their agro-ecological approaches ensure for more resilient crop systems.

Supporting women and small farmers. Other supply chain actors mentioned their desire to use the growing demand for specialty coffee as a way to make a social impact as they scaled their businesses. One importer commented:

> So, you get to a certain size, and you find that you can do more things, you can buy larger quantities and have a bigger impact - you know, you are throwing a stone into a pond, but now it's an even bigger stone, so the ripple is bigger and you can impact more people positively. That is where we are at right now. (P8)

When asked about what might motivate different actors in the supply chain to buy 'Women Grown Coffee', respondents referenced both the opportunity to support marginalized women producers while also developing a niche market within the specialty coffee industry. Some respondents described why they thought coffee industry buyers and individual consumers were interested in 'Women Grown Coffee'. A variety of respondents discussed the importance of market demand. A representative from the coffee federation that handles the exporting business commented on the importance of demand connected to the priorities of clients, both retail buyers and consumers:

> There are some buyers who already focus on a niche market in specialty coffee, and their customers, who are retailers, also want to sell female coffee at their coffee shops or restaurants. For importers, they want to meet the demands of their customers – both retailers and then consumers further down the supply chain who want to consume this type of coffee. And they say: I want coffee that is 100% women grown. Part of it is the client's demand that encourages the buyer, but part of it is also the priority of the buyer to focus on social impact. (P3)

A coffee retailer spoke more specifically about why they support coffee from women and small producers. He said:

> "Buying coffee produced by women is a way to raise up and support women producers and women in general, by 'breaking the barriers'. Also, importers are able to support small producers as a way to break the power of the coffee plantations" (P5).

Some respondents referenced the power of the women's movement as permeating individual and corporate motivations at multiple levels, from the consumer and up through the supply chain:

> What we have seen in the US – the entire women's movement has incredibly strengthened any activity that focuses on empowering women. And especially now, everyone is trying to support this movement, partly as a reaction to recent anti-feminists elected into the government. We have also seen a large demand in Europe, where there are countries like Sweden that have declared themselves feminist. A product that empowers women is very popular amongst countries where there is strong support for the feminist agenda (P3).

Other respondents commented that coffee shop owners view buying 'Women Grown Coffee' to *do the right thing*, by supporting women coffee producers. One coffee retailer mentioned that *"Store owners generally see women in coffee as a good thing, but something new. Their opinion is that it helps rural women in poverty in an industry dominated by men." (P6).* This same respondent, from Guatemala, noted that while this trend may be more well-received abroad, in Guatemala there was less awareness of women's changing roles in the coffee production process partly due to the still very patriarchal society. They commented that:

> "Guatemala is a country with a lot of machismo. Most don't realize that this trend is happening with women in coffee and they don't recognize that women have the capacity and expertise to be involved in a male dominated industry" (P7).

Despite the current gender and equality reality in Guatemala, there was some hope voiced from a participant involved in Fairtrade from the consumer end, who reflected on the gateway effect of women's participation in the coffee industry as a mechanism for shifting broader societal norms. She concluded that:

> "The women have gone on to empower themselves a little more, and the lesson we learned is that the Guatemalan coffee producers have been a part of the process of changing some paradigms or some stereotypes attached to women's participation" (P16).

At the international level of the coffee industry, there was discussion around women at other levels of the supply chain wanting to support women working 'at origin' as producers. The International Women's Coffee Alliance representative from Guatemala referenced this being the impetus for the creation of the International Women's Coffee Alliance (IWCA). One of the founders of IWCA, a North American coffee importer herself, described how she was inspired to support women working at origin in coffee:

> I was involved in coffee first on the business end. And I would go visit these countries and see the women, who were always involved in various aspects of the coffee industry. Sometimes they would be picking during the harvest, or helping to process or dry. Or sometimes women had jobs on the line at factories, picking the beans for quality control. A tedious job where they would literally just sit there for 8-10 hours a day. Anyhow, I would be there with these women, and they would ask me all of these questions, like how could they stop having children, and so on and so forth. It was clear to me that there needed to be some sort of organization to represent women in coffee. So when I started the organization with a few other women from North America, we could not believe how much interest we got. And now, we have 22 different country chapters. (P9)

This response of individuals, organizations, and businesses supporting women across the coffee value chain was evident at the 2017 Latin American Coffee Summit, where there was a specific focus on gender as the theme of the conference. Representatives from the large international coffee organization talked about women's inclusions at the organizational level and even discussed the possibility of creating another certification scheme, 'Women Care Certified'. This certification would focus on integrating women in decision-making positions in cooperatives through policies for gender inclusion. There was a lot of discussion about the power of the global network of women, especially through codified organizations like UN Women, and new partnerships with the World Trade Organization. There were also a lot of questions from other supply chain actors about what role they 'should' play in supporting women in coffee. Some responses included creating a broader market and market awareness about women in coffee and roasters creating awareness at the consumer level.

4   Discussion

Our findings shed light on the process of gender transformative change through the perceptions of a variety of institutional actors connected to the global value chain of the coffee federation and its network of cooperatives. Throughout the supply chain there is widespread acknowledgement of the hidden role of

women in agricultural industries such as coffee (Flora, 1985; Reed, Westneat, Browning, and Skarke, 1999). However, there was considerable variation in the level of awareness based on each participant's role in the supply chain. Supply chain actors and institutional representatives expressed a duel sense of hope and support for the trend of women moving into formal roles as coffee cooperative members, while also acknowledging the simultaneous socio-structural challenges that women face related to entrenched gender roles, land ownership, and uneven support for equality at the organizational level.

Institutional representatives, especially those involved in agricultural technical assistance and certification programming, reflected on the integral process of gender sensitization as a catalyst for initiating gender transformative change, and the key role that education plays in this process. While ultimately this process should involve both women and men, at the beginning, creating space for women first was seen as a prerequisite, especially in extremely traditional patriarchal contexts (Basak, 2017). While there was widespread support for gender sensitization and the incorporation of women into leadership roles in organizations, there was also skepticism regarding the current gender and equality realities, which led many participants to characterize these changes as gradual and marked by intergenerational shifts. Insights from the literature on gender transformative change also observes the implications of intergenerational transmission of values and norms for the graduate evolution of society towards increased gender equity (Inglehart and Ponarin, 2017; Margunn 2009).

Aside from discussions about this topic at individual, relational, and institutional levels, various respondents also discussed the influence of the global market and the international feminist movement. From a business perspective, support for 'Woman Grown' products was perceived as both a way to create a 'niche' in the growing competitive specialty coffee market, while also 'doing the right thing' (Heiliger, 2013). In addition, supply chain actors also saw support coming from men and women at the consumer level, the level of the buyer (importers and retailers), and even the influence of country-level politics, as signaled by mention of feminist-declared countries like Sweden.

Several cautionary points were described throughout these semi-structured interviews that should be taken into account when considering this process, particularly within the household. In many situations, not only might there be dominance and control, but even abusive and violent dynamics. Sensitivity to these situations is required. Charging into a community where women are being dominated in such repressive ways could exacerbate, rather than alleviate such realities (WHO, 2001).

Concern over superficial integration into organizations was also significant. If the necessary steps are not being taken to harmonize the process of gender transformative change through a combination of education, modeling, and structural change at the organizational level, then including women for the sake of including them may result in a continuation of the status quo and in some cases just more work for the women (Rao and Kelleher, 2003). In order for women to truly have a voice, they need cultural and institutional support as well as leadership and communication skills. At the same time, men need to be brought into the education process, and a supportive organizational structure must be present. There was also caution around importing expectations from abroad, and a need to create change from within, while respecting and working within the local context. At the same time, there has been an inevitable pollenization of ideas from the global development agenda that values gender equity, and this cannot be avoided. Tailoring and adapting the messaging and approaches of the international movement for gender equity to the local context may offer a compromise and reduce any reaction to an outside agenda (Okin, 1998).

5   Limitations

This study has limitations, which are primarily related to the scope of the research, and also include limitations with participant selection and language barriers. Due to the focused nature of this part of the study, only supply chain actors and institutional representatives connected to the coffee federation were selected to participate, based on their knowledge of the federation, and their marketing of coffee as 'Woman Grown'. This may have limited the perspectives of wider trends in the coffee industry and the global development agenda tied to agriculture. However, based on the focus of the qualitative study, this type of purposive sampling strategy was justified.

Language barriers also may have been a limitation as the research was conducted in both Spanish and English, based on the preference of the respondent. The primary investigator, a native English speaker, but fluent in Spanish, conducted all of the semi-structured interviews and translated and transcribed the audio recordings. In addition, the primary investigator also conducted direct translations of meeting observations for meetings conducted in Spanish, which may have also been limited by non-native fluency. In order to minimize misinterpretations related to translation, back-translations were conducted by a

neutral third party on samples of the data generated, whereby the final English translation was translated back into Spanish to confirm accuracy of understanding.

6   Conclusions

The overall purpose of this paper has been to understand the perspectives of global supply chain actors whose purchasing power and influence at the level of the international coffee value chain directly impacts the institutions that support coffee producers at origin. To achieve this purpose, the perspectives of supply chain stakeholders have been explored regarding the role of women's empowerment in agriculture and value the agricultural products created from women producers. These findings have highlighted ways in which actors and institutions further along the supply chain contribute to the multilevel process of gender transformative change within agricultural institutions. This shift in gender norms at various levels has been influenced by the gender norms and values of exporters, importers, retailers, and technical assistance organizations connected to the coffee industry, even extending to the perceived preferences and values of consumers. Supply chain reflections on the reality and slow evolution of women's roles in the coffee industry, and their experiential understanding of best practices for gender sensitization based on grassroots level observations are important insights that contribute to a better understanding of the role that institutions linked at multiple levels can play in closing the gender gap in agriculture and shaping gender norms more broadly.

This practical understanding of the importance of taking into account the socio-cultural context 'at origin' can inform the success of programs and policies aimed at supporting the process of gender transformative change that goes beyond superficial gender integration strategies. By tailoring gender sensitization to the local context, resources can be more effectively targeted to further enhance this process of change. For example, working with women separately at the outset of gender transformative programming may be critical, while simultaneously channeling resources into co-educational gender sensitization trainings. Further, the organizational setting presents a particularly powerful opportunity to initiate change, where concepts of gender equity can be reinforced not only in theory, but also in practice. This type of approach may lead to more than just superficial gender integration, and has the potential to result in the genuine integration of women into previously male-dominated organizations and the eventual percolation of society-wide shifts in gender norms, moving towards a more equitable society.

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