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The effect of reproductive health on women's economic empowerment

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"Reproductive Choices to Life Chances:
The Links between Contraception and Women's
Economic Empowerment"
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PopPov 2006-2016: Summary Findings

- Improvements in reproductive health do lead to improvements in women's economic empowerment.
- Expanding contraceptive use improves women's agency, education, and labor force participation.
- Higher maternal age at first birth (reducing adolescent childbearing) increases the likelihood of school completion and participation in the formal labor market.
- Longer birth intervals increase labor market participation, as does having fewer children.



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Women's Economic Empowerment



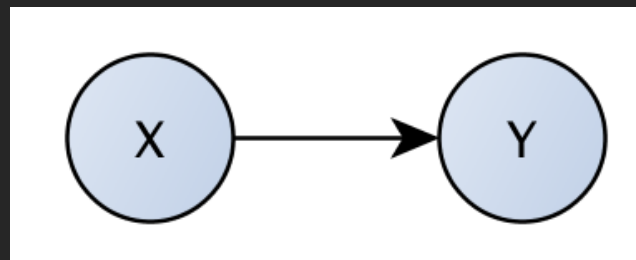
A woman is economically empowered when she has both the ability to succeed and advance economically and the power to make and act on economic decisions.



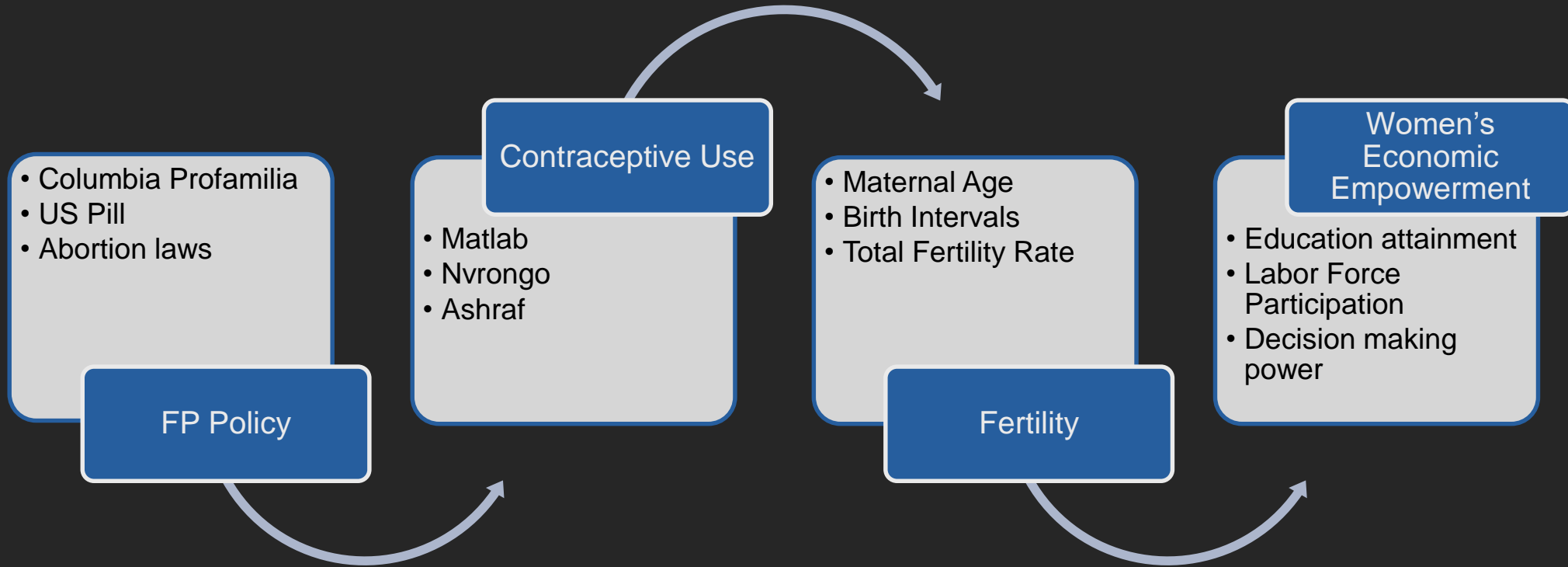
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Strategies for Causal Analysis

- Statistical methods to identify the causal effect of reproductive health improvements on women's economics empowerment
- Causal inference, as distinct from inference of association
- Instrumental variables, propensity score matching, natural experiments, quasi-experiments, randomized control trials



Evidence



Key points: PopPov Literature

- Expansion of Family Planning through national policies often impacts women's economic empowerment through delaying first birth (and increasing education)
- Delaying first birth can come with the implicit assumption that the gained time is used to accumulate capital (physical, human, social).
- Sometimes there are long-run impacts that do not contribute to WEE.
- The literature largely points to positive impact of RH improvements on WEE.

Conclusions



- Studies that go in the other direction
- Qualitative work (pathways but not effect)
- We have strong causal findings through PopPov research
- Ongoing studies (Canning/Malawi, McConnell/Kenya, Finlay/Burundi – RCTs)
- Recognition (but not necessarily funding) for researching long-term outcomes



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Thank you

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