

Assumptions and basic constructs of empowerment

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Women's empowerment: a means and an end

SDG 5: GENDER EQUALITY
The goal of SDG 5 is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

WHAT?

- 1 End discrimination against all women and girls
- 2 Eliminate violence against all women and girls
- 3 Eliminate all harmful practices such as child marriage
- 4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work
- 5 Ensure women's participation and leadership in decision-making
- 6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights

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Defining 'women's empowerment'

Capability of women for **self-determination**:

to take control over their own circumstances and to realize their aspirations in order to live a life they have reason to value

(Annas, 2003; Kabeer, 1999; Sen, 1990)





“I feel empowered when I can take decisions about the cattle I raise and can decide how to use the income from the cattle”

(Price at al 2018)

Why women's empowerment in livestock development?

Women are the majority of poor livestock keepers (FAO 2011)

Livestock and products as source of income

Livestock more easily controlled by women than other assets

Livestock key for women's empowerment



Women have limited control over livestock, farm, and agr. resources

With livestock intensification and commercialization women tend to lose control over livestock products and income

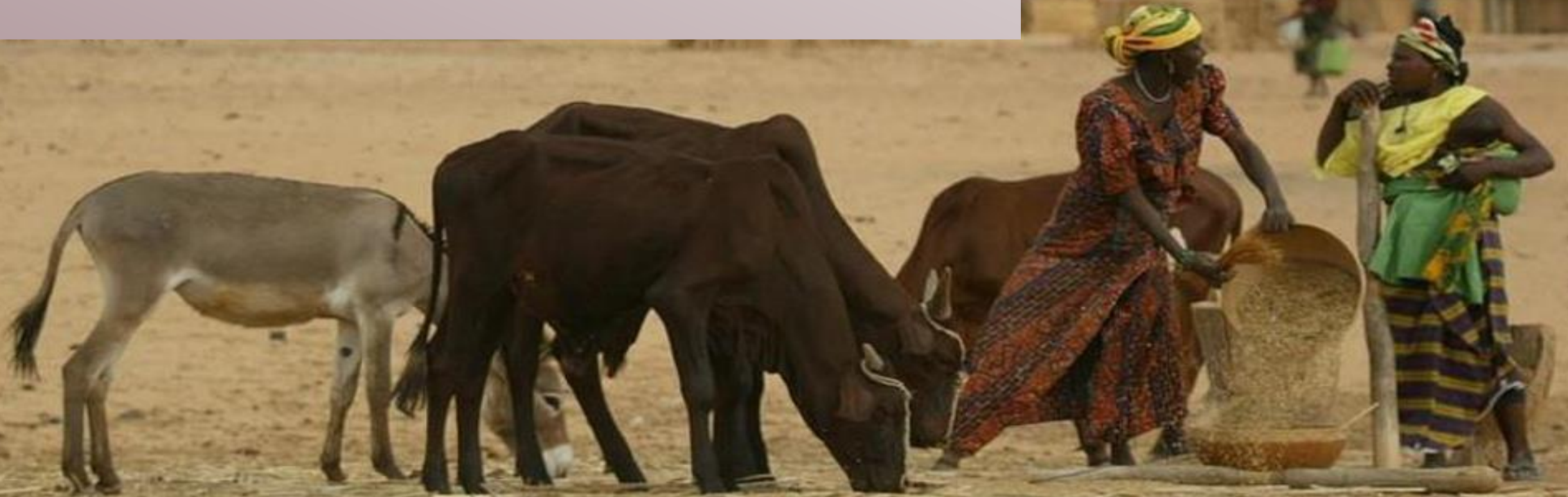
Gender-responsive livestock development for women's empowerment



How can we learn about the ways in which
livestock can enhance women's
empowerment?

The Women's empowerment in Livestock Index

A standardized measure to assess the empowerment of women in the livestock sector





WEI provides data on

Level of Empowerment of:

- a given woman
- a man in the same household
- women in a community
- What activities affect E. over time

Food for thought

1. Individual path to self-determination vs standard measure
2. Complexity of empowerment vis-à-vis 'one index number'
3. Absolute value of index n. or OR change for 1 person over time
4. Woman's empowerment vis-à-vis man's

Rethinking Empowerment: Power Through

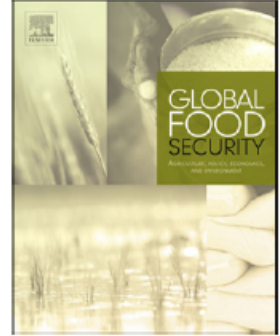


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Power through: A new concept in the empowerment discourse

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1. Introduction

Women's empowerment describes the capability of women for self-determination: to take control over their own circumstances and to realize their aspirations in order to live a life they have reason to value (Annas, 2003; Kabeer, 1999; Sen, 1990). The emphasis is on 'agency'

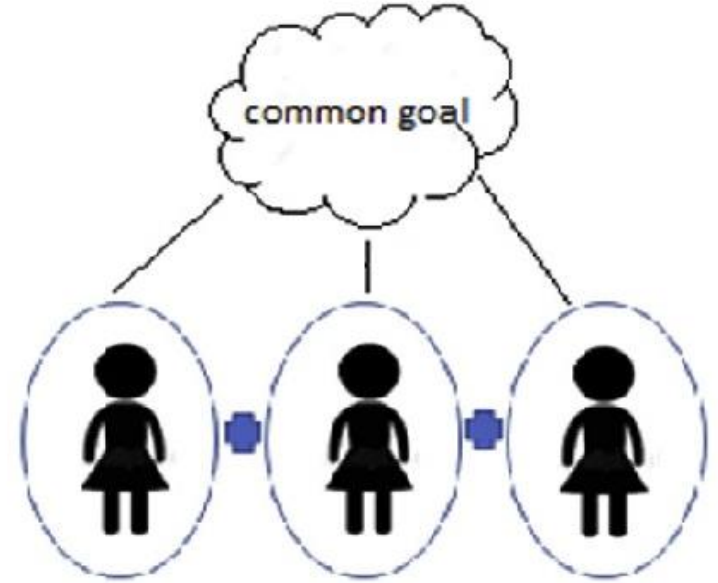
Social norms clearly play a role in determining 'the possible' when it comes to the choices women may decide to make and to enact. Social norms lie outside the immediate control (or agency) of individuals and can greatly influence individual choice. Stewart, 2013 argues that no one can experience complete autonomy: alongside political and economic constraints, their choices are heavily influenced by underlying

Four common definitions of power...

Power within



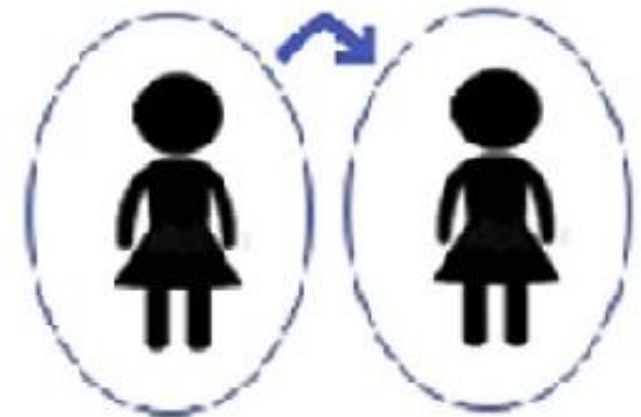
Power with



Power to



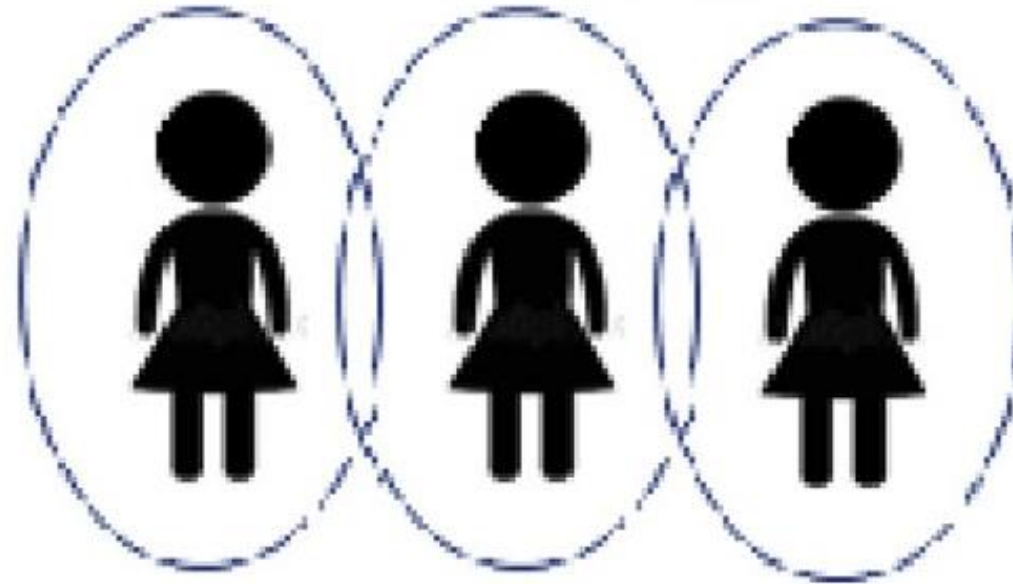
Power over



Power through

relational

involuntary



➔ precondition
for dis/empowerment

Power through...

Empowerment mediated by:

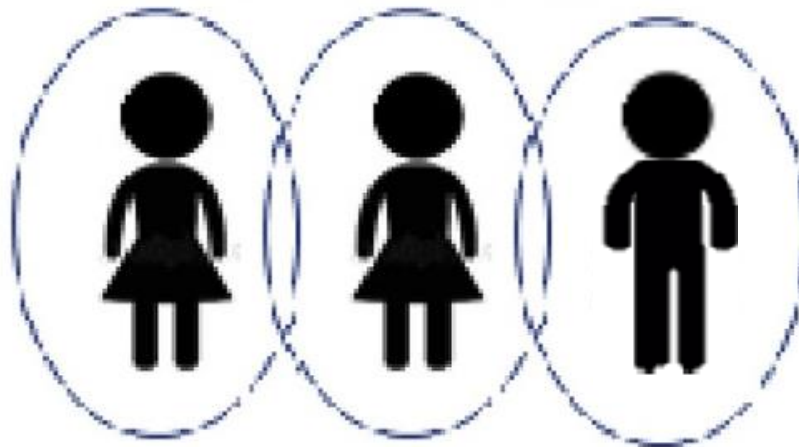
1. the empowerment status of associated others



Maha: “when my sister became a teacher, the whole village looked at me with admiration”

Key message 1

Empowerment of individual women is partly **involuntary** and **constituted through the empowerment of significant people - associated with them**



Power through...

Empowerment mediated by:

1. the empowerment status of associated others

2. personal characteristics vis-à-vis gender norms

“A self-confident but disrespectful wife cannot be an empowered woman”



Key message 2

‘Empowerment is affected by a complex interplay between **individual characteristics** of empowerment and the compatibility of these characteristics with **locally sanctioned social roles**’

Power through...

Empowerment mediated by:

1. the empowerment status of associated others
2. personal characteristics vis-à-vis gender norms

3. normative judgment by community

Fatma: “When I started selling the chicken, I started making money and felt empowered. But the village was not happy. My husband left us”



Key message 3

‘An individual is accorded an ‘empowered’ or ‘disempowered’ status

through the **assessment by community members** of

an individual's performance of gender roles vis-à-vis locally valid gender norms’



Concluding remarks

1. Women's empowerment needs to be situated within gender dynamics/norms
2. Empowerment IS NOT a zero-sum game because 'individual empowerment' is mediated by the 'empowerment of significant others'
3. 'Individual empowerment' is affected by personal characteristics and local norms
4. Empowerment depends on how individuals, hhs, community interpret change
5. Empowering women purposefully remains critical. Empowering men as a means to empower women simply will not work.

Some roles of qualitative analysis

1. Explore lived experiences of empowerment processes:
 - a) Local gender dynamics and norms
 - b) Do they actually feel empowered? Why and how

2. Dig deeper when qualitative and quantitative findings clash
 - a) Increased labour = increased empowerment? Why?
 - b) Women's empowerment = more food security? How?

3. Explore how and whys of quant findings
 - a) Knowledge of vaccines = women's empowerment?! How?
 - b) Women's empowerment = knowledge of vaccines?!