



**OPHI Working Paper Series**

# **Agency & Empowerment: A proposal for internationally comparable indicators**

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## Summary of the Paper and Proposed Indicators:

**What are Agency and Empowerment?** Amartya Sen (1985b) defines human agency as ‘what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important’<sup>2</sup>. More simply, an agent is “someone who acts and brings about change.”<sup>3</sup> The opposite of a person with agency is someone who is coerced, oppressed, or passive. Agency recurs as a variable that is of intrinsic and instrumental importance to impoverished communities. **Empowerment** has many definitions (this paper lists 33), which fall into three categories for measurement purposes: Fundamentally, empowerment is an **expansion of agency**. In addition, to exert agency effectively requires attention to the **institutional environment**; some measures focus on this. Empowerment is sometimes measured by identifying **processes** or causes of empowerment and measuring these - for example an expansion of economic resources or assets, democracy, or participation. However these measures, being drawn from others, are quite imprecise. We focus on the first, and include papers on the second.

The most common measures of agency in large-scale surveys are control over income and household decision-making; both are usually used for women. No other potentially internationally comparable indicators are commonly implemented.

Our aim is to propose a small, robust, internationally comparable list of indicators of agency and empowerment that can address key research questions. Tables 1 to 9 at the end of the full paper present the most commonly used indicators used to measure agency and empowerment either directly or indirectly. Building on a growing body of empirical research, this paper proposes the ‘short list’ of empowerment indicators and explains the reason for the selection of each indicator. In brief, we use an elaboration of the **household decision-making** question that identifies who makes decisions about different areas of the household life and whether the respondent could if he or she chose. To measure the extent to which people feel themselves to be coerced, and/or acting on their own initiative, the paper proposes, uniquely, **autonomy** indicators from psychology that have been tested across cultures and recently in poor communities. The other indicators of **political empowerment** and **access to credit** acknowledge institutional contributions. All questions have strengths and weaknesses that the paper discusses.

The following criteria were used to choose suitable indicators for the inclusion in individual or household surveys. First, the indicators need to be *internationally comparable*. This is particularly important as there is a gap in the literature on comparative empowerment studies<sup>4</sup>. Secondly, the indicators need to assess not only the instrumental but also the *intrinsic* aspects of agency and empowerment. Third, as empowerment is a process, it is essential to select indicators that would be able to identify *changes in empowerment levels* over time. Fourth, the choice of the indicators’ short-list draws on *experience with particular indicators* to date, i.e. how frequently these indicators have been previously fielded and found to be ‘adequate’ measures of empowerment for research purposes. It goes without saying that the indicators need to be scrutinized on standard conditions of accuracy, validity, and reliability.

Based on these criteria this paper proposes a set of indicators of empowerment relating to these four topics:

- 1: *Household Decision-Making in different domains*
- 2: *Domain-specific Autonomy (robust psychological questions from Ryan and Deci)*
- 3: *Political Empowerment*
- 4: *Access to Credit*

If these are too long, we would propose the first three as a shorter core of questions. The proposed survey questions follow on the next page.

<sup>2</sup> Sen (1985b) p. 206. For other descriptions of agency see: Drèze and Sen (1989), Drèze and Sen (2002), Sen (1982), Sen (1985a), Sen (1987), Sen (1988a), Sen (1988b), Sen (1989), Sen (1992), Sen (1993a), Sen (1994), Sen (1999a), Sen (1999c), Sen (2002b), Sen (2005)

<sup>3</sup> Sen (1999b): 19

<sup>4</sup> Malhotra, Boender and Schuler 2002

**Household Decision Making and Autonomy**

	<i>Household Decision-Making</i>	<i>Autonomy</i>			
When decisions are made regarding the following aspects of household life, who is it that normally takes the decision?	1 Respondent 2 Spouse 3 Respondent & Spouse Jointly 4 Someone else 5 Jointly with someone else 6 Other <i>[Specify and add code: _____] if _____</i> <i>1, go to column 2; if not 1, skip to column 3.</i>	<i>If the answer on left is not 1:</i> To what degree do you <i>feel</i> you can make your own personal decisions regarding these issues if you want to?  1 To a very high degree 2 To a fairly high degree 3 To a small degree 4 Not at all	I am now going to ask you to tell me how accurate are three statements. Each can be somewhat true, or only one or two can be true.  To what extent do you feel that your decisions or your actions in _____ <i>[name the domain from the left hand column]</i> are motivated by a desire to avoid punishment or to gain reward?	To what extent do you feel that your decisions or your actions in _____ <i>[name the domain from the left hand column]</i> are motivated by a desire to avoid blame, or so that other people speak well of you?	To what extent do you feel that your decisions or your actions in _____ <i>[name the domain from the left hand column]</i> are motivated by and reflect your own values and/or interests?
Minor Household Expenditure					
Major Household purchases					
Young People's Education					
Political Decisions <sup>5</sup>					
Marriage Choices					
Religious Beliefs <sup>6</sup>					
Health Care for family members					
Work and Employment					

<sup>5</sup> \*Political Decisions: voting, party affiliation, campaigning, and standing for election;

<sup>6</sup> +Religious beliefs: going to temple/place of worship, praying at home, fasting, festivals

**Political Empowerment**

1. Have you ever been dissatisfied with the way that your elected representatives/ **local authorities**<sup>7</sup> behave?<sup>8</sup>

- 1 Most of the time
- 2 Some of the time
- 3 Rarely
- 4 Never
- 5 Would rather not say
- 6 Don't know

[If possible, specify reason and add code: \_\_\_\_\_]

Local	Regional	National
<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>

2. Are there ways of holding **them** accountable?<sup>9</sup>

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Would rather not say

[If possible, specify reason and add code: \_\_\_\_\_]

Local	Regional	National
<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>

3. If yes, have you ever used these?<sup>10</sup>

- 1 Often
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Never [Go to question 5]
- 4 Would rather not say [Go to question 5]

[If possible, specify reason and add code: \_\_\_\_\_]

Local	Regional	National
<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>

4. If yes, did they work?<sup>11</sup>

- 1 Yes
- 2 Some impact
- 3 Little impact
- 4 No impact
- 5 Would rather not say

[If possible, specify reason and add code: \_\_\_\_\_]

Local	Regional	National
<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>

<sup>7</sup> This category has been modified for countries who do not have elected representatives

<sup>8</sup> Alsop et al (2006): 324

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.: 324

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.: 325

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.: 325



## Introduction

In a village in Venganoor, Kerala, impoverished women earn a livelihood by breaking rocks into smaller rocks which can then be used for construction purposes. Their village lies geographically near to the popular tourist beach of Kovalam, but the lives they lead are very distant from those of reclining tourists. When a women's savings and loan organisation began to work in the area, these village women deeply valued a new-found set of skills and confidence that might be called a kind of empowerment. Describing their situation in 2006 they said, *'we have greater real 'swathanbreyam' (freedom). When we used to go to any bank or office, we were afraid. We did not know what to say or how to behave...but now we do. We can talk to anyone in malayalam and can say yes or no in English.'*

One might suspect that these women are not alone in valuing their enhanced freedom to take action in one or more spheres of life. Amartya Sen observes that poor people regularly value 'unrestrained participation in political and social activities'<sup>15</sup> and lament its absence. For example, when Indira Gandhi called a state of emergency to suppress rights this was rejected by Indian citizens – who form one of the poorest electorates in the world. Parallel situations in which poor people defended their ability to be agents and use democratic freedoms can be observed, Sen argues, in South Korea, Thailand, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Myanmar (Burma). Concern for people's agency plays a central role in Sen's human development and capability approach: 'Greater freedom enhances the ability of people to help themselves, and also to influence the world, and these matters are central to the process of development'<sup>16</sup>

This case for empowerment is strengthened by sources that draw on poor people's own perceptions of their situation. Although any individual or small group qualitative findings need to be viewed in relation to representative sources of data, the value of being able to take action is regularly articulated. For example, a participant in the *Voices of the Poor* from El Mataria, Egypt explained the importance of helping one another – as so many people do across the globe: *'Whenever there is a crisis, the fishermen help each other by collecting money for the person needing help.'*<sup>17</sup> In Ghana, a poor person said: *'you know good but you cannot do good. That is such a person knows what should be done but has not got the means'*<sup>18</sup>. A woman from the community of Borborema Brazil argued *'the rich one is someone who says, 'I am going to do it' and does it'*<sup>19</sup>. Leticia from Ecuador explained how her ability to participate in decision-making in the household rendered her empowered: *'my opportunity is that I have free space, to decide for myself, no longer dependent on others. For me, this is a source of pride, my husband asking me [my advice]... now there isn't this machismo...there is mutual respect...together we decide'*<sup>20</sup>.

What is also evident from the examples above is that agency or empowerment can be applied to different tasks – the ability to have a conversation in the bank; the ability to help others, the ability to make decisions in one's family, or a general ability to plan effectively. In the language that we will be using, agency and empowerment can be described and measured

<sup>15</sup> Sen (1999b): 152

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.: 18-19

<sup>17</sup> Narayan et al (2000b)

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.: 32

<sup>19</sup> Narayan et al Ibid.: 28

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.: 132

with respect to different domains of life. For this reason we will argue that measures of agency and empowerment should likewise be *domain-specific*.<sup>21</sup> Different kinds of empowerment may be, however, interconnected with, and instrumental to, a number of other positive changes, and a research agenda that focuses on these might be of considerable value.

This paper investigates and proposes a small set of indicators of empowerment that could be added to individual or household surveys to generate internationally comparable data. In order to select conceptually and technically valid indicators, it first considers, briefly, the different *definitions of empowerment* in the literature, and clarifies how the terms will be used. Second, it investigates various *possible research hypotheses* regarding the instrumental value of empowerment: how might ‘empowering people’ be an effective investment in health, education, equity, or governance? This is necessary in order to envision the research questions with respect to which empowerment data at the household level might be analysed. Third, it proposes a very small number of *survey questions* for regular inclusion in household surveys. The questions are not new; they have already been used – albeit the autonomy indicator has been used extensively in psychology rather than development studies. Further, the ensuing data has been sufficiently robust to contribute to various analyses, a list of which is provided. Although not considering entirely new indicators limits the potential innovation of the indicators proposed, it also means that the proposition is feasible and realistic for use given the time and training constraints under which such data are collected.

## Section 1: Empowerment: Concept and Definitions

The concept of empowerment has been used repeatedly. It is not a new concept, and is related to other terms such as agency, autonomy, self-direction, self-determination, liberation, participation, mobilization, and self-confidence<sup>22</sup>. It is also a debated term, which has been ascribed a wide variety of definitions and meanings in various socio-economic contexts<sup>23</sup>. This section will review some of the common definitions of this concept and identify their commonalities as well as areas of divergence. The table below lists 33 of the many definitions of empowerment in current use.

### Definitions of Empowerment

Study	Definition or Concept of Empowerment
Albertyn (2001)	Effective empowerment must occur at each of 3 levels: micro (attitude, feelings and skills), interface (participation and action immediately around the individual) and macro (beliefs, action and effects)
Alkire 2005	Empowerment is an increase in certain kinds of agency that are deemed particularly instrumental to the situation at hand. Thus I am choosing to assume that empowerment is a subset of agency, and that increases in empowerment would be reflected in increased agency (but not necessarily vice versa) <sup>24</sup>
Alsop 2006	Empowerment is defined as a group’s or individual’s capacity to make effective choices, that is, to make choices and then to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes <sup>25</sup> .
Appleyard 2002	Empowering people to make their own decisions, rather than be passive objects of choices made on their behalf. It focuses on empowering all people to claim their right to opportunities and services

<sup>21</sup> Alkire (2005), Alkire (2007 (forthcoming))

<sup>22</sup> Narayan (2005): 3

<sup>23</sup> Malhotra et al (2002): 17

<sup>24</sup> Alkire (2005): 4

<sup>25</sup> Alsop et al (2006): 10

	made available through pro-poor development (Bartlett, 2004, 54)
Bartle, Phil (2003).	Having the capacity to do things that community members want to do and going beyond political or legal permission to participate in the national political system
Bennet 2002	<i>Empowerment</i> is used to characterize approaches based on <i>social mobilization</i> . A key element in most social mobilization approaches is helping poor and socially excluded individuals realize the power they gain from collective action. Often social mobilization approaches work “from below” to create voice and demand for change among diverse groups of poor and socially excluded citizens (Bartlett, 2004, 54)
Brown (2003)	Providing empowerment opportunities as Necessary prerequisites to altering a person’s potential reality and giving people the means to better themselves
Chambers (1993)	Empowerment means that people, especially poorer people, are enabled to take more control over their lives, and secure a better livelihood with ownership and control of productive assets as one key element. Decentralization and empowerment enable local people to exploit the diverse complexities of their own conditions, and to adapt to rapid change. (Bartlett, 2004, 55)
Craig and Mayo 1995	Empowerment is about collective community, and ultimately class conscientization, to critically understand reality in order to use the power which even the powerless do possess, so as to challenge the powerful and ultimately to transform the reality through conscious political struggles (cited Oakley 2001, 4)
Friedmann 1992	An alternative development involves a process of social and political empowerment whose long term objective is to rebalance the structure of power within society by make state action more accountable, strengthening the powers of civil society in the management of their own affairs and making corporate business more socially responsible (cited in Oakley 2001, 3)
Gootaert 2005	Empowerment falls in three categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- making state institutions more responsive to poor people</li> <li>- removing social barriers</li> <li>- building social institutions and social capital<sup>26</sup></li> </ul>
Grootaert (2003)	Expanding assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives
Jackson 1994	The process by which people, organizations or groups who are powerless (a) becomes aware of the power dynamics at work in their life context, (b) develop the skills and capacity for gaining some reasonable control over their lives, (c) exercise their control without infringing upon the right of others and (d) support the empowerment of others in the community (cited in Rowlands, 1997, 15)
Kabeer (2001)	Empowerment ... refers to the expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them. (Bartlett, 2004, 57)
Lokshin and Ravallion (2003)	Taking actions that selectively empower those with little power to redress power inequality
Malena (2003)	Enabling or giving power to (whom) to do (what)
Malhotra (2002)	Enhancing assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to engage, influence, and hold accountable the institutions that affect them
Mayoux 2000; DFID	Women’s empowerment is defined as ‘individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercise choice, and to fulfill their potential has fallen equally to members of society’ <sup>27</sup>
McMillan, et al. (1995)	Gaining influence over events and outcomes of importance
Moser (2003)	Expanding assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives
Moser 1991	While the empowerment approach acknowledges the importance for women of increasing their power, it seeks to identify power less in terms of domination over others and more in terms of the capacity of women to increase their self-reliance and internal strength. This is identified as the right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change, though ability to gain control over crucial material and non-material sources. It places less emphasis than the equity approach on increasing women’s status relative to men, but seeks to empower women through the redistribution of power within, as well as between, societies ( cited in Oakley, 2001, 4)
Narayan 2005	The expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives <sup>28</sup> .
Oppenheim Mason and Smith (2003)	Extent to which some categories of people are able to control their own destinies even when their interests are opposed by others with whom they interact

<sup>26</sup> Grootaert (2005): 310

<sup>27</sup> Mayoux (2000a): 4

<sup>28</sup> Narayan (2002): vi ; Narayan (2005): 5

Oxaal and Baden 1997	Empowerment cannot be defined in terms of specific activities or end results because it involves a process whereby women can freely analyse, develop and voice their needs and interests, without them being pre-defined, or imposed from above, by planners or other social actors <sup>29</sup>
Oxfam 1995	Empowerment involves challenging the forms of oppression which compel millions of people to play a part in their society on terms which are inequitable, or in ways which deny their human rights (Oxfam, 1995) in (Oxaal and Baden 1997, 2).
Rowlands 1997	'Empowerment is more than participation in decision-making; it must also include the processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions.' <sup>30</sup>
Spreitzer (1995)	Intrapersonal empowerment as the component of psychological empowerment that deals with cognitive elements. Other components are interactional (thinking about and relating to the environment) and behavioral (taking action and engaging issues)
Strandburg	Empowerment can overall be defined as all those processes where women take control and ownership of their lives. Control and ownership requires an array of opportunities to choose among and this understanding of empowerment overlaps with the concept of human development when defined as "a process of enlarging people's choices". Both concepts describe processes, but where human development entails enlarging choices, empowerment is the process of acquiring the ability to choose among these enlarged choices... (Bartlett, 2004, 59)
Van Eyken 1991	Empowerment is an intentional and ongoing dynamic process centered on the local community, involving mutual dignity, critical reflection, caring and group participation, through which people lacking a valid share of resources gain greater access to and control over those resources, though the exercise of an increased leverage of power (cited in Oakley 2001, 16)
WDR 2000/2001	Empowerment as the process of 'enhancing the capacity of poor people to influence the state institutions that affect their lives, by strengthening their participation in political processes and local decision-making. And it means removing the barriers- political, legal and social- that work against particular groups and building the assets of poor people to enable them to engage effectively in markets' <sup>31</sup> .

There are various ways that empowerment and agency might be understood. The discussion can be grouped into three categories. First, empowerment might be thought of, most directly and most narrowly, as an expansion of agency – the ability to act on behalf of what you value and have reason to value.<sup>32</sup> The focus is on the person – providing them the skills, confidence, self-respect, and information to be an agent of change. Second, empowerment is often defined, more widely, to include the institutional environment which offers people the opportunity to exert agency fruitfully – whether credit markets exist and so on. Third, empowerment may be characterized by a process which, it is assumed, is instrumental to agency – for example an expansion of economic resources. Of course these are not mutually exclusive; the shift is one of emphasis. Further, clearly a process of empowerment is incomplete unless it attends to the people's abilities to act, the institutional structure, and the various non-institutional changes that are instrumental to increased agency. However the definitional question is to what extent institutional arrangements are considered part of empowerment and need to be measured as such. We take these broad categories of definitions in turn.

***Empowerment: An expansion of agency.*** Sen (1985b) defines human agency as 'what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important'<sup>33</sup>. More simply, an agent is "someone who acts and brings about change."<sup>34</sup> The

<sup>29</sup> Oxaal and Baden (1997): 6

<sup>30</sup> Rowlands (1997): 14

<sup>31</sup> World Bank (2001): 39

<sup>32</sup> Malhotra (2003): 3

<sup>33</sup> Sen (1985b) p. 206. For other descriptions of agency see: Drèze and Sen (1989), Drèze and Sen (2002), Sen (1982), Sen (1985a), Sen (1987), Sen (1988a), Sen (1988b), Sen (1989), Sen (1992), Sen (1993a), Sen (1994), Sen (1999a), Sen (1999c), Sen (2002b), Sen (2005)

opposite of a person with agency is someone who is coerced, oppressed, or passive. Malhotra (2003) explains that ‘among the various concepts and terms we encountered in the literature on empowerment, ‘agency’ probably comes closest to capturing what the majority of writers are referring to.’ Kabeer (2001) describes agency as related to the ability of an individual to set his own goals and act upon them. The process involves bargaining and negotiation as well as resistance and manipulation<sup>35</sup>. Empowerment and agency are interlinked as they are both concerned with self-efficacy, i.e. people’s authentic self-determination ‘to effect change in themselves and their situations through their own efforts’ despite external constraints<sup>36</sup>. Agency may be influenced by people’s individual (material, human, social and psychological) and collective (voice, organization, representation and identity) assets and capabilities<sup>37</sup>.

For measurement purposes it is necessary to observe that even defined this way, empowerment and agency constitute part of the freedom a person has to enjoy other dimensions such as friendship, work and health<sup>38</sup>. For that reason, this paper will usually consider empowerment and agency with respect to different domains of action rather than as a dimension a person enjoys separately from them all. One can be empowered as a professional doctor who has the respect of colleagues, but disempowered as a wife because the husband makes decisions, empowered as a voting citizen who can choose for whom she votes, disempowered in relation to education decisions for children because her ethnic group cannot attend decent schools, empowered in cultural and religious activities where she acts as a lead singer, and so on. Like empowerment, agency can be constrained by economic scarcity or a domineering family member. Increasing agency may have positive ‘spillover’ effects on agency in other domains, and perhaps also on other aspects of well-being<sup>39</sup> - but it also may not.

***Empowerment: the preconditions to exert effective agency.*** Other definitions of empowerment have tended to focus not only upon the person’s freedom to act (although this is retained), but also upon the *institutional* structure, and upon the likelihood that if people *do* act as agents, they are likely to *achieve* the outcomes they desire and be pleased by those outcomes. That is, empowerment holds in view both the persons and the surrounding institutions, and searches for an increased ability in people to influence those institutions. A widely cited definition of empowerment of this kind is that of the *World Development Report* 2000/20001, which views empowerment as the process of ‘enhancing the capacity of poor people to influence the state institutions that affect their lives, by strengthening their participation in political processes and local decision-making. And it means removing the barriers- political, legal and social- that work against particular groups and building the assets of poor people to enable them to engage effectively in markets’<sup>40</sup>. Narayan (2002) and Narayan (2005) introduce, further, not only the actions of poor people but also their assets and skills. Narayan defines empowerment as ‘the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor

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<sup>34</sup> Sen (1999b): 19

<sup>35</sup> Kabeer (1999): 438 cited in Mosedale (2003): 16

<sup>36</sup> Bandura 1989: 1175 cited in Alkire (2005): 237

<sup>37</sup> Narayan (2005): 5-6

<sup>38</sup> Alkire (2005): 224-225

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.: 226

<sup>40</sup> World Bank (2001): 39

people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives'<sup>41</sup>. The 2002 report stresses four main elements of empowerment: access to information, inclusion and participation, accountability as well as local organizational capacity<sup>42</sup>.

Alsop et al (2006) argues that 'agency cannot be treated as synonymous with empowerment'<sup>43</sup>. In her account, people might have the agency to undertake actions or make choices; however, they are constrained through the 'opportunity structure', i.e. the institutional context in which they live. This is why the exercise of human agency requires a 'change in the rules of the game', i.e. the formal and informal institutions that impact the effectiveness of human agency<sup>44</sup>. The opportunity structure also refers to the institutional climate (information, inclusion/participation, accountability, local organizational capacity) and the social and political structures (openness, competition and conflict)<sup>45</sup>. The opportunity structure is affected by three main influences: the permeability of the state; the extent of elite fragmentation and the state's implementation capacity<sup>46</sup>. An effective exercise of agency entails the overcoming of significant institutional and informal obstacles, including those mentioned above, as well as the domination of existing elite groups or of unresponsive public programmes<sup>47</sup>. Alsop et al (2006) defines empowerment as a 'group's or individual's capacity to make effective choices, that is, to make choices and then to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes'<sup>48</sup>.

Other authors draw attention to additional intervening variables, such as information, mobilization, ownership, or moral collective action. Khwaja (2005) argues that any 'workable' definition of empowerment needs to include two main aspects: influence and information. The former refers to some activity or event and the latter refers to the provision of and access to information by the empowered agent. He argues that information is important to allow people to express their preferences and gain information from outside, while influence is needed for them to have an effective impact on particular decisions<sup>49</sup>. Bennett (2002) argues that empowerment is mainly based on social mobilization that gives people voice and allows them to demand change.<sup>50</sup> Viewing empowerment as a bottom-up process, Chambers (1993) describes it as the process that gives the poor control over their lives as well as ownership of productive assets to secure a better livelihood<sup>51</sup>. Friedman (1992) defines empowerment as a bottom-up process originates from territory-based social formations, moral relations and the involvement of individuals in socially and politically relevant actions<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> Narayan (2002): vi; Narayan (2005): 5

<sup>42</sup> Narayan (2002): vi-vii

<sup>43</sup> Alsop et al (2006): 10

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.: 11

<sup>45</sup> Narayan (2005): 5-6.

<sup>46</sup> Petesch et al (2005): 45-49

<sup>47</sup> Smulovitz and Walton (2003): 2

<sup>48</sup> Alsop et al (2006): 10

<sup>49</sup> Khwaja (2005): 273-274

<sup>50</sup> Bennett (2002) cited in Bartlett (2004): 54

<sup>51</sup> Chambers 2003 cited in Bartlett (2004): 54

<sup>52</sup> Friedmann (1992): 33

Other definitions focus on moral aspects, such as fulfillment, human rights, the removal of oppression and injustice. A DFID document on women's empowerment describes it as a means for individuals to acquire 'the power to think and act freely, exercise choice, and to fulfil their potential as full and equal members of society'.<sup>53</sup> Thus some argue that empowerment is an essential precondition for poverty reduction and the protection of basic human rights<sup>54</sup>. An Oxfam paper defines empowerment as the removal of oppression and inequalities. It is therefore a process through which people 'can freely analyze, develop and voice their needs and interests'<sup>55</sup>. Mosedale (2003) identifies four main aspects present in any definition of (women's) empowerment. First, that the person has been disempowered; secondly, that the empowerment process has to be intrinsic not imposed by a third party; thirdly, that empowerment allows people to make decisions that matter to their lives and enables them to implement these decisions; finally, it is an ongoing process rather than simply an end product<sup>56</sup>.

It is clear from this swift review of the second category of empowerment definitions that authors stress different aspects of empowerment, and that the definitions are not always compatible. Many definitions do emphasize choice, participation, control, influence, ownership, or voice as well as overcoming any form of oppression and inequality.

### ***Empowerment: Process Aspects***

In addition to different definitions, authors stress different processes that generate an increase in empowerment, such as *power, democratization, economic abilities, self-esteem and agency*.

#### *Power*

While differing on the exact definition of empowerment, there seems to be consensus that 'power' is a central concept for *empowerment*<sup>57</sup>. Empowerment is about 'the extent to which some categories of people are able to control their own destinies, even when their interests are opposed by those of the other people with whom they interact'<sup>58</sup>. Rowlands (1997) argued that no definition of empowerment is complete without recognizing the need for a change in the distribution of power relations. She argues that empowerment is more than participation. It involves various 'processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions'<sup>59</sup>. She introduces her famous categorizations of power: power over (ability to resist manipulation), power to (creating new possibilities), power with (acting in a group) and power from within (enhancing self-respect and self-acceptance).<sup>60</sup> Oakley (2001) also differentiates between two 'types' of power: power to cause radical change versus power- in a Freirian sense as the ability to do and to gain control. Uphoff (2005) distinguishes between 'power resources', i.e. the accumulated, invested and exchanged assets

<sup>53</sup> Mayoux (2000b)

<sup>54</sup> Mayoux (2000a): 2

<sup>55</sup> Oxfam (1995) cited in Oxaal and Baden (1997): 2

<sup>56</sup> Mosedale (2003): 3

<sup>57</sup> Oakley (2001): 13; Bartlett (2004): 8; see Uphoff (2005) for a detailed discussion of the concept of power and its relation to empowerment.

<sup>58</sup> Mason and Smith (2003): 1

<sup>59</sup> Rowlands (1997): 14

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.: 13

and the ‘power results’, i.e. the activities that are achieved by using these resources<sup>61</sup>. Any empowerment process therefore needs not only to provide access to these ‘resources’, but also to allow people to effectively use them to gain more ‘power’. Empowerment can have an impact on three main areas: (1) confidence in one’s ability to undertake certain actions, (2) relations between people and institutions; (3) access to economic resources<sup>62</sup>. It is important to note, that power can therefore be either ‘variable-sum’ or ‘zero-sum’. The former refers to a process through which the ‘powerless can be empowered without altering the nature and the levels of power already held by existing powerful groups’; the latter argues that ‘any gain in power by one group inevitably results in a reduction of the power exercised by others’<sup>63</sup>. Oakley (2001) explains that evidence from different efforts to ‘empower’ people confirmed the former view<sup>64</sup>. It thus follows that any process of empowerment challenges and changes the existing power relations. Poverty can therefore be perceived a ‘disempowering’ phenomenon that denies poor households the social power to improve their own conditions<sup>65</sup>. This is why any poverty reduction effort needs to challenge unequal power relations and help the poor regain the power to enhance their living conditions.

### *Participation and Democratization*

In the literature, empowerment has been related to other aspects of development such as participation, democratization, capacity-building, agency and autonomy. Oakley (2001) explains that empowerment and participation are closely linked in practice. At the project level, empowerment can sometimes be defined as the participation of local people in a specific project<sup>66</sup>. The UNDP’s *Human Development Report* (1995) argues that people need to fully participate in decisions and processes that shape their lives, thus it is participation that generates empowerment. Empowerment in the political domain is also related to democratization and political participation as it is concerned not only with ‘people’, but also with the strengthening of grassroots and civil society organizations. It is also about promoting the participation of marginalized social groups in national and local politics<sup>67</sup>.

### *Economic Enhancement and Poverty Reduction*

Many scholars also emphasize the role of ‘economic improvement’ for empowerment – or empowerment in the economic domain. To empower does not only mean to promote participation, democratization and capacity building, but also to provide access to essential economic resources and improve people’s opportunities to gain better income. This is why a number of studies focused on the role of micro-credit in empowering marginalized social groups, especially women<sup>68</sup>.

### *Self-Confidence and Self-Esteem*

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<sup>61</sup> Uphoff (2003): 6; Uphoff (2005): 224-225

<sup>62</sup> Oakley (2001): 13-17. See also Oakley (2001): 59ff for an extensive review of previous attempts to define empowerment.

<sup>63</sup> Oakley (2001): 15

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.: 15

<sup>65</sup> Friedmann (1992): 66

<sup>66</sup> Oakley (2001): 43

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.: 43; Oxaal and Baden (1997): 14

<sup>68</sup> Malhotra et al (2002); Mayoux (2000a); Oxaal and Baden (1997)

Finally, another central aspect of empowerment relates to the more internal or psychological domain. It is the process of ‘self-scrutiny’ that the individual undergoes and that gives him/her confidence to expand his/her horizons and break his/her exclusion<sup>69</sup>. Others have argued that the empowerment process is incomplete without effective participation, economic enhancement and building of organizational capacity at the individual and collective levels<sup>70</sup>. More recently, the World Bank also examined how poor people move out of poverty. In a global study across 10-15 countries, it explores the mobility out of poverty, its causes, its relationship to different growth levels, as well as any gender differences that affect this process. Using qualitative and quantitative data, the aim of this study is to identify the different factors that lead to a successful transition ‘out of poverty’ and to link these economic, social and political factors to the mobility process<sup>71</sup>. For the sake of this analysis, this process of ‘moving out of poverty’ can also be considered as an ‘empowering process’.

Clearly the measurement task for a wide concept of empowerment that includes agency, assets, institutional structures, social political structures, and local elites is quite significant. Indeed it is too broad for the limited scope of the indicators this paper is able to propose. Further, some of these indicators are already collected in household surveys.<sup>72</sup> Others are appropriate for collection at other levels of analysis.

For the purposes of this paper, the set of indicators that we do propose are mainly focused on domain-specific agency. The questions on household decision-making and autonomy reflect this focus. But as a great deal of the literature stresses the role of institutions, we wished to develop a shortlist that would acknowledge alternative approaches and concepts. The difficulty with questions of is their potential incomparability. In the end, the proposed shortlist contains two sections – one on political accountability, and one on access to credit – that have been used extensively. These are also subject to the valid criticism that the same responses in different contexts may not actually reflect the same levels of empowerment. Yet in some senses, this need for careful analysis and reflection on the potential strengths and distortions of these measures, as we shall see, holds for all of the variables in this domain, so we present a shortlist not as a final response but as a starting-place for discussion and improvement. The proposed indicators will be explained, and their strengths and weaknesses discussed, in section 3.

## Section 2: Claims, Hypotheses, and Research Questions

Empowerment is often argued to be instrumentally powerful for achieving other capabilities. Groups have claimed that it can lead to positive development outcomes, such as improved incomes and assets for the poor, better local and national governance, more inclusive social services, more equitable access to markets, better access to justice and legal aid as well as stronger civil society and strengthened poor people’s organizations.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Oakley (2001): 43-44

<sup>70</sup> Luttrell et al (2007)

<sup>71</sup> Narayan (2006)

<sup>72</sup> Alkire (2007 (forthcoming))

<sup>73</sup> Narayan (2005): 7

As is natural for any relatively new term, often these claims have been put forward without the benefit of a large and well-established body of empirical research. The data that would be generated by the survey questions we propose would, it is hoped, contribute to improving our understanding of interconnections between variables (empowerment, income, governance, health and nutrition outcomes etc) in different contexts, and on their durability across time.

In order to clarify the research questions that empowerment data might be used to engage, this section will briefly acknowledge some hypotheses and claims regarding the instrumental efficacy of empowerment available in the literature. It does so without either supporting or refuting the claims. The focus is to draw attention to the need for internationally comparable data on empowerment in order to explore issues rigorously and in a greater number of contexts.

#### *Empowerment and Human Development: A virtuous circle*

One of the strong claims that Sen makes for increasing the agency of deprived people in particular is that such persons are then able and motivated to be effective agents of their own human development. A strong line of research explores, and undoubtedly will continue to explore, such interconnections. For example, women's income in Brazil is spent more on human capital investments and is associated with greater nutrient intake and better child health (Thomas (1997), Thomas (1990) cited in Malhotra et al (2002): 48). Similarly, investment priorities of politically empowered women differ from those of men: in India, "women are more likely to participate if the leader of the council is a woman and invest more in infrastructure that is directly relevant to rural women's needs (water, fuel, health, roads, etc.); men invest more in education" (Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2001) cited in Malhotra et al (2002): 49). Information on the intervening variable of 'empowerment' is required for such analyses.

#### *Disempowerment, the inability to take action*

The *Voices of the Poor* study argued that hopelessness and powerlessness of the poor is reflected in various areas of their lives such as their exploitation in the market, their limited bargaining power, their inability to stand up to corrupt government officials, the lack of political accountability towards their elected representatives as well as their denied access to basic social services and their entrapment in the vicious circle of indebtedness.<sup>74</sup>

One implication of this is that impoverished people may be afraid to make choices. Poverty affects people's confidence to make choices as they tend to 'feel defenseless against damaging loss'<sup>75</sup>. The unpredictability of their lives limits their ability to make these choices. As young people in Bulgaria say: 'Each day is unpredictable- you can't make plans, don't know what you're in for tomorrow'<sup>76</sup>. Some impoverished people may feel trapped by their frustrating realities and unsecured futures. Empowerment therefore is not only related to the material,

<sup>74</sup> Narayan et al (2000b): 32-35

<sup>75</sup> Narayan et al Ibid.: 36

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.: 36

social and physical well-being of the poor, but also helps enhance their ‘peace of mind’ and promotes their psychological well-being.<sup>77</sup>

### *Empowerment and Governance*

The claim that individual empowerment and good governance are mutually reinforcing also merits further empirical exploration. Effective justice systems, secured rule of law and accountability systems, open channels of participation and protection of their civil liberties may both empower citizens and work better if empowered citizens hold them to account. Through open information flow, increased transparency, active civil society and improved spending on social services, good governance lays the ground for effective public action and empowerment, especially of marginalized communities. Once empowered, these communities may promote good governance and reduce state capture through their effective civic cooperation, voice and inclusion<sup>78</sup>. To empower poor people, state institutions therefore need to implement policies effectively, protect legal rights, support public action and respond to poverty<sup>79</sup>. Restrictive informal institutions and social barriers also need to be challenged thus reducing gender inequalities and nurturing different forms of social capital<sup>80</sup>.

### *Empowerment and Pro-poor Growth*

A number of studies emphasize the need for macro and meso-level studies on empowerment, as the focus has mainly been on local and small scale projects (Oxaal and Baden (1997): 24). “Macro-level studies are especially weak on measuring agency and often do not employ a relevant conceptual framework. Household-level studies have made significant progress in conceptualizing broader, context-specific frameworks and in specifying indicators that can be said to capture aspects of agency, but considerably more work is required in this area. The lack of empirical research at ‘meso’ levels presents an important gap, as does the relative lack of rigorous research on policy and programmatic efforts” (Malhotra et al (2002): 35)

Despite this need for further research, in the World Bank’s *WDR 2000/2001* and in the *Empowerment Sourcebook*, empowerment is argued to be instrumentally important for pro-poor growth. It is also argued to increase the sustainability of collective activities and the cost effectiveness of various development interventions. Knack and Keefer (1997) emphasize the close link between empowerment and growth. Encouraging poor communities to participate in poverty reduction has not only increased the sustainability of these poverty reduction efforts, but also, they argue, promoted pro-poor growth and more equitable income distribution. Whereas civil strife and the breakdown of social cohesion and rule of law has a negative impact on investments and growth performance, empowerment has a positive

<sup>77</sup> On this note, there is indeed research on the relationship between empowerment and ‘happiness’. The WDIP (Women’s Development Initiatives Project) in Ethiopia seeks to empower poor and disenfranchised women. After the implementation of the project, 80% of the WDIP participants felt less lonely, happier and less isolated (Alsop et al (2006): 144). The project increased women’s access to assets and enabled them to negotiate better prices (Alsop et al (2006): 146). 71% of the women also gained more power to participate in decision-making at the household level and were even able to stop some ‘traditional harmful practices’ in their own households (Alsop et al (2006): 147).

<sup>78</sup> Narayan (2002): 1-3

<sup>79</sup> World Bank (2001): Chap. 6 p. 99-104

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. 117-125

impact on income distribution through the provision of access to basic services, the broadening of human capabilities and the improved distribution of assets. These capabilities and assets are essential for poor people to seize new economic opportunities thus rendering growth more participatory, inclusive and bottom-up, in short more pro-poor. This pro-poor growth in turn further empowers the poor by promoting their social inclusion, encouraging their collective action and, as was explored in the previous section, enhancing the government accountability towards them<sup>81</sup>.

### *Empowerment and Project Effectiveness*

At the micro-level, many argue that empowerment may enhance project effectiveness. Local participation in development projects and the inclusion of the poor's voices in these projects has a strong impact on development outcomes. Some projects are more effective when they are managed by local communities rather than other entities. Community empowerment is essential for the management and preservation of public goods as well as the provision of basic services, their sustainability and their maintenance. To ensure that empowerment brings about the desired development outcomes, suitable institutional structures need to be created and tailored to local conditions thus allowing effective citizen participation, promoting gender equality and preventing elite capture.

*Empowerment in Practice* contains five case studies of development projects that sought to empower local communities. In each study, authors argue that empowerment contributed to better development outcomes. In Brazil, the introduction of participatory budgeting (PB) at the local level succeeded in empowering many, and especially the most marginalized groups. PB 'not only targets a critical source of power- the allocation of local public resources- but does so explicitly by offering incentives for agency and linking agency to authoritative decision-making'<sup>82</sup>. It thus challenged the clientelistic nature of traditional politics, supported reforms and good governance and led to better development outcomes such as reduced extreme poverty, better access to public services and improved cost-effectiveness and income equality<sup>83</sup>. In Ethiopia, the Women's Development Initiatives Project (WDIP) helped women to be economically and socially empowered. Economically, women had higher incomes, more accumulated assets and larger bargaining power to negotiate prices and better access to financing, information and training. In the social domain, women gained more freedom, participated more actively in decision-making within the household and were able to challenge informal rules and create wider support networks<sup>84</sup>.

The results of the Community-based Education project in Honduras also demonstrate the instrumental importance of empowerment in providing voice to excluded social groups. The school councils constituted a forum for marginalized groups such as women, indigenous population and the poorest to make choices and voice their needs despite the continued dominance of local power relations over these councils<sup>85</sup>. Similarly, the Kecamatan Development Project (KDP) in Indonesia had a positive impact on conflict management.

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<sup>81</sup> Narayan (2002): 4-6

<sup>82</sup> Alsop et al (2006): 121

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.: 110- 123

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.: 144-150

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.: 165-170

Through facilitated forums at different local levels, marginalized groups were able to exercise their decision-making powers and villagers succeeded in democratically resolving many of their problems through purposeful collective action thus reducing elite capture and avoiding potential conflict in their communities<sup>86</sup>. In Nepal, community empowerment not only succeeded in reducing the discriminating impacts of cast and ethnicity, but also improved access to social services, promoted income generation and asset accumulation and encouraged effective citizen participation<sup>87</sup>.

Other interesting research hypotheses relate to more ambiguous possible interconnections between empowerment and poverty outcomes. Kabeer (1997) reported that gender status of women in the household in Bangladesh increased as a result of factory work, but men viewed women who work as factory workers as “low status”! This proves the dilemmas that women might face in some socio-cultural contexts, when women can fail to reconcile their financial and their social empowerment (Malhotra et al (2002): 39). This was also confirmed by the research of Malhotra and Mather (1997) in Sri Lanka, where they discovered that work for pay and education increase the decision-making of women in financial aspects, but not in social and organizational matters in the household (Malhotra et al (2002): 40).

This section has provided some examples of the hypothesized instrumental connections between empowerment and other relevant variables that could be further explored, honed, and tested using the indicators proposed here, often in conjunction with more local or national data sources, with data on community, regional, or national institutions, and with qualitative or participatory data.

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.: 186-191

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.: 212-215

### Section 3: Selecting Indicators

#### *Methodological Challenges*

In this section, we identify the questions raised by those who have tried to measure empowerment and agency recently, and clarify where our proposal stands in relation to debated issues. For example, the selection of indicators implicitly defines the *type* of empowerment under scrutiny, and the degree to which future rounds can capture changes over time<sup>88</sup>. In many cases the nature of our exercise – that is, to identify indicators that can be included in short modules of nationally representative individual or household surveys that give rise to internationally comparable data – shapes our response; in others we have tried to explain the decision we have taken, in order to spark further discussion and debate if appropriate.

*Intrinsic or Instrumental:* A first issue is the following: should we measure the empowerment people *value* or the power they *have*? If we are accepting Sen's definition, then agency is the ability to act on behalf of what you value *and* have reason to value. However as Alkire has written elsewhere, it is impossible for one indicator to access both of these definitely and simultaneously. The proposed survey questions measure both, with household decision-making, political empowerment and access to credit, relating to 'power they *have*', and the questions on motivation from Ryan and Deci capturing the empowerment they *value*. One could refer to the latter class of measures as *subjective*; however we believe that the term '*positionally objective*' better conveys the intelligibility of the responses.<sup>89</sup>

*Universal or Context specific:* A second question is should we find indicators that can be compared, or limit ourselves to culturally relative and context specific indicators – or both? It is evident that both kinds of data are needed; this study seeks to identify indicators that can be compared across contexts and across time – which entails awareness of how good indicators of empowerment in one context or point in time may be defunct in another.<sup>90</sup> A prior question, of course, is whether it is *possible* to find meaningful universal indicators of empowerment at all. For our purposes this is a research question that the collection of such potentially-comparable data alone can illuminate. As power is central to empowerment, so, many argue, is culture. To empower the poor, one needs to carefully understand the socio-cultural environment in which this empowerment takes place<sup>91</sup>. Kabeer (2001) explains that culture is particularly important as it is related to Bourdieu's concept of 'doxa', i.e. 'the aspects of tradition and culture which are so taken-for-granted that they have become internalized'. Internalizing subordinate social status, for example, affects human agency and the ability to make choices<sup>92</sup>. This contextual nature of empowerment, and the problem of adaptive preferences, poses a major challenge to the measure of agency that people actually value<sup>93</sup>. Because of these deep difficulties, in addition to developing internationally

<sup>88</sup> CIDA (1997): 19

<sup>89</sup> Sen (1993b)

<sup>90</sup> Malhotra et al (2002): 19-20. They mention the example of 'the use of contraceptives' that can be an empowering indicator, however, once it has been widely used, it becomes obsolete.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.: 17; Bartlett (2004): 12; Oxaal and Baden (1997): 23

<sup>92</sup> Malhotra et al (2002): 10

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.: 18; Khwaja (2005)

comparable indicators, it is essential that researchers continue to gather context-dependent measures of empowerment<sup>94</sup>.

*Level of Application:* Should indicators of empowerment be measured at the individual household, group, community, local government, national government, or global level?<sup>95</sup> Because of the survey instruments we are using, this study focuses on the individual or household level. Clearly this information would best be supplemented with data from other units of analysis.

*Individual or Collective:* Can individual measures of agency capture group agency? This study asks questions about both. The questions on household decision-making focus more on the individual, but other questions – such as the efficacy of action to hold the local government accountable, or questions of who is most likely to be an effective agent, address the other. In many cases collective agency information would need to be gathered at the community level or higher.

*Dimensions of Empowerment: Neglect of the psychological:* what dimensions of empowerment should we study? Annex1 as well as Box 1 and 2 below review a number of domains that were proposed by studies that measured empowerment in different socio-cultural contexts. Narayan (2005) points out that although economic, social and political dimensions have been usually used, the psychological aspects of the empowerment process, such as self-worth and self-confidence, have usually been neglected<sup>96</sup>. This study proposes measures drawn from psychology as well as development. The domains it includes are: minor household expenditures, major household expenditures, health, education, political decisions, religious beliefs, marriage choices, and work and employment decisions. This selection of domains is based on previous empowerment studies, as well as on other work on the ‘dimensions’ of poverty and human development, and is open to review and revision.<sup>97</sup>

*Origins and Change:* ‘if a woman works hard and saves enough to buy a cow, she feels more competent and has more assets; she is empowered. If she inherits a cow or receives a gift of a cow because of her social relationships, she may be wealthier, but is she empowered?’<sup>98</sup> This survey focuses on the level of empowerment, not on perceptions of whether or not it has increased, or the process by which it has come about. To measure empowerment dynamics properly would require panel data, as well as indicators that might capture the dynamic processes of change<sup>99</sup>. Smulovitz and Walton (2003) argue that three types of information need to be gathered to capture the empowerment process: (1) factors affecting the capacities of individuals to act as agents, (2) the actual exercise of agency; and (3)

<sup>94</sup> Khwaja (2003): 5, Malhotra (2003): 3; Oxaal and Baden (1997): 6

<sup>95</sup> Malhotra et al (2002):12 suggest household and community, regional, national and global as levels of analysis ; Bartlett (2004: 21) propose the assessment of empowerment at the village, sub-district and national levels ; Holland and Book (2004: 2) argue that empowerment can be measured: at the national, intermediary and local levels; Narayan (2005:18) suggests individual, household, group, community, local, national and global levels

<sup>96</sup> Narayan (2005): 20

<sup>97</sup> Alkire (Forthcoming 2007)

<sup>98</sup> Narayan (2005): 22

<sup>99</sup> Malhotra et al (2002): 19

influences on the institutional context<sup>100</sup> (see Figure 1). This study focuses on the second of these (the middle column below) alone, although some survey instruments to which this could be appended have questions on the other columns already in place.

**Figure 1: Relevant Information for Measuring Empowerment**

Influences on agency capacities of poor groups	Information on the exercise of agency	Influences on the institutional context
Economic and human capital --standard measures	Actual participation in decision-making, implementation and evaluation	Formal and informal rules affecting the permeability of of institutions --documentation on formal rules; observation on informal norms
Aspirational capacities attitudes; ethnographies	Attitudes on relative power	The nature, strength and strategies of elite and other oppositional, groups --documentation on behaviors and alliances
Organizational capacities --social capital surveys --organizational activity and membership	Perceptions by poor, government and other groups on influence	
	Ethnographies of behaviors	Effectiveness of state action

Source: Smulovitz and Walton 2003: 37

*Establishing Causality:* A further question relates to what indicators would be adequate for testing hypotheses of causality. What indicators would enable researchers to explore the extent to which agency is *instrumental* to a range of development outcomes or what what 'production function' it *causes* reduction in other dimensions of poverty (directly or with a lag)? Our research questions clearly emphasise such questions of the causal connections between empowerment and other domains of poverty so it is a criteria of selection.<sup>101</sup> However in addition to the difficulty in identifying robust indicators for establishing causality, there are also the issues of endogeneity that regularly surface in multidimensional poverty analyses, i.e. it is difficult to separate the changes induced by 'empowering activities' from other 'external' factors<sup>102</sup>.

*Who measures: Self or others:* Empowerment not only has multiple definitions, but also involves a number of tangible and non-tangible aspects that need to be captured within any measurement attempt<sup>103</sup>. Should we use subjective or self-report data that draws on the perceptions of the poor, or avoid perceptual data as being potentially biased and faulty? Does subjective data strengthen or discredit rigorous analysis? The proposed survey uses both. The 'perception' data will need to be 'cleaned' or examined for adaptive preferences, but is suitable for analysis where the potential biases are understood.

<sup>100</sup> Smulovitz and Walton (2003): 37; These three types of information are similar to the three levels of choice that Alsop et al (2006) also identified.

<sup>101</sup> Khwaja (2005): 279

<sup>102</sup> Smulovitz and Walton (2003): 41

<sup>103</sup> Holland and Brook (2004): 1

*How to Measure: Quantitative or Qualitative or both:* what kind of data should be gathered? How can diverse kinds of data be integrated into the analysis. This survey proposes quantitative data, recognising of course that qualitative and participatory data, as well as more locally specific quantitative data, are necessary to triangulate, guide, and deepen the analysis in many contexts.<sup>104</sup>

This section placed our particular proposal in relation to some of the complex challenges raised by measuring empowerment. Now we turn to our short list.

### *Criteria for Selecting Indicators*

The aim of this section is to build on existing efforts and indicators already in use, and propose a small, robust, internationally comparable list of empowerment indicators that can address key research questions. Tables 1 to 9 at the end of this Chapter present the most commonly used indicators used to measure empowerment either directly or indirectly. Building on the existing body of empirical research, this section proposes the ‘short list’ of empowerment indicators and explains the reason for the selection of each indicator.

The following criteria were used to choose suitable indicators for the inclusion in individual or household surveys. First, given the context of our study, the chosen indicators should be relevant to the lives of the poor and the areas in which they suffer from a ‘power deficit’. Second, the indicators need to be *internationally comparable*. This is particularly important as there is a gap in the literature on comparative empowerment studies<sup>105</sup>. Third, the indicators need to assess not only the instrumental but also the *intrinsic* aspects of empowerment. Fourth, as empowerment is a process, it is essential to select indicators that would be able to identify *changes in agency and empowerment* over time. Fifth, the choice of the indicators’ short-list draws on *experience with particular indicators*. That is, these indicators have previously tested and found to be ‘adequate’ measures of empowerment for research purposes, and their shortcomings have been identified. It goes without saying that the indicators need to be scrutinized on standard conditions of accuracy, validity, and reliability.

Based on these criteria this paper suggests the following four indicators to measure empowerment:

- Indicator 1: *Household Decision-Making in different domains*
- Indicator 2: *Domain-specific Autonomy*
- Indicator 3: *Political Empowerment*
- Indicator 4: *Access to Credit*

### **Indicator 1: Household Decision-Making**

In the area of society, indicators have been used to measure empowerment in three main areas: (1) Household and kinship group entitlements, (2) Roles and responsibilities and (3) Community organizations and relationships<sup>106</sup>. The main aim of these indicators is to assess

<sup>104</sup> Mayoux (2000a): 11; Malena (2003): 4

<sup>105</sup> Malhotra et al (2002)

<sup>106</sup> Alsop and Heinsohn (2005) 82

whether the agency of individuals and social groups have been constrained by local power relations and patriarchal social hierarchies or not<sup>107</sup>. It also examines any changes in gender roles and the impact of these changes on women and on the household<sup>108</sup>. In this domain, one indicator has been chosen to assess empowerment: that is the decision-making process within the household

The household is regularly, although not invariably, a core social institution. ‘The household is often a fundamental building block of society, and the place where individuals confront basic livelihood concerns, norms, values, power and privilege’<sup>109</sup>. Decision-making with respect to different aspects of life is an important indicator of the ‘power relations’ and the ‘division of gender roles’ within the household. This study proposes this indicator for several reasons. First, as Table A below demonstrates this indicator has been identified by many studies as crucial for the empowerment process. Secondly, as Table B shows it has been also previously used by various scholars in a number of countries which demonstrates its international comparability – although naturally some problems have been identified. Third, participatory studies of the experience of poverty in different contexts – particularly of women - report that their participation in decision-making within the household is crucial for their well-being. Although this participation has recently expanded in many countries, empowerment levels in this domain still remain limited. Some women have gained more decision-making power to decide on crops, traveling, employment and family planning, nevertheless, men still take the major decisions (e.g. the purchase or sale of assets)<sup>110</sup>.

**Table A Studies proposing Indicator: ‘Decision-making within Household’**

Study	Recommendation of the Proposed Indicator
Malhotra and Schuler (2005)	Identified ‘domestic decision-making’ as indicator at the household level within the social and cultural dimension of empowerment (83)
Malhotra et al (2002)	Participation in domestic decision-making identified as an indicator in the familial and interpersonal domain (13/26)
Parveen and Leonhäuser (2004)	Participation within the household in the familial domain
Roy and Niranjana (2004)	Involvement in decision-making in the decision-making domain
Schuler and Hashemi (1994)	‘status and decision-making power within the household’ has been identified as a domain
CIDA (1997)	‘control over fertility decisions (e.g. number of children and number of abortions) identified as indicator within the social domain
Jejeebhoy (1995)	‘decision-making economy’ as one dimension of women’s empowerment
Kishor (2000)	‘sharing roles and decision-making’
Holland and Brook (2004); Alsop and Heinsohn (2005); Alsop et al (2006)	‘score for distribution of household decision-making power’ as indicator within society domain at the local level (Q. 4.46 in their survey)
Mayoux (2000a)	‘changes in underlying resource and power constraints at household level’ and ‘control over parameters of household consumption and other valued areas of household decision-making including fertility decisions’ (21) within the ‘power over’ dimension of empowerment

<sup>107</sup> Alsop et al (2006): 21

<sup>108</sup> Alsop and Heinsohn (2005): 86

<sup>109</sup> Narayan et al (2000b): 219

<sup>110</sup> Narayan et al Ibid.: 118

Sen (1999b)	'household work and decision-making'
Bartlett (2004)	'the household' identified as one domain among three domains of decision-making

**Table B Studies using Indicator: 'Decision-making within Household'**

Study	Location
Frankenberg and Thomas (2001)	Indonesia
Grasmuck and Espinal (2000)	Dominican Republic
Hashemi et al (1996)	Bangladesh
Jejeebhoy (2000)	India
Kabeer (1997)	Bangladesh
Malhotra and Mather (1997)	Sri Lanka
Mason (1998)	Pakistan, India, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines
Kishor (2000)	Egypt
Mason and Smith (2000)	Pakistan, India, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines
Schuler and Hashemi (1994) and Schuler et al (1997): 25	Bangladesh
Malhotra et al (2002)	Participation in domestic decision-making identified as an indicator in the familial and interpersonal domain (13/26)
Hindin (2000)	Zimbabwe

The chosen indicator clarifies who usually makes decisions, and if the respondent could influence these if they wished. It thus mainly addresses the first and second empowerment levels, i.e. the 'existence of choice' in the household and the actual use of this choice. Data on this indicator have often be gathered simply by determining who makes decisions. However this standard question ignores the possibility that a husband may make the political decisions because the wife is an avid cricket player and does not really have the time or interest for political debate so, in an empowered division of labor, the couple mutually agree that the husband will take the lead in political choices and decide how they will vote etc. For clarity we have, drawing on Alsop et al, added also a second question that will distinguish between disempowerment and an empowered division of labour in which the party could influence the decision if they wished (or, in our case, the decisions could be made by the wife if the cricketplayer decided to run for local elections and became an avid follower of party politics). The questions are as follows:

Q1 When decisions are made regarding the following aspects of household life, who is it that normally takes the decision?

- 1 Respondent
- 2 Spouse
- 3 Respondent and Spouse Jointly
- 4 Someone else
- 5 Jointly with Someone else
- 6 Other [*Specify and add code:* \_\_\_\_\_]

	Household expenditures	Education	Political decisions*	Marriage choices	Religious beliefs+	Health
Minor	<input style="width: 80px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>					

\*Political Decisions: voting, party affiliation, campaigning, and standing for election;

+Religious beliefs: going to temple/place of worship, praying at home, fasting, festivals

**Enumerator: Ask this question only for those boxes where the answer on the above question is not 1.**

Q2 To what degree do you *feel* you can make your own personal decisions regarding these issues if you want to?

- 1 To a very high degree
- 2 To a fairly high degree
- 3 To a small degree
- 4 Not at all

	Household expenditure	Education	Political decisions	Marriage choices	Religious beliefs	Health
Minor	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

The 'Domains' of this question were selected as follows. First, we considered the full set of domains in which survey questions have been fielded and/or studies have been accomplished (Annex 1 and Boxes 1 and 2). Second, we drew upon the elements of empowerment that seem to be regularly identified by poor people in participatory studies. Third, we focus on the domains of empowerment that seemed in some sense basic to the research questions identified earlier. The set of domains could be altered if it is found that a significant area is missing or if a country wishes to emphasise a particular domain further.

The data

It will not pass notice that this question is an extension of the single question in one dimension, 'control over income', which is by far the single most widely used existing indicator of empowerment, having been included in DHS and SWAF surveys. The single most-often asked question of this type is the following:

Who mainly decides how any money you earn will be used?

1. Respondent decides
2. Spouse decides
3. Respondent decides jointly with spouse
4. Someone else decides
5. Respondent decides jointly someone else
6. Respondent does not earn any income

This question could be added either to triangulate with the household-decision-making question or to supplement it with direct enquiries about the participant's own-earned income. However despite its wide usage, we were reluctant to propose this question as the single empowerment question in this domain for several reasons. First, many respondents (women or men) do not earn an income and hence their responses will be 'missing'. Secondly, in single-headed households the individuals might have 'full control over income'; however s/he might be oppressed or disempowered in other areas so full control over decisions does

not, for single-headed households, imply full empowerment. Third, it asks only about one domain within the household, and research to date has identified the importance of asking about multiple domains because they may not move together. This is why, we propose the more ‘comprehensive’ household decision-making question, that measures not only the empowerment of the individual in various domains -such as household expenditures, education, political decision, marriage, religious beliefs-, but also the ability of the individual to make these choices in case s/he wants to.

No indicators from the social domain were selected from ‘the roles and responsibilities’ nor from ‘the household and kinship group entitlements’ as they are mostly covered in the general ‘decision-making within the household’ question. Appendix C presents additional indicators previously used to measure empowerment in the social domain.

### Indicator 2: Domain-specific Autonomy

This section proposes an indicator of positionally objective autonomy that has been developed within psychology. There are several reasons for this proposal, that relate to the shortcomings of the household decision-making question and similar questions. First, in some cases the constraints to empowerment arise from social pressures or people external to the household and the commonly used question would overlook these. Second, the household decision-making question (like the credit and the state questions) does not access the respondent’s own values regarding the situation. For example some respondents may assess that a ‘joint’ decision is preferable to a ‘sole’ decision by themselves. While we have tried to capture this to some extent by the follow-up question, a residual unclarity remains. Third, the commonly used indicator is has a limited sensitivity to changes over time. For this reason, we introduced a further 3-question indicator of autonomy.

This indicator enquires the extent to which a person feels their action in each domain is motivated by a fear of punishment or hope for reward. It then asks the extent to which the same action was motivated by a desire to avoid shame or gain praise. Finally, it asks the extent to which it was motivated by its consonance with the respondent’s interests and values. All of these may be true to varying extents, and they give rise to a weighted measure of the degree to which the person regards themselves as the authentic ‘author’ of their action in this domain, or swayed by others’ views.<sup>111</sup>

Unlike the previous proposed indicators, this indicator arose not from development-related social sciences, but from psychology. Definitionally, it has clear affinities with Sen’s approach; the authors describe autonomy as follows<sup>112</sup>:

a person is autonomous when his or her behavior is experienced as willingly enacted and when he or she fully endorses the actions in which he or she is engaged and/or the values expressed by them.

<sup>111</sup> The weights for the combined index can be set arbitrarily; alternatively they can be set using statistical procedures such as multidimensional scaling. We have tried to explore these issues in Chiappero-Martinetti and Alkire, *mimeo*. A promising technique is to use multidimensional scaling techniques to explore the weights in different contexts (thus verifying comparability or proposing changes in the weights), but not to set the weights statistically for different datasets as comparability would be compromised.

<sup>112</sup> Alkire (2005), Alkire (2007 (forthcoming))

People are therefore most autonomous when they act in accord with their authentic interests or integrated values and desires (Deci and Ryan (1985), Ryan and Deci (2000); Ryan et al (1995)).<sup>113</sup>

This approach contrasts autonomy with its [presumed] opposite, *heteronomy*, “in which one’s actions are experienced as controlled by forces that are phenomenally alien to the self, or that compels one to behave in specific ways regardless of one’s values or interests.”<sup>114</sup>

Because the ability to measure autonomy accurately across cultures is also deeply contested within psychology, this indicator has been challenged and subsequently tested and used extensively internationally, including in developing countries, and has been shown to be robust across individualist and collectivist, and vertical and horizontal, cultures (Chirkov et al (2005)). Table C below lists some of the cross-cultural studies that either explore or use the indicator.

**Table C Studies using and/or exploring Ryan-Deci’s Indicator of Autonomy**

Study	Location
Alkire et al (Mimeo)	India, El Salvador, Egypt, Turkey
Chirkov and Ryan (2001)	Russia and the US
Chirkov et al (2003)	South Korea, Russia, Turkey, USA
Chirkov et al (2005)	Canada and Brazil
Ryan and Deci (2001)	Bulgaria
Downie et al (2004)	Tricultural individuals in Canada of over 35 ethnicities
Grouzet et al (2005) <i>Note this paper tests goals including autonomy.</i>	Australia, Bulgaria, China, China, Hong Kong, Colombia, Dominican republic, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Romania, South Korea, Spain, US
Rijavec et al (2006)	Croatia
Schmuck et al (2000)	Germany and the US
Sheldon et al (2001)	US, South Korea
Sheldon et al (2004)	US, China, South Korea, Taiwan
Vansteenkiste et al (2005)	China

The question is domain-specific, thus the same three questions are asked with respect to different domains – in this case the same domains as are named on the household decision-making question. The form of words is given below. At first they appear quite complicated. However when this indicator was tested with destitute, poor, and recently poor women in El Salvador and India, it was found that the questions were readily understandable, and even interesting, as they helped respondents to articulate their experience in a new way.

I am now going to ask you to tell me how accurate are three statements. Each can be somewhat true, or only one or two can be true.	To what extent do you feel that your decisions or your actions in _____ [ <i>name the domain from the left hand column</i> ] are motivated by a desire to avoid blame, or so that other people speak well of you?	To what extent do you feel that your decisions or your actions in _____ [ <i>name the domain from the left hand column</i> ] are motivated by and reflect your own
To what extent do you feel that your decisions or your actions in _____ [ <i>name the domain from the left hand column</i> ] are motivated by		

<sup>113</sup> Chirkov et al (2003): 98

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.: 98

a desire to avoid punishment or to gain reward? Scale: 1-4 or 1-6	Scale: 1-4 or 1-6	values and/or interests? Scale: 1-4 or 1-6
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There are a number of potential difficulties with this indicator. The most serious difficulty is also the greatest strength, and this is that the indicator captures the ‘positionally objective’ perception of the respondent – a view that is coming ‘from’ a delineated place such as a set of beliefs about what an empowered woman, or man, or ethnic person, does.<sup>115</sup> Such beliefs influence people’s actions, and also have practical relevance for development activities. Understanding ‘how a person sees’ a particular situation – in this case empowerment – is quite important.

Adaptive preferences are in some ways distorted, and hence data on them, one would presume, need not be collected, particularly in short survey modules. When we discover that Bihari widows are quite satisfied with their health state (but we know it to be objectively awful), and Keralite widows are dissatisfied (although they are relatively well off), then the natural response is to cease from gathering data on perceptions of health status, because they are *inaccurate*; objective measures of morbidity would be a better guide for policy.<sup>116</sup> In the case of the present indicator, in Kerala, more educated women reported a ‘lower’ level of autonomy than might be expected. This creates complications because the data must be transformed to remove adaptive preferences prior to its use in hypothesis testing.

While we support the distrust of positionally objective information for policy purposes, it seems that information on people’s views may be quite relevant, particularly with respect to autonomy and empowerment. First, it will directly answer the question of whether, at this time, the respondent *values* each domain of autonomy or empowerment (which, implicitly, he or she might have reason to value). A second value is more practical. Consider a local government that wished to increase women’s autonomy, and did not know whether to invest in conscientization of the women about their deplorable state, or in direct interventions to assist in change, such as providing training for advocacy for child care facilities and maternity leave on jobs. Which of these interventions will prove most helpful? If the women are truly chafing at their situation, further conscientization is not necessary and could seem a waste of time, so the second option would be chosen; if on the other hand, the women were demurely satisfied with their role as housewives, then they would not participate in the advocacy work, and so conscientization would be a necessary first step. However to choose between these requires an understanding of the women’s own ‘positionally objective’ views.

Thus the Ryan-Deci Autonomy indicator is proposed with considerable energy, as it has been vigorously tested across countries in psychology, but not yet used in development. Thus its inclusion could introduce some interesting and potentially useful insights.

### Indicator 3: Political Empowerment

In relation to political action, formal or informal, most empowerment indicators fell in one of the following three categories: (1) justice systems, (2) participation in politics and (3)

<sup>115</sup> Sen (1993b)

<sup>116</sup> Sen (2002a)

access and quality of social services<sup>117</sup>. Empowerment with respect to state institutions usually examines whether political processes allow people to express their political voice or not. It also accounts for the independence of the judicial system and the police as well as their ability to enforce contracts and apply sanctions in case of law violations. Empowerment in the state domain also means that the state has its own regulatory mechanisms to ensure the accessibility and delivery of quality social services to its citizens<sup>118</sup>. Table D indicates some indicators used in various studies to measure empowerment in the state domain. This paper selected the following indicator to measure empowerment in the state domain: Ability to hold local authorities accountable and the actual use of accountability systems.

*Empowerment Indicator: Ability to hold local authorities accountable/ Actual use of local accountability systems*

The suggested indicator in the state domain is the ability of communities to hold local authorities accountable. This indicator is crucial for empowering poor communities as it ensures not only the fairness of the laws, but also the adequacy of their implementation. This is particularly important as sometimes formal rules might be egalitarian, however, they can be challenged in reality by unequal informal rules and exploitative power relations. Thus, the existence of local accountability systems and their use indicates that laws can overrule power and hence local communities are not afraid to challenge their authorities. Holding local authorities accountable is only possible if citizens are aware of their rights and capable *and* willing to exercise and protect these rights even against powerful state officials.

The study argues that ‘the use and effectiveness of accountability systems’ can be a crucial indicator for the empowerment of the poor in the state/political domain. Although a few studies –in fact- used this indicator, it has been recommended by a number of studies (Tablxx). The concept of ‘accountability’ is important for measuring empowerment in a number of ways. First, empowerment is defined as ‘the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and *hold accountable institutions that affect their lives*’<sup>119</sup>. Holding local institutions accountable thus lies at the heart of the empowerment process. Various studies also pointed out the importance of ‘accountability’ for empowering the poor. Grootaert (2005) identified ‘voice and accountability’ as a priority indicator for measuring empowerment<sup>120</sup> as accountability ‘defines who has authority, as well as responsibilities and processes for oversight’<sup>121</sup>. Effective accountability systems can therefore render representatives and service providers answerable for their actions. The indicator will mainly measure the vertical accountability, i.e. the accountability of state agencies towards the citizens, rather than horizontal accountability within the state apparatus itself. Citizens need information to effectively use these accountability systems<sup>122</sup>. Thus, ‘poor people desire to have influence and control over institutions that affect their lives. The reality, however, is one of exclusion and alienation.

<sup>117</sup> Alsop and Heinsohn (2005): 82

<sup>118</sup> Alsop et al (2006): 20

<sup>119</sup> Narayan (2005): 5 [emphasis added]

<sup>120</sup> Grootaert (2005): 331

<sup>121</sup> Petesch et al Ibid.: 47

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.: 47

What emerges is corruption and domination of public institutions by the powerful and rich, with little apparent accountability to anyone<sup>123</sup>. As a poor person explains: ‘a person remains unprotected; he is oppressed by a feeling of being humiliated, beaten, insulted and robbed’<sup>124</sup>. The poor do not even know whom they can hold accountable and when they do use the available accountability systems, state officials rarely respond to their demands<sup>125</sup>. They also lack the necessary information and documents to hold them accountable<sup>126</sup>.

Accountability systems are also important not only for the poor, but also to promote state reform. They allow state power to be always challenged by ‘the power of the people’ thus ensuring government’s effectiveness and reducing state capture and elite capture. This -in fact- can reduce corruption and prevent illicit payments at least at the local level. Such a system is also crucial to ensure the provision of quality social services. The ability and actual use of local accountability systems is also fundamental for justice (a crucial component for empowerment in the state domain). Local accountability systems not only indicate the existence of systems of justice, but also demonstrate that people are actually using these systems. Hence their existence and their use can promote fair treatment as whoever does not comply with these ‘fairness’ rules will be subject to punishment.

**Table D: Studies proposing this Indicator: ‘Accountability’**

Study	Recommendation of the Proposed Indicator
Schuler and Hashemi (1994)	‘political and legal awareness’ and use of corruption perception index to measure accountability
Malhotra et al (2002)	- ‘questions, complaints, requests from women at village council’ (30) - ‘political participation, e.g. public protests and political campaigning’
Holland and Brook (2004); Alsop and Heinsohn (2005); Alsop et al (2006)	In the state domain the following indicators were suggested: - frequency of use of accountability mechanisms (Q4.31) - score of effectiveness of accountability mechanisms (Q.32)
Mayoux (2000a)	‘joint action to challenge discrimination in women’s access to resources (including land rights), markets and gender discrimination in macro-economic context’ (21) and ‘joint action for increased public welfare provision for women’ (21) within the ‘power with’ dimension of empowerment
Malhotra and Schuler (2005)	‘knowledge of political system and means to access it’, ‘use of judicial system to redress rights violations’(83)
Malena (2003)	‘holding state accountable’; ‘how active and successful civil society is in monitoring state performance and holding the state accountable’ (18)
Grootaert (2005)	‘enhancing citizens’ voice and politicians’ accountability he also used the ‘voice and accountability indicator’

This indicator is suggested as it addresses the three empowerment levels: (1) existence of choice, i.e. existence of accountability systems; (2) use of choice, i.e. the actual use of these systems and finally (3) the impact of this choice, i.e. the effectiveness of these accountability systems. However, the difficulty of applying this indicator lies in the lack of available ‘ready’ data. It is a subjective indicator that allows the respondents to reflect on a number of dimensions related to his/her relationship to the political process and its different actors.

<sup>123</sup> Narayan et al (2000a): 186

<sup>124</sup> Narayan et al Ibid.: 219

<sup>125</sup> Narayan et al Ibid.: 203-205

<sup>126</sup> Narayan et al Ibid.: 219

Empowerment in the state domain can therefore tested by asking the following ‘series’ of questions:

1. Have you ever been dissatisfied with the way that your elected representatives/ **local authorities**<sup>127</sup> behave?<sup>128</sup>

- 1 Most of the time
- 2 Some of the time
- 3 Rarely
- 4 Never
- 5 Would rather not say

[If possible, specify reason and add code: \_\_\_\_\_]

Local	Regional	National
<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>

2. Are there ways of holding **them** accountable?<sup>129</sup>

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Would rather not say

[If possible, specify reason and add code: \_\_\_\_\_]

Local	Regional	National
<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>

3. Have you ever used these?<sup>130</sup>

- 1 Often
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Never [Go to question 4.33]
- 4 Would rather not say [Go to question 4.33]

[If possible, specify reason and add code: \_\_\_\_\_]

Local	Regional	National
<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>

4. If yes, did they work?<sup>131</sup>

- 1 Yes
- 2 Some impact
- 3 Little impact
- 4 No impact
- 5 Would rather not say

[If possible, specify reason and add code: \_\_\_\_\_]

Local	Regional	National
<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>

<sup>127</sup> This category has been modified for countries who do not have elected representatives

<sup>128</sup> Alsop et al (2006): 324

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.: 324

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.: 325

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.: 325

If these 'series' of questions are 'too long', a shorter version has been suggested below whereby respondents are asked about their ability to file a complaint for different reasons and the reasons for the success or failure of their complaint. This can be another 'short' way of testing the ability of citizens to hold local authorities accountable and the effectiveness of such an act and hence can help measure how empowered people are in the state domain.

### Shorter Question for Testing Local Accountability Systems

Over the past year, have you been in a situation in which you wanted to file a complaint with public authorities because you wanted to (1) complain about the provision or quality of public services (2) claim alimony or file for a divorce, (3) report unfair treatment by local authorities?<sup>132</sup>

1. Did you file any such complaint?

----> If yes, what was the outcome?

----> If no, why not?

- I don't know which type of complaints can be filed//
- I don't know how to file a complaint/
- I was too intimidated to do so<sup>133</sup>

These questions can help reveal the dynamic relationship between the people and state officials in a number of ways. The questions explore the people's awareness of their local authorities, their satisfaction with these authorities as well as their ability and actual use of accountability systems and the effectiveness of these systems. Thus, if empowerment is about 'giving power to people', then the first step is to give these people the means to question those in 'power'!

Studies measuring empowerment in the state domain developed other indicators to assess the participation in politics and the availability of social services. However, no indicators were selected from these areas due to the following reasons. First, the use of women's participation in the political process as an indicator can reveal the dynamic interaction between the formal and informal rules of conduct. However, we are here mostly concerned with the empowerment of different communal groups and hence it would be rather restrictive to focus only on female participation as an indicator of the overall community empowerment in the state domain. Secondly, the use of voting as an empowerment indicator is rather questionable, not only as the data on voters' turnout can be easily forged and manipulated, but also as voting decisions can be coerced or simply affected by the influence of local leaders. Thirdly, some studies assessed the strength of civil society as an empowerment indicator in the state domain. This indicator has been also discarded as the strength of civil society, especially in many developing countries, is not only difficult to assess, but also does not tell us a lot about the nature of this civil society, its composition nor whether this 'strong' civil society actually responds to the needs of vulnerable social groups or not.

No indicators were chosen to measure the availability of social services due to various reasons. First, the existence of social services does not indicate that citizens have voice, e.g. in many socialist countries these basic social services were provided, but many of the

<sup>132</sup> other reasons can be added: for example to complain that you have been unfairly treated by local authorities

<sup>133</sup> Alsop and Heinsohn (2005): 58 from the Mexico Lifelong Learning Project

citizens' liberties and freedoms were denied. Secondly, service delivery does not reveal anything neither about the nature nor quality of these services. Finally, the fact that people complain about the quality of social services does not necessarily mean that these services are 'bad' -using objective criteria- as this judgment can mainly depend on the nature of people's expectations from the government. Thus, the existence and use of local accountability systems is the empowerment indicator that this study suggests for measuring empowerment in the state domain. Appendix A presents the various indicators used by different studies to measure empowerment in the state domain.

#### Indicator 4: Access to Credit

In the market, three kinds of indicators have regularly been used to assess empowerment: (1) Credit provision and services, (2) Labour market and employment conditions and choices and (3) Asset entitlements and consumption<sup>134</sup>. Empowerment in the market addresses the different regulations and systems for the protection of property rights as well as the access to markets, land, labour and credit<sup>135</sup>. Appendix B presents some examples of indicators that sought to measure empowerment in the market domain.

This study proposes 'access to credit/resources' as an indicator for measuring empowerment for the following reasons. First, as Table E shows, this indicator has been proposed by a number of studies as an 'empowering' factor, especially but not exclusively for women. Secondly, a number of country studies, esp. in Bangladesh, have been conducted to examine the impact of this indicator on the empowerment and livelihoods of the poor. Although income is not enough, in many studies including *Voices of the Poor*,<sup>136</sup> income and 'adequate and secure livelihoods emerge as a central concern to poor people's well-being'<sup>137</sup>. In many contexts, limited access to formal sources of credit forces impoverished people to depend mainly on local moneylenders and shopkeepers. When even these are unavailable, debt may force them to engage in illegal dealings, or sex work, or child labour<sup>138</sup>. The poor in Sarajevo explain that 'a man is ashamed to go to the neighbourhood. You can't ask for loans from everyone. Times are hard for everybody'<sup>139</sup>. The informal credit available from social networks and friends is often supplemented with borrowing from moneylenders, shopkeepers, landlords and pawnbrokers, but on far worse terms, rendering borrowers dependent and disempowered. When impoverished people try to resort to formal credit sources, the collateral requirements may be unrealistic, the interest rates, too high, or lending officials may be corrupt<sup>140</sup>. In many contexts, the poor suffer from limited access to banks and credit schemes and thus access to credit would be a relevant indicator of changes in their effective agency or empowerment.

In addition, access to credit variables are policy-relevant because they pertain to institutions that can change. Data on access to finance/credit allow researchers to assess whether legal

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<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*: 82

<sup>135</sup> Alsop et al (2006): 21

<sup>136</sup> Narayan et al (2000a): 21

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*: 25

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*: 45

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*: 56

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*: 56-59

procedures are biased against vulnerable social groups or not. It can also enable studies regarding the accessibility and transparency of these procedures and the prospects of corruption under the current credit regulations. The proposed indicator measures the ‘existence of choice’ as the first empowerment level, i.e. the ability to access credit if people want to, and the use of this choice, i.e. the actual borrowing activities of the people.

Despite the potential insights that might arise from this indicator, there are also serious weaknesses and insufficiencies of this as the ‘only’ indicator for market activities. First, accessing credit is necessary but insufficient for a ‘full’ empowerment in the market domain. Luttrell et al (2007) explain that ‘increasing access to resources may only bring potential rather than actual power, and that access is only meaningful for empowerment if the marginalised are able to act as a result of this access’.<sup>141</sup> Empowerment requires not only credit, but also the necessary skills, ideas and marketing techniques to engage in market activities. Furthermore the proposed questions will not accurately represent empowerment in areas where credit arrangements are missing, or in communities who operate largely outside the money economy. Another weakness is that the indicator is capped: if there is a functioning and fair credit market, the indicator will give no further information regarding empowerment. Also, the indicator might mistakenly rank as disempowered two persons who did not access credit, one because she had all the provisions she required, and the other because the practice of taking loans went against cultural norms and practices. However imperfect the indicators are, the hope is that the information will, in many circumstances, be a useful objective proxy for empowerment in the market, and that researchers will be able to draw on other data sources in order to identify how relevant this indicator is in their context.

**Table E Studies proposing the Indicator: ‘Access to Credit/Resources’**

Study	Recommendation of the Proposed Indicator
Parveen and Leonhäuser (2004)	‘how women are empowered through micro-credit’ and importance of ‘access to resources, esp. credit’ as indicator
Roy and Niranjana (2004)	Access to money (26)
Schuler and Hashemi (1994)	Importance of economic security; participation in micro-credit programs to enhance the economic roles of women
Malhotra et al (2002)	‘access to credit’ as indicator at the communal level in the economic domain (26)
Holland and Brook (2004); Alsop and Heinsohn (2005); Alsop et al (2006)	At the local level in the market domain identified the following indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- % needing to borrow money or goods in last year (Q4.44)</li> <li>- % borrowing money or goods in past year (Q4.45)</li> <li>- score of awareness of formal and informal credit-providing institutions (Q4.46)</li> <li>- score of accessibility to formal credit-providing institutions (Q4.47-4.50)</li> <li>- score of control over loans and savings (Q 4.51- 4.53)</li> </ul> Also Identified sources of credit as a financial asset affecting agency
Mayoux (2000a)	‘increased opportunities for access’ within the ‘power to’ dimension of empowerment
Malhotra and Schuler (2005)	Access to credit at the communal level in the economic domain (83)

<sup>141</sup> Luttrell et al (2007): 6

**Table F Studies using the Indicator: Access to Credit/Resources**

Study	Location
Goetz and Gupta (1996)	Bangladesh
Hashemi et al (1996)	Bangladesh
Kabeer (1998)	Bangladesh
Mayoux (2001)	Cameroon
Luttrell et al (2007)	International organizations using micro-credit as an 'empowering instrument': CIDA, USAID, UNDP, ActionAid UK, Concern WorldWide (16-19)

This indicator can be assessed by questions Q1- Q5. They test people's need to borrow as well as their actual borrowing activities and their mostly used credit sources. In addition, these questions also help us understand whether there are any credit sources that are denied to the poor and the reasons for this denied access. We propose that empowerment in the market domain be assessed by asking the following questions:

1. Did you feel the need to borrow goods or money in the past year?
  - 1 Yes, very often
  - 2, Yes, fairly often
  - 3 Yes, sometimes
  - 4 No, not at all
  
2. Did you actually borrow money or goods in the past year?
  - 1 Yes
  - 2 No
  
3. Which two sources do you most usually borrow from?
  - 1 Bank
  - 2 Formal Credit Association
  - 3 Informal Credit Association
  - 4 Shopkeeper
  - 5 Moneylender
  - 6 Family
  - 7 Friends and other Community members
  - 8 Other<sup>142</sup> [specify and add code: \_\_\_\_\_] \*Note, underlined answers have been added from other existing questionnaire sources

Source A

Source B
  
4. Are there any other sources of credit for people in your area that you feel are not available to you?
  - 1 Yes
  - 2 No [end of questions]
  
5. Why are these not accessible by you?
  - 1 Lack of Collateral
  - 2 No guarantor
  - 3 Interest rates too high
  - 4 Culturally unacceptable
  - 5 Other [specify and add code: \_\_\_\_\_]<sup>143</sup>

<sup>142</sup> These prompts have been changed from: bank, credit association, shopkeeper, landlord, family and other so that the question can be more easily used in diverse socio-cultural contexts.

In the market domain, no indicators have been selected from the ‘labour market and employment conditions’ area as labour regulations are country specific and do not necessarily capture the nature of the informal labour in which most of the ‘empowerment-needed’ groups are usually engaged. Furthermore some of the data from our proposed indicators of employment may shed light upon this topic. In addition, the ability to choose one’s own occupation (another indicator often used to measure empowerment) did not seem adequate, as it a prior question is the existence of such an occupation in the first place, especially given the high levels of unemployment in many developing as well as developed countries. No indicators pertaining to property rights were chosen because the institutional arrangements vary tremendously, and the interpretation of this indicator is again deeply contextual; however it would be a very plausible area to explore.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has attempted to articulate the reasoning behind the proposed shortlist, and draw attention to the potential research questions that it could expose, and the expected strengths and weaknesses of the ensuing data. The complete shortlist of indicators appeared at the front of this paper, and the reader is referred again to it. It must be stressed that the purpose of this document is to stimulate discussion and seek advice as to how to improve and deepen our internationally comparable measures of agency and empowerment.

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<sup>143</sup> Alsop et al (2006): 333-335

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### Appendix A Indicators Measuring Empowerment in the State Domain

Women	Justice	Participation in Politics	Social Services Delivery/ Access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ratio of women to men serving in village and district councils<sup>144</sup></li> <li>- Women's representation in community groups<sup>145</sup></li> <li>Equal treatment (of women) in judicial system<sup>146</sup></li> <li>- Women's awareness of their rights<sup>147</sup></li> <li>- Women's representation in government<sup>148</sup></li> <li>- Number of people women can rely on for support<sup>149</sup></li> <li>- Women's ability to speak in public<sup>150</sup></li> <li>- Women's ability to break traditional rules of conduct<sup>151</sup></li> <li>- Women's ability to affect political decisions<sup>152</sup></li> <li>- Women's representation in civil service<sup>153</sup></li> <li>- Women's representation in parliament<sup>154</sup></li> <li>- Women's representation in elected regional councils<sup>155</sup></li> <li>- Women's access to services</li> <li>- Women's awareness of their rights to and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Perceptions of fairness of courts<sup>157</sup></li> <li>- Ability of citizens to approach the police<sup>158</sup></li> <li>- Ability of the police and courts to apply the laws correctly and solve their conflicts<sup>159</sup></li> <li>- Functioning and accountability of local authorities<sup>160</sup></li> <li>- Egalitarian formal rules vs. unfair informal rules<sup>161</sup></li> <li>- What rights do people have<sup>162</sup></li> <li>- What are the source of these rights<sup>163</sup></li> <li>- Crime rate in a country<sup>164</sup></li> <li>- Role of/existence of Local informal and dispute resolution systems<sup>165</sup></li> <li>- State reform including government effectiveness, corruption perceptions index, incidence of illicit payments<sup>166</sup></li> <li>- Reform of legal system: rule of law, quality of regulations, pro-poor decentralization<sup>167</sup></li> <li><b>State/Justice<sup>168</sup></b></li> <li>- existence of systems of justice</li> <li>- use of systems of justice</li> <li>- frequency of using and accessing justice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Citizen participation in local decision-making<sup>169</sup></li> <li>- People's protection from political oppression<sup>170</sup></li> <li>- participation of Excluded social groups (social exclusion)<sup>171</sup></li> <li>- Ability of different social groups to participate in the political process<sup>172</sup></li> <li>- In case of crisis, the type of institutions that people can go to<sup>173</sup></li> <li>- Municipal budgeting<sup>174</sup></li> <li>- Participation in ongoing peace processes (but context-specific!)<sup>175</sup></li> <li>- Democracy: civil liberties and political freedoms, voice and accountability, strength of civil society<sup>176</sup></li> <li>- Removal of social barriers to citizen participation: share of women in political offices, income inequality, building social capital<sup>177</sup></li> <li><b>State/Political<sup>178</sup>:</b></li> <li>- frequency of elections at different levels</li> <li>- interest in elections at different levels</li> <li>- having voting rights in elections at different levels</li> <li>- exercise of voting rights at different levels</li> <li>- willingness to exercise voting in elections</li> <li>- decision-making of voting decision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social transfer systems: their availability, especially to vulnerable people<sup>179</sup></li> <li><b>State/Service Delivery<sup>180</sup></b></li> <li>- availability of public services</li> <li>- access to public services</li> <li>- actual use of public services</li> <li>- quality of services</li> <li>- denied access to public services</li> <li>- individual complaint about public services</li> <li>- communal complaint about public services</li> <li>- frequency of complaints about public services</li> <li>- equal effectiveness in addressing people's needs</li> <li>- impact of ethnicity and religion on people's treatment</li> </ul>

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.: 51<sup>145</sup> Ibid.: 51<sup>146</sup> Ibid.: 51<sup>147</sup> Ibid.: 51<sup>148</sup> Ibid.: 130<sup>149</sup> Ibid.: 130<sup>150</sup> Ibid.: 130 and 143<sup>151</sup> Ibid.: 130<sup>152</sup> Ibid.: 133<sup>153</sup> Ibid.: 133<sup>154</sup> Ibid.: 133<sup>155</sup> Ibid.: 133

<p>practicing these rights 156</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- satisfaction with justice system</li> <li>- fair treatment (perception of past treatment)</li> <li>- fair treatment (perception of future treatment)</li> <li>- equal treatment in justice system (individual)</li> <li>- equal treatment of other social groups by the justice system</li> <li>- access to justice system</li> <li>- activity in complaining about the justice system</li> <li>- effectiveness of complaints</li> <li>- independence of police force</li> <li>- punishment of corrupt activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- impact of local leaders on voting decisions</li> <li>- ability of local leaders to affect people's voting decisions</li> <li>- actual involvement in the political process</li> <li>- willingness to be involved in the political process</li> <li>- awareness of political parties and movements</li> <li>- influence of local representatives on the political process</li> <li>- perceived fairness of the electoral process</li> <li>- satisfaction with elected representatives</li> <li>- ability to hold local representatives accountable</li> <li>- actually using local accountability systems</li> <li>- effectiveness of accountability systems</li> </ul>	
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<sup>156</sup> Ibid.: 133

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.: 133

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.: 265

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.: 54

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.: 54

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.: 133

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.: 85

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.: 85

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.: 85

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.: 85

<sup>166</sup> Grootaert (2005) cited in Alsop et al (2006): 222

<sup>167</sup> Grootaert (2005) cited in Alsop et al (2006): 222

<sup>168</sup> Indicators in this section have been adopted from the questionnaire in Alsop et al (2006): 314- 318.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.: 54

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.: 85

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.: 85

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.: 85

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.: 85

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.: 50

<sup>175</sup> Moser (2005) cited in Alsop et al (2006): 229

<sup>176</sup> Grootaert (2005) cited in Alsop et al (2006): 222

<sup>177</sup> Grootaert (2005) cited in Alsop et al (2006): 222

<sup>178</sup> Indicators in this section have been adopted from the questionnaire in Alsop et al (2006): 318- 325.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.: 290

<sup>180</sup> Indicators in this section have been adopted from the questionnaire in Ibid.: 325-329

## Appendix B: Indicators Measuring Empowerment in the Market Domain

Women	Credit Provision and Services	Labour Market and Employment	Asset Entitlement and Consumption
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women's education and income levels<sup>181</sup></li> <li>- Women's possession of job specific skills<sup>182</sup></li> <li>- Women's access to different sources of information<sup>183</sup></li> <li>- Cultural restrictions on the nature of women's professions<sup>184</sup></li> <li>- Amount of time women dedicate to household chores<sup>185</sup></li> <li>- Gendered rules governing access to productive assets and markets<sup>186</sup></li> <li>- Women's participation in the labour force<sup>187</sup></li> <li>- Women's ability to choose their type of employment<sup>188</sup></li> <li>- Entrepreneurial and business skills of women<sup>189</sup></li> <li>- Type of activities undertaken by women: tradable activities, sheep and husbandry<sup>190</sup></li> <li>- Women's economic participation and decision-making: administrative and managerial positions, professional and technical positions<sup>191</sup></li> <li>- Gender-disparity in earned income</li> <li>Economic independence of women<sup>192</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to finance/credit and demand for/receipt of loans and the size of these loans<sup>193</sup></li> <li>- Access to credit: accessibility, effectiveness, transparency, accountability, freedom from corruption<sup>194</sup></li> <li>- Control over credit in the household<sup>195</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>Market/Credit<sup>196</sup></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- need to access credit</li> <li>- actual access to credit/borrowing</li> <li>- number of credit sources (formal and informal)</li> <li>- mostly used credit sources</li> <li>- reasons for preferential use of credit sources</li> <li>- credit sources denied access to specific social groups/individuals</li> <li>- reasons for lack of accessibility of certain credit sources</li> <li>- availability of savings</li> <li>- decision-making on the use of savings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Legal labour standards and people's awareness of them<sup>197</sup></li> <li>- Employer's compliance to labour standards<sup>198</sup></li> <li>- Government's insurance of Employer's compliance to labour regulations<sup>199</sup></li> <li>- Understanding people's perceptions of power<sup>200</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>Market/Labour<sup>201</sup></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ability to choose own occupation</li> <li>- ability to change occupation (if want to)</li> <li>- reasons for (in) ability to change occupation</li> <li>- doing household work</li> <li>- kind of household work done</li> <li>- frequency of doing household work</li> <li>- household work that is never done</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- transparent rules of transaction<sup>202</sup></li> <li>- differences in gaining control over resources and information<sup>203</sup></li> <li>- lack of contract enforcement<sup>204</sup></li> <li>- Capacity to negotiate in markets, especially negotiating prices<sup>205</sup></li> <li>- Asset endowments<sup>206</sup></li> <li>- Change in specific markets: labour, land, water, housing<sup>207</sup></li> <li>- Differential access to market by different social groups<sup>208</sup></li> <li>- Transparency and accountability of market transactions</li> <li>- Access and control over productive assets, especially for different social groups<sup>209</sup></li> <li>- Inheritance of assets</li> <li>- Government policies in relation to land redistribution<sup>210</sup></li> <li>- Access and control over consumption goods and services<sup>211</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>Market/Goods<sup>212</sup></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- threat to be evicted from land (land security)</li> <li>- protection from authorities/enactment of property rights</li> <li>- restrictions on rent/ownership rights/property rights</li> <li>- reasons for restrictions on property rights</li> <li>- individual inheritance</li> <li>- family inheritance</li> <li>- traditional rules of inheritance</li> </ul>

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.: 51

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- <sup>182</sup> Ibid.: 51  
<sup>183</sup> Ibid.: 51  
<sup>184</sup> Ibid.: 51  
<sup>185</sup> Ibid.: 51  
<sup>186</sup> Ibid.: 51  
<sup>187</sup> Ibid.: 130  
<sup>188</sup> Ibid.: 267  
<sup>189</sup> Ibid.: 66  
<sup>190</sup> Ibid.: 137  
<sup>191</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1995) cited in Alsop, Bertelsen and Holland 2006 p. 228  
<sup>192</sup> Ibid. cited in Alsop et al (2006): 228  
<sup>193</sup> Alsop et al (2006): 130  
<sup>194</sup> Ibid.: 85  
<sup>195</sup> Ibid.: 85  
<sup>196</sup> Indicators in this section have been adopted from the questionnaire in Ibid.: 333-335  
<sup>197</sup> Ibid.: 290  
<sup>198</sup> Ibid.: 290  
<sup>199</sup> Ibid.: 290  
<sup>200</sup> Lokshin (2005) cited in Alsop et al (2006): 224  
<sup>201</sup> Indicators in this section have been adopted from the questionnaire in Alsop et al (2006): 329- 332  
<sup>202</sup> Ibid.: 20  
<sup>203</sup> Ibid.: 20  
<sup>204</sup> Ibid.: 20  
<sup>205</sup> Ibid.: 130  
<sup>206</sup> Ibid.: 146  
<sup>207</sup> Ibid.: 290  
<sup>208</sup> Alsop and Heinsohn (2005): 85  
<sup>209</sup> Alsop et al (2006): 290  
<sup>210</sup> Ibid.: 290  
<sup>211</sup> Ibid.: 290  
<sup>212</sup> Indicators in this section have been adopted from the questionnaire in Ibid.: 332- 333

### Appendix C Indicators Measuring Empowerment in the Social Domain

Household and kinship group entitlements	Roles and Responsibilities	Community organizations and relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customs that influence whether women are allowed to disagree with their husbands or not<sup>213</sup></li> <li>- Sending girls to school/ girls' schooling<sup>214</sup></li> <li>- Existence of traditional harmful practices (THP)<sup>215</sup></li> <li>- Women's mobility: ability to go out alone/ freedom of movement<sup>216</sup></li> <li>- Women's ability to ride a cart<sup>217</sup></li> <li>- Women's ability to wear trousers<sup>218</sup></li> <li>- Women's engagement in savings and credit activities<sup>219</sup></li> <li>- Women's subjection to genital mutilation<sup>220</sup></li> <li>- Forced and early marriages<sup>221</sup></li> <li>- Ability of women to choose their husbands<sup>222</sup></li> <li>- Women's subjection to rape<sup>223</sup></li> <li>- Women's subjection to domestic violence<sup>224</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decision-making with the household about the number and spacing of children, use of contraceptives (in relation to women's education, income, self-confidence, awareness of reproductive health, participation in women's groups)<sup>225</sup></li> <li>- Whether women are expected to play a subservient role regarding sexual conduct<sup>226</sup></li> <li>- Women's willingness to make independent decisions<sup>227</sup></li> <li>- Who does the housework</li> <li>- Institutionalized gender inequalities<sup>228</sup></li> <li>- women's say in household economic decisions<sup>229</sup></li> <li>- women's participation in family size decisions<sup>230</sup></li> <li>- women's exposure to coercive controls by</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Associational and social interaction among people of different identities<sup>233</sup></li> <li>- Caste systems<sup>234</sup></li> <li>- Local implementation of formal institutions<sup>235</sup></li> <li>- Existence of membership organizations<sup>236</sup></li> <li>- Rules governing membership in communal organizations<sup>237</sup></li> <li>- Existence of conflict between the degree to which the community has changed with regards to: altruism, common values, communal services, communication within the community, confidence, political and administrative context, information intervention, leadership, networking, organization, political power, skills, trust, unity, wealth<sup>238</sup></li> <li>- sense of meanings and beliefs, competence, self-determination and impact or efficacy<sup>239</sup></li> <li>- activity and effectiveness of civil society in informing, educating, building capacity for collective action, empowering poor people and women, building social capital<sup>240</sup></li> <li>- community-level gender attitude<sup>241</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.: 141

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.: 278

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.: 130

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.: 141

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.: 141

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.: 141

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.: 66

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.: 137

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.: 137

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.: 141

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.: 141

<sup>224</sup> Alsop and Heinsohn (2005): 85

<sup>225</sup> Alsop et al (2006): 52

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.: 52

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.: 130

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.: 125

<sup>229</sup> Mason and Smith (2003) cited in Alsop and Heinsohn (2005): 37

<sup>230</sup> Mason and Smith (2003) cited in Alsop and Heinsohn (2005): 37

	<p>their husbands<sup>231</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- having control over decisions pertaining personal welfare, health and body<sup>232</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- psychological empowerment: perceived knowledge, skills development, perceived participation, compliance, expected future individuals contributions, perceived group accomplishments, future expected accomplishments<sup>242</sup></li> <li>- micro: attitude, feelings, skills/ interface: participation and action immediately around the individual/ macro: beliefs, action and effects<sup>243</sup></li> <li>- access to health services<sup>244</sup></li> <li>- access to education and training services<sup>245</sup></li> <li>- estimated spending on personal health<sup>246</sup></li> <li>- decision-making on public services in the community<sup>247</sup></li> <li>- actual involvement in communal decision-making<sup>248</sup></li> <li>- willingness to be involved in communal decision-making<sup>249</sup></li> <li>- individual influence on communal decision-making processes<sup>250</sup></li> </ul>
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<sup>231</sup> Mason and Smith (2003) cited in Alsop and Heinsohn (2005): 37

<sup>232</sup> Alsop et al (2006): 337

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.: 54

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.: 55

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.: 20

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.: 291

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.: 291

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.: 220

<sup>239</sup> Spreitzer (1995) cited in Alsop et al (2006): 228

<sup>240</sup> Malena (2003) in Alsop and Heinsohn (2005): 35-36

<sup>241</sup> Oppenheim, Mason and Smith 2003 cited in Alsop and Heinsohn (2005): 37

<sup>242</sup> McMillan et al (1995) cited in Alsop et al (2006): 224

<sup>243</sup> Albertyn (2001) cited in Alsop et al (2006): 220

<sup>244</sup> Alsop et al (2006): 337

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.: 337

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.: 338

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.: 338

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.: 339

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.: 339

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.: 339

## Annex 1 Dimensions for Measuring Empowerment

Study	Purpose of the Study	Dimensions	Indicators	Data Sources	Conclusions
Bartlett (2004)	Developing a model for evaluating empowerment to use in CARE projects	Three domains of decision-making: Household, community and social domain; 5 types of capital: human, social, natural, physical and financial capital	CARE Bangladesh Key behavioral indicators: - organizational behavior - planning behavior - entitlement behavior - economic behavior - learning behavior - experimental behavior	Key Reviewing global efforts to evaluate empowerment	- need to capture the process and ends of empowerment - key empowerment indicators should be part of any monitoring and evaluation of CARE projects
Malhotra, Schuler and Boender (2002)	Identifying Dimensions for measuring women's empowerment	Economic, socio-cultural, familial/interpersonal, legal, political and psychological <sup>251</sup>	A number of indicators in each domain at the household, community and broader arenas. See Table 1 on the commonly used indicators for women's empowerment	Reviewing 45 studies on women's empowerment	- need to measure the empowerment process - need for macro-level studies on empowerment - need for meso-level studies on empowerment - any dimension can be operationalized at any level of aggregation
Oakley (2001)	Developing a methodology for evaluating empowerment and social development	Psychological; Social; organizational; cultural; economic; political <sup>252</sup>	Work division in the household; attitude towards girls, access to household property; control over resources; participation; organization and collective action; self-confidence; social status; work pattern and productivity <sup>253</sup>	Organizing regional workshops on the evaluation of empowerment in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East and synthesizing their findings	- empowerment can be promoted through participation, capacity-building, democratization and economic improvement

<sup>251</sup> For a detailed analysis of each of the reviewed studies, their sample and design, their variables and their indicators, see Malhotra et al (2002): Appendix B: p. 38- 49.

<sup>252</sup> Psychological (self-image, identity, creating space, acquiring knowledge); Social (leadership in community action, action for rights, social inclusion, literacy); organizational (collective identity, establishing representative organization, organizational leadership); cultural (redefining gender rules and norms, recreating cultural practices); economic (attaining income security, ownership of productive assets; entrepreneurial skills); political (participation in local institutions, negotiating political power, accessing political power) Oakley (2001): 15

Parveen and Leonhauser (2004)	Examining how rural women were empowered through micro-credit in Bangladesh	Socio-economic; familial; psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- contribution to household income</li> <li>- access to resources</li> <li>- ownership of assets</li> <li>- participation in household decision-making</li> <li>- perception on gender awareness</li> <li>- coping capacity to household shocks</li> </ul>	A study conducted in three villages in Bangladesh using household surveys and qualitative methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the level of women's empowerment at the household level is not satisfactory</li> <li>- education, exposure to information; medial and spatial mobility are the most influential factors for women's empowerment</li> </ul>
Roy and Niranjana (2004)	Developing indicators to measure women's empowerment in India	Decision-making Mobility Access to economic resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- indirect indicators of empowerment: education, occupation, age difference and education difference between spouses and their influence on women's access to and control over resources</li> <li>- direct indicators of empowerment: involvement in decision-making, freedom of movement and access to money<sup>254</sup></li> </ul>	Analyzing the data of the NFHS survey conducted in 1998-1999 in two Indian states: Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- there is a regional divide in the women's empowerment levels</li> <li>- women with education have greater self-esteem</li> </ul>
Schuler and Hashemi (1994)	Examining how women's status affects fertility	Mobility and visibility; economic security; status and decision-making power within the household; ability to interact effectively in the public sphere; participation in non-family groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mobility</li> <li>- economic security</li> <li>- making small and large purchases</li> <li>- subjection to domination and violence</li> <li>- political and legal awareness</li> <li>- protest and campaigning</li> </ul>	Conducting a survey over 18 months with 1305 respondents in addition to ethnographic findings from six villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation in micro-credit programs empower women by enhancing their economic roles</li> <li>Empowerment is positively associated with contraceptive use</li> </ul>

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.: 175<sup>254</sup> Roy and Niranjana (2004): 26

### Box 1: Empowerment Dimensions used by CIDA

CIDA (1997)	Examining why and how gender-sensitive indicators can be integrated in development projects	Legal; political; economic; social	<p><b>Legal empowerment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enforcement of legislation related to the protection of human rights.</li> <li>• Number of cases related to women's rights heard in local courts, and their results.</li> <li>• Number of cases related to the legal rights of divorced and widowed women heard in local courts, and the results.</li> <li>• The effect of the enforcement of legislation in terms of treatment of offenders.</li> <li>• Increase/decrease in violence against women.</li> <li>• Rate at which the number of local justices/ prosecutors/ lawyers who are women/men is increasing/decreasing.</li> <li>• Rate at which the number of women/men in the local police force, by rank, is increasing or decreasing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Political empowerment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of seats held by women in local councils/decision-making bodies.</li> <li>• % of women in decision-making positions in local government.</li> <li>• % of women in the local civil service.</li> <li>• % of women/men registered as voters/% of eligible women/men who vote.</li> <li>• % of women in senior/junior decision making positions within unions.</li> <li>• % of union members who are women/men.</li> <li>• Number of women who participate in public protests and political campaigning, as compared to the number of men.</li> </ul> <p>Economic empowerment (changes should be noted over time)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in employment/unemployment rates of women and men.</li> <li>• Changes in time-use in selected activities, particularly greater sharing by household members of unpaid housework and child-care.</li> <li>• Salary/wage differentials between women and men.</li> <li>• Changes in % of property owned and controlled by women and men (land, houses, livestock), across socio-economic and ethnic groups.</li> <li>• Average household expenditure of female/male headed households on education/health.</li> <li>• Ability to make small or large purchases independently.</li> <li>• % of available credit, financial and technical support services going to women/men from government/non-government sources.</li> </ul> <p><b>Social empowerment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers of women in local institutions (e.g. women's associations, consciousness raising or income generating groups, local churches, ethnic and kinship associations) relative to project area population, and numbers of women in positions of power in local institutions.</li> <li>• Extent of training or networking among local women, as compared to men.</li> <li>• Control of women over fertility decisions (e.g. number of children, number of abortions).</li> <li>• Mobility of women within and outside their residential locality, as compared to men.</li> </ul>
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**Box 2: Proposed Dimensions to Measure Women's Empowerment**

<b>Stromquist (1995)</b>	Cognitive; Psychological; Economic; Political
<b>Sen (1999)</b>	Absence of gender inequality in: Mortality rates Natality rates Access to basic facilities such as schooling Access to professional training and higher education Employment Property ownership Household work and decision-making
<b>Jojeebhoy 1995</b>	Knowledge economy, decision-making economy, physical economy, emotional autonomy, economic and social autonomy and self-reliance
<b>Kishor 2000a cited in Malhotra, Schuler and Boender (2002)</b>	Financial autonomy, participation in the modern sector, lifetime exposure to employment, sharing of roles and decision-making, family structure amenable to empowerment, equality in marriage, (lack of) Devaluation of women, women's emancipation, marital advantage, traditional marriage

Table 1: Direct Indicators of Empowerment: State Domain

DOMAIN		INDICATOR OF FORMS OF EMPOWERMENT		
State	Subdomain	National	Intermediary	Local
State	Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of court cases and the time between submission and conclusion of cases</li> <li>% of positions in justice system per social/ ethnic/ religious group</li> <li>No. of national newspapers/ media organisations independent of government influence or control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of local court cases and the time between submission and conclusion of cases</li> <li>% of positions in local justice system per social/ ethnic/ religious group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% awareness of listed (formal/informal) justice systems (4.1)</li> <li>No. times justice systems used (4.2-4.3)</li> <li>Score of effectiveness of justice systems (4.4)</li> <li>Score of fairness of justice systems (4.5-4.6)</li> <li>Score of gender equity in treatment by justice systems (4.7)</li> <li>Score of equity by other stated social variable in treatment by justice systems (4.8)</li> <li>Score of accessibility of justice systems (4.9)</li> <li>Score of ability to complain about justice systems' performance (4.10-4.11)</li> <li>Score of level of independence of police force (4.12)</li> <li>Score of confidence in corrupt people facing justice (4.13)</li> </ul>
	Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HH survey questions 4.14-4.32 also apply at the national level</li> <li>% of elected representatives in national government per social/ ethnic/ religious group</li> <li>No. people actively voting in national elections compared to those entitled to vote</li> <li>No. of representative and democratic national political parties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HH survey questions 4.14-4.32 also apply at the regional level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% awareness of local electoral process (4.14)</li> <li>% interest in local electoral process (4.15)</li> <li>% entitled to vote in local elections (4.16)</li> <li>% voting in last local elections (4.17)</li> <li>% wanting to vote in last local elections (4.18)</li> <li>% control over their voting choice (4.19)</li> <li>Frequency of, and impact of, discussion about local election candidates (4.20-4.23)</li> <li>Score of involvement in the local political process (4.24)</li> <li>Score of aspiration to be more or less involved in the local political process (4.25)</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diversity of representative and democratic national political parties</li> <li>No. of national newspapers/ media organisations independent of government influence or control</li> <li>Diversity of newspaper/ media ownership</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score of number of representatives of national political parties in the local area (4.26)</li> <li>Score of degree of influence of elected representative at local level (4.27)</li> <li>Score of fairness of local electoral process (4.28)</li> <li>Frequency of dissatisfaction with local elected representative (4.29)</li> <li>Availability of accountability mechanisms (4.30)</li> <li>Frequency of use of accountability mechanisms (4.31)</li> <li>Score of effectiveness of accountability mechanisms (4.32)</li> </ul>
	Service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score of satisfaction with national executive administration (key line ministries)</li> <li>Score of effectiveness of regional executive administration (key line ministries) compared with other social groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score of satisfaction with regional executive administration</li> <li>Score of effectiveness of regional executive administration compared with other social groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of publicly provided services available locally (4.33)</li> <li>% able to access public services (4.34; 4.37)</li> <li>No. public services used (4.35)</li> <li>Score of quality of public services used (4.36)</li> <li>% individuals that have complained about public service delivery (4.38)</li> <li>% of households that have complained about public service delivery (4.39)</li> <li>Frequency of complaints (4.40)</li> <li>Score of satisfaction with outcome of complaint (4.41)</li> <li>Score of equitability in addressing needs and concerns (4.42)</li> <li>Score of influence of social characteristics on the authorities treatment of people (4.43)</li> </ul>

Source: Holland and Brook. (2004). *Measuring Empowerment: Country Indicators*.

[http://Inweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/68ByDocName/MeasuringEmpowermentCountryIndicators/\\$FILE/Draft+Background+Paper+Country+Indicators.pdf](http://Inweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/68ByDocName/MeasuringEmpowermentCountryIndicators/$FILE/Draft+Background+Paper+Country+Indicators.pdf) accessed April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007: 14- 15

**Table 2: Direct Indicators of Empowerment: Market Domain**

DOMAIN		INDICATOR OF EMPOWERMENT		
	Subdomain	National	Intermediary	Local
Market	Credit			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score of civil society advocacy activity for pro-poor credit provision</li> <li>% of credit provision by formal institutions according to social/ethnic/religious group</li> <li>Diversity of national credit providing institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score of consultation levels by credit providing agencies with clients</li> <li>No. of partnerships in credit system design and delivery</li> <li>Diversity of local formal credit sources</li> <li>Diversity of local informal credit sources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% needing to borrow money or goods in past year (4.44)</li> <li>% borrowing money or goods in past year (4.45)</li> <li>Score of awareness of formal/ informal credit services (4.46)</li> <li>Score of accessibility to formal credit-providing institutions (4.47-4.50)</li> <li>Score of control over loans and savings (4.51-4.52)</li> </ul>
	Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diversity of national labour organisations</li> <li>% changes in labour market composition per year</li> <li>Score of civil society advocacy activity for labour protection legislation</li> <li>% presence in capital intensive/ high skill positions per social/ ethnic/ religious group</li> <li>% difference in salary levels by ethnic/ social/ religious group</li> <li>No. of industrial disputes resolved equitably per year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score of effectiveness of local labour organisations</li> <li>Diversity of local labour organisations</li> <li>No. of collective bargaining mechanisms/processes over wage rates/ employment conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score of control over employment/occupation choices (4.53-4.55, 3.41-3.42)</li> <li>% involved in household work (4.56)</li> <li>Score of time used for unpaid household work and childcare (4.57-4.58)</li> <li>Score of division of labour and roles within household (4.59)</li> </ul>
	Goods			
	(production/ consumption, including basic needs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score of civil society advocacy activity for redistribution of productive assets</li> <li>Score of civil society advocacy activity for basic needs provision</li> <li>% awareness of national market prices and conditions</li> <li>Score of civil society and state advocacy activity for equitable access to markets</li> <li>% change in national asset ownership per social/ ethnic/ religious group per year</li> <li>% change in control over national assets per social/ ethnic/ religious group per year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score of civil society advocacy activity for (decentralised) basic needs provision</li> <li>No. of local buyers of products</li> <li>No. of local suppliers of products</li> <li>No. of producer cooperatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score of perceived risk/threat of eviction (4.60)</li> <li>Score of protection from eviction (4.61)</li> <li>Score of influence of social characteristics on asset ownership/access (4.62-4.63)</li> <li>Score of gender influence on inheritance rights (4.64-4.66)</li> </ul>

Source: Holland and Brook. (2004). *Measuring Empowerment: Country Indicators*.

[http://inweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/68ByDocName/MeasuringEmpowermentCountryIndicators/\\$FILE/Draft+Background+Paper+Country+Indicators.pdf](http://inweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/68ByDocName/MeasuringEmpowermentCountryIndicators/$FILE/Draft+Background+Paper+Country+Indicators.pdf) accessed April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007: 16-17

**Table 3: Direct Indicators of Empowerment: Social Domain**

DOMAIN		INDICATOR OF EMPOWERMENT		
	Subdomain	National	Intermediary	Local
Society	Household	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score of civil society advocacy activity for legislation addressing informal patriarchal rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score of community advocacy activity addressing informal patriarchal rules</li> <li>Score of civil society monitoring activity of unequal household relations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score for distribution of HH decision making power (4.67)</li> <li>Score of individual's decision making autonomy (4.68)</li> <li>Score of control over one's body (4.69)</li> <li>Score of individual mobility (4.70)</li> <li>Score of individual access to basic services (4.71-4.72)</li> <li>Score of comparative household expenditure on healthcare per individual HH member (4.73-4.74)</li> </ul>
	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of national networks/alliances of community organisations</li> <li>Diversity of community based organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score of inter-community networking activity</li> <li>Score of authority over local policy process</li> <li>Score of authority over local budgets</li> <li>% of local government budget allocated per social/ ethnic/ religious group</li> <li>Score of mobility of social/ ethnic/ religious groups outside their immediate locality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% awareness of main local public service decision-makers (4.75)</li> <li>Score of involvement in community decision making processes (4.76)</li> <li>Score of aspiration to be more or less involved in community decision making processes (4.77)</li> <li>Score of influence in community decision making processes (4.78)</li> </ul>

Source: Holland and Brook. (2004). *Measuring Empowerment: Country Indicators*. [http://inweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/68BvDocName/MeasuringEmpowermentCountryIndicators/\\$FILE/Draft+Background+Paper+Country+Indicators.pdf](http://inweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/68BvDocName/MeasuringEmpowermentCountryIndicators/$FILE/Draft+Background+Paper+Country+Indicators.pdf) accessed April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007: 17-18

**Table 4: Intermediate Indicators of Empowerment: Agency (from existing survey instruments)<sup>255</sup>**

Asset base	Indicator	Existing sources/ instruments
<b>Psychological assets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-perceived exclusion from community activities</li> <li>• Level of interaction/sociability with people from different social groups</li> <li>• Capacity to envisage change, to aspire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IQMSC – section 5</li> <li>• IQMSC – section 5</li> <li>• IQMSC – section 6</li> </ul>
<b>Informational assets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journey time to nearest working post office</li> <li>• Journey time to nearest working telephone</li> <li>• Frequency of radio listening</li> <li>• Frequency of television watching</li> <li>• Frequency of newspaper reading</li> <li>• Passable road access to house (by periods of time)</li> <li>• Perceived changes in access to information</li> <li>• Completed education level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IQMSC – section 4</li> <li>• SCAT Household Questionnaire – section 2</li> </ul>
<b>Organisational assets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership of organisations</li> <li>• Effectiveness of group leadership</li> <li>• Influence in selection of group leaders</li> <li>• Level of diversity of group membership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IQMSC – section 1</li> </ul>
<b>Material assets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land ownership</li> <li>• Tool ownership</li> <li>• Ownership of durable goods</li> <li>• Type of housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LSMS – economic activities module</li> <li>• LSMS – economic activities module</li> <li>• LSMS – economic activities module</li> <li>• SCAT Household Questionnaire – section 2</li> </ul>
<b>Financial assets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment history</li> <li>• Level of indebtedness</li> <li>• Sources of credit</li> <li>• Household expenses</li> <li>• Food expenditure</li> <li>• Occupation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LSMS – economic activities module</li> <li>• LSMS – economic activities module</li> <li>• LSMS – economic activities module</li> <li>• LSMS – housing module</li> <li>• LSMS – food expenditures module</li> <li>• SCAT Household Questionnaire – section 2</li> </ul>
<b>Human assets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy levels</li> <li>• Numeracy levels</li> <li>• Health status</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LSMS – education module</li> <li>• LSMS – education module</li> <li>• LSMS – health module</li> </ul>

IQMSC – Integrated Questionnaire for the Measurement of Social Capital; LSMS – Living Standards Measurement Survey; SCAT – Social Capital Assessment Tool

Source: Holland and Brook. (2004). *Measuring Empowerment: Country Indicators*.

[http://inweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/68ByDocName/MeasuringEmpowermentCountryIndicators/\\$FILE/Draft+Background+Paper+Country+Indicators.pdf](http://inweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/68ByDocName/MeasuringEmpowermentCountryIndicators/$FILE/Draft+Background+Paper+Country+Indicators.pdf) accessed April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007: 4.

<sup>255</sup> For a full list of indicators of opportunity structure and their sources see Holland and Brook p. 6- 13. and for a full list of direct indicators of empowerment see

Table 5: Commonly Used Dimensions and Indicators of Women's Empowerment

Dimension	Household	Community	Broader Arenas
<b>Economic</b>	Women's control over income; relative contribution to family support; access to and control of family resources	Women's access to employment; ownership of assets and land; access to credit; involvement and/or representation in local trade associations; access to markets	Women's representation in high paying jobs; women CEO's; representation of women's economic interests in macro-economic policies, state and federal budgets
<b>Socio-Cultural</b>	Women's freedom of movement; lack of discrimination against daughters; commitment to educating daughters	Women's visibility in and access to social spaces; access to modern transportation; participation in extra-familial groups and social networks; shift in patriarchal norms (such as son preference); symbolic representation of the female in myth and ritual	Women's literacy and access to a broad range of educational options; Positive media images of women, their roles and contributions
<b>Familial/ Interpersonal</b>	Participation in domestic decision-making; control over sexual relations; ability to make childbearing decisions, use contraception, access abortion; control over spouse selection and marriage timing; freedom from domestic violence	Shifts in marriage and kinship systems indicating greater value and autonomy for women (e.g. later marriages, self selection of spouses, reduction in the practice of dowry; acceptability of divorce); local campaigns against domestic violence	Regional/national trends in timing of marriage, options for divorce; political, legal, religious support for (or lack of active opposition to) such shifts; systems providing easy access to contraception, safe abortion, reproductive health services
<b>Legal</b>	Knowledge of legal rights; domestic support for exercising rights	Community mobilization for rights; campaigns for rights awareness; effective local enforcement of legal rights	Laws supporting women's rights, access to resources and options; Advocacy for rights and legislation; use of judicial system to redress rights violations
<b>Political</b>	Knowledge of political system and means of access to it; domestic support for political engagement; exercising the right to vote	Women's involvement or mobilization in the local political system/campaigns; support for specific candidates or legislation; representation in local bodies of government	Women's representation in regional and national bodies of government; strength as a voting bloc; representation of women's interests in effective lobbies and interest groups
<b>Psychological</b>	Self-esteem; self-efficacy; psychological well-being	Collective awareness of injustice, potential of mobilization	Women's sense of inclusion and entitlement; systemic acceptance of women's entitlement and inclusion

Source: Malhotra, Schuler and Boender. (2002). Measuring Women's Empowerment as a Variable in International Development. <http://www.aed.org/LeadershipandDemocracy/upload/MeasuringWomen.pdf> accessed April 22nd, 2007: 13.

**Table 6: Commonly used Indicators of Women's Empowerment at the Individual and Household levels**

<p><b><i>Most Frequently Used Indicators</i></b></p> <p>Domestic Decision-Making            Finances, resource allocation, spending, expenditures            Social and domestic matters (e.g. cooking)            Child related issues (e.g. well-being, schooling, health)</p> <p>Access to or control over resources            Access to, control of cash, household income, assets, unearned income,            welfare receipts, household budget, participation in paid employment</p> <p>Mobility/freedom of movement</p> <p><b><i>Less Frequently Used Indicators</i></b></p> <p>Economic contribution to household            Time use/division of domestic labor</p> <p>Freedom from violence</p> <p>Management/knowledge            Farm management            Accounting knowledge            Managerial control of loan</p> <p>Public space            Political participation (e.g. public protests, political campaigning)            Confidence in community actions            Development of social and economic collective</p> <p>Marriage/kin/social support            Traditional support networks            Social status of family of origin            Assets brought to marriage            Control over choosing a spouse</p> <p>Couple interaction            Couple communication            Negotiation and discussion of sex</p> <p>Appreciation in household            Sense of self worth</p>
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Source: Malhotra, Schuler and Boender. (2002). Measuring Women's Empowerment as a Variable in International Development. <http://www.aed.org/LeadershipandDemocracy/upload/MeasuringWomen.pdf> accessed April 22nd, 2007: 26.

**Table 7: Commonly used Indicators of Women's Empowerment at the Aggregate Level**

Labor market	
	Female labor force participation (or female share, or female/male ratios)
	Occupational sex segregation
	Gender wage differentials
	Child care options
	Labor laws
	Percent of wives/women in modern work
	Ratio of female/male administrators and managers
	Ratio of female/male professional and technical workers
	Women's share of earned income
Education	
	Female literacy (or female share, female/male ratio)
	Female enrollment in secondary school
	Maternal education
Marriage/kinship system	
	Singulate mean age at marriage
	Mean spousal age difference
	Proportion unmarried females aged 15-19
	Area of rice cultivation
	Relative rates of female to male migration
	Geographic region
Social norms and practices	
	Wives'/women's physical mobility
Health/Survival	
	Relative child survival/Sex ratios of mortality
Political and Legal	
	Ratio of seats in parliament held by women
	Women's legal rights
	Questions, complains, requests from women at village council

Source: Malhotra, Schuler and Boender. (2002). Measuring Women's Empowerment as a Variable in International Development. <http://www.aed.org/LeadershipandDemocracy/upload/MeasuringWomen.pdf> accessed April 22nd, 2007: 30.

Table 8: Framework for Assessing Women's Empowerment

TYPE OF POWER RELATION	ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT	WELL-BEING BENEFITS	CULTURAL/LEGAL AND POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT
<b>POWER WITHIN:</b> increased awareness and desire for change for individual woman	- women's positive evaluation of their economic contribution - desire for equal economic opportunities - desire for equal rights to resources in the household and community	- women's confidence and happiness - women's desire for equal well-being - desire to take decisions about self and others - desire to take control of own fertility	- assertiveness and sense of autonomy - recognition of need to challenge gender subordination including cultural 'tradition, legal discrimination and political exclusion - desire to engage in cultural, legal and political processes
<b>POWER TO:</b> increased individual capacity for change increased opportunities for access	-access to micro-finance services - access to income - access to productive assets and household property - access to markets - reduction in burden of unpaid domestic work including childcare	- skills including literacy - health and nutrition status - awareness of and access to reproductive health services - availability of public welfare services	- mobility and access to the world outside the home - knowledge of cultural, legal and political processes - removal of formal barriers to access to cultural, legal and political processes
<b>POWER OVER:</b> changes in underlying resource and power constraints at household, community level and macro-level individual power/action to challenge these constraints	- control over loans and savings use and income therefrom - control over income from other household productive activities - control over productive assets and household property - control over household labour allocation - individual action to challenge discrimination in access to resources and markets	- control over parameters of household consumption and other valued areas of household decision-making including fertility decisions -individual action to defend self against violence in the household and community	- individual action to challenge and change cultural perceptions of women's capacities and rights at household and community levels - individual engagement with and taking positions of authority within cultural, legal and political processes
<b>POWER WITH or increased solidarity/joint action with other women to challenge underlying resource and power constraints at household, community level and macro-level</b>	- acting as role model for other women, particularly in lucrative and non-traditional occupations - provision of wage employment for other women at good wages - joint action to challenge discrimination in women's access to resources (including land rights), markets and gender discrimination in macro-economic context.	- higher valuation of and increased expenditure on girl children and other female family members - joint action for increased public welfare provision for women	- increase in networks for support in times of crisis - joint action to defend other women against abuse in the household and community - participation in movements to challenge cultural, political and legal gender subordination at the community and macro-level

Source: Mayoux, L. (2000). From Access to Empowerment: Gender Issues in Micro-Finance. CSD NGO Women's Caucus Position Paper for CSD-8. <http://www.earthsummit2002.org/wcaucus/Caucus%20Position%20Papers/micro-finance.pdf> accessed April 22nd, 2007: 21.

Table 9: Indicators of Internal and External Group Empowerment

Indicators of INTERNAL Empowerment	
Objective	Indicators
<b>Self-Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership growth and trends</li> <li>• Clear procedures and rules</li> <li>• Regular attendance at meetings</li> <li>• Maintaining proper financial records</li> </ul>
<b>Problem Solving</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem identification</li> <li>• Ability to analyse</li> </ul>
<b>Democratisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free and fair selection of leaders</li> <li>• Role for weaker members in decision-making</li> <li>• Transparency in information flow</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability and self-reliance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict resolution</li> <li>• Actions initiated by group</li> <li>• Legal status</li> <li>• Intra-group support system</li> </ul>
Indicators of EXTERNAL Empowerment	
Building Links	Indicators
<b>With Project implementing agency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence at different stages of project</li> <li>• Representation on project administration</li> <li>• Degree of financial autonomy</li> </ul>
<b>With State agencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence on state development funds</li> <li>• Influence on other state development initiatives in the area</li> </ul>
<b>With Local and social political bodies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representation on these bodies</li> <li>• Lobbying with mainstream parties</li> <li>• Influence in local schools and health centers</li> </ul>
<b>With other groups and social movements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• formation of federations</li> <li>• Networking</li> </ul>
<b>With local elites and other non-group members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• level of dependence on local elites</li> <li>• Degree of conflict</li> <li>• Ability to increase power</li> </ul>

Source: Oakley, P. (2001). *Evaluating Empowerment: Reviewing the Concept and Practice*. Oxford: INTRAC: 52-53.