

# **Intersections of public and private domains**

## **Women's empowerment typologies from Demographic and Health Surveys, 2010–2021**

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Population Association of New Zealand Conference 2023

# Table of Contents

- 1 Background
- 2 Data and method
- 3 Results
- 4 Discussion

# Background

- The UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 aims to **achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**
- However, women's empowerment is not a straightforward concept to measure and there is a lack of agreement about how best to capture its various dimensions

# Background

- Prior research has mainly focused on assessing gender equality in public domains (e.g. education and employment)
- This may overlook important interplay among diverse dimensions, nested within multilayered contexts
- An intersectional perspective could help address the interconnectedness and disparities in public and private domains



# Aim

## 1: Conceptual framework

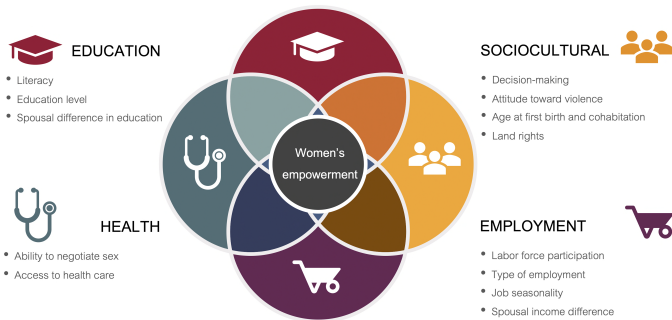
To summarize the multidimensional and interdependent nature of women's empowerment

## 2: Person-oriented methodological framework

To identify typologies of women's empowerment in sub-Saharan Africa

# Conceptual framework: Four dimensions

- Women's empowerment is a **multidimensional** process or outcome that helps women enhance their autonomy and self-reliance (Kabeer 1999, 2005)



# Data

- DHS data (2010–2021) to identify and examine different empowerment typologies across 34 SSA countries
- Nationally representative of women of reproductive ages (15–49 years)
- Categorized into Central, Eastern, Southern and Western African regions
- The final sample comprised 303,717 partnered women

# Data

- 23 binary/categorical indicators to capture four dimensions
- Education: literacy, education level and spousal difference in educational attainment
- Employment: labor force participation, type of earning, seasonality of work and spousal income difference
- Sociocultural: household decision-making, attitudes toward violence, life course transitions and property ownership
- Health: ability to negotiate sex and whether the respondent experienced difficulties in accessing health care

# Methodological framework

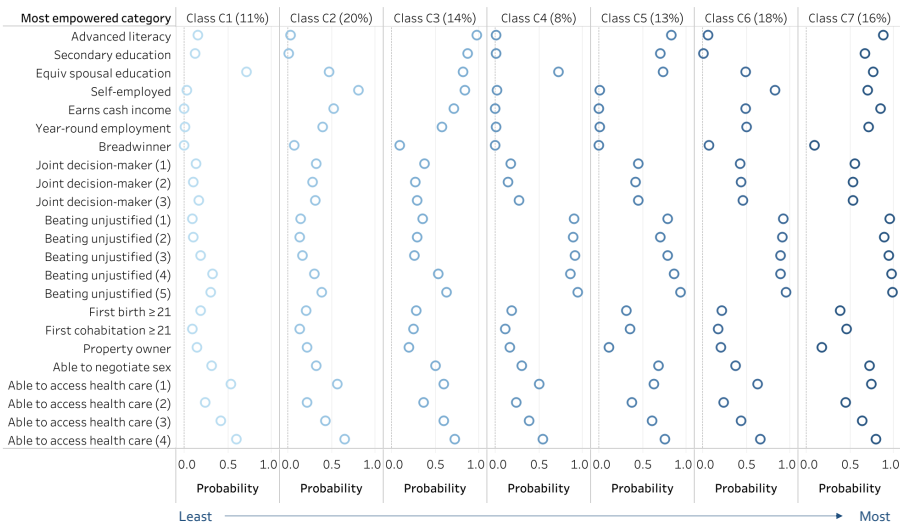
- Latent class analysis to identify empowerment classes
- Inductive person-centered perspective
- To understand how women assess their personal circumstances and choices, along with their perceptions and responses to diverse social situations and contexts
- Adjusted for women's age, countries and sample weights to account for possible life course, cohort and contextual variability

# Three key findings

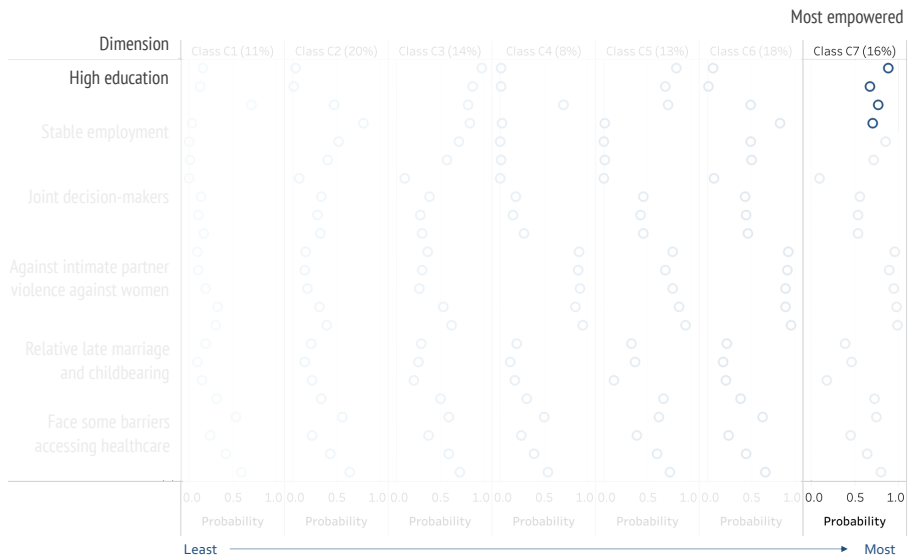
- ① Education appears to be closely linked to women's reproductive health outcomes across all regions
- ② Financial and geographical constraints continue to be the main barriers to accessing health services, although different regions experience varying levels and types of challenges
- ③ Many instances of a mismatch between women's empowerment in the public and private spheres

# Results

## Central Africa



# Central Africa

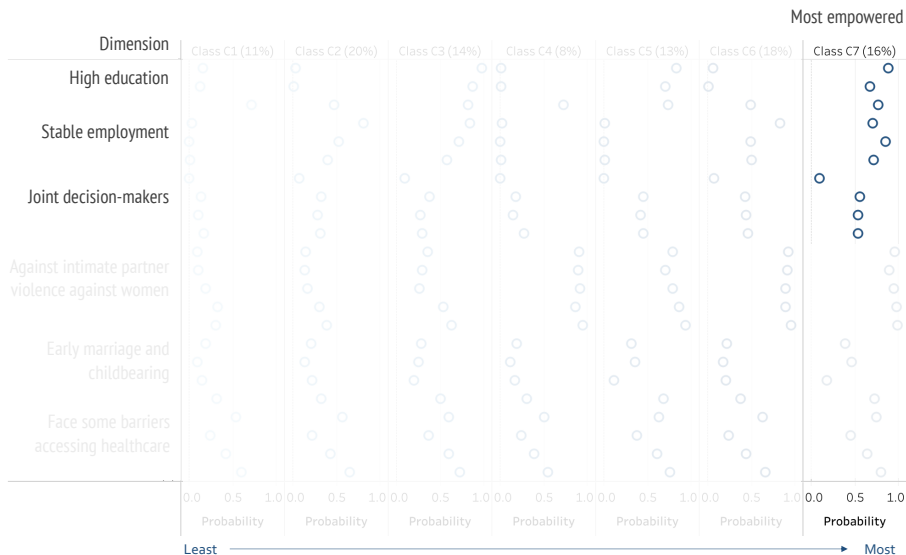




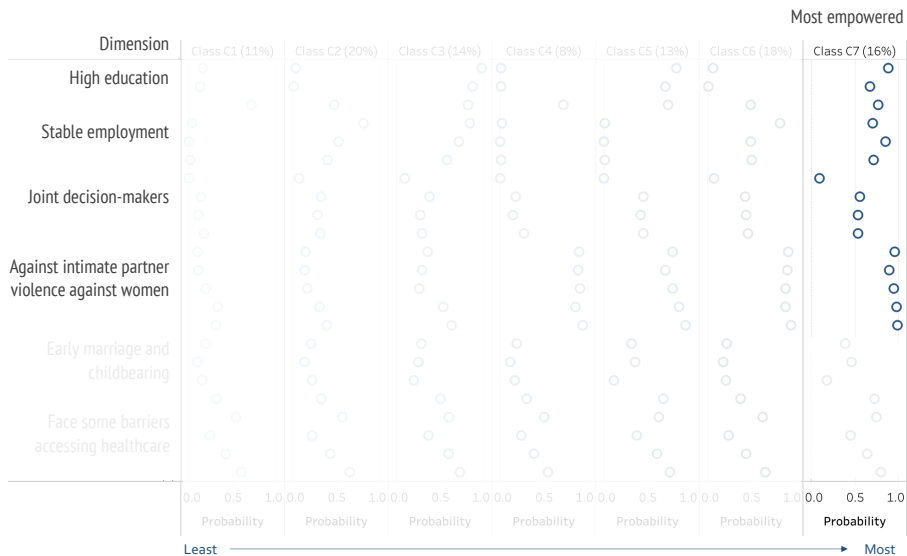
Most empowered



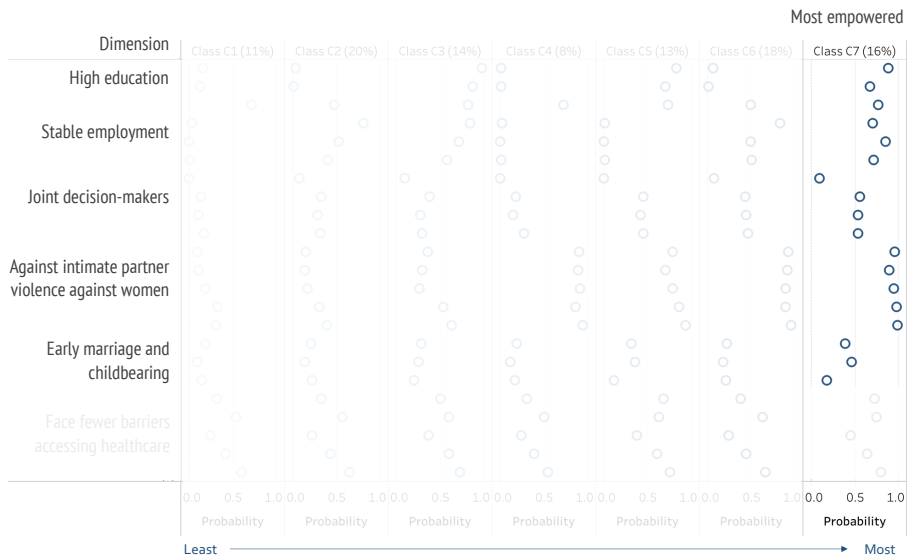
# Central Africa



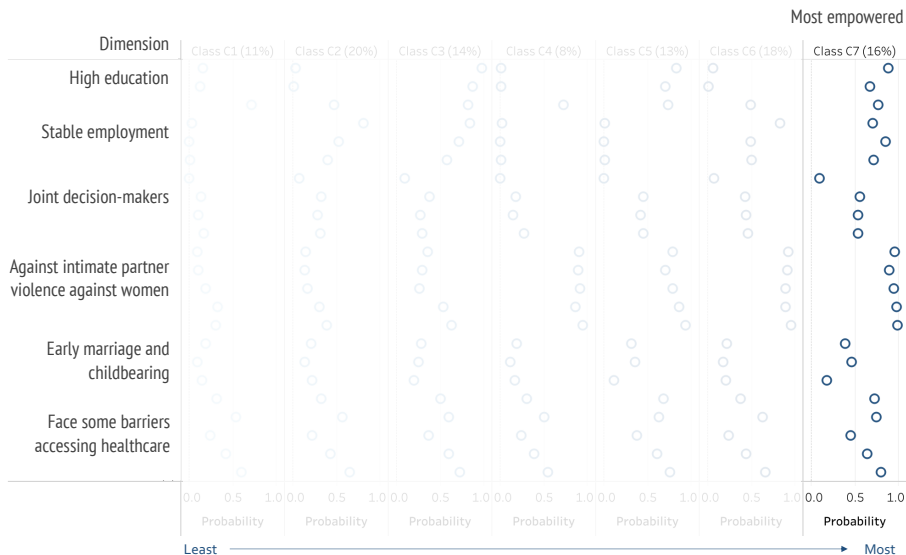
# Central Africa



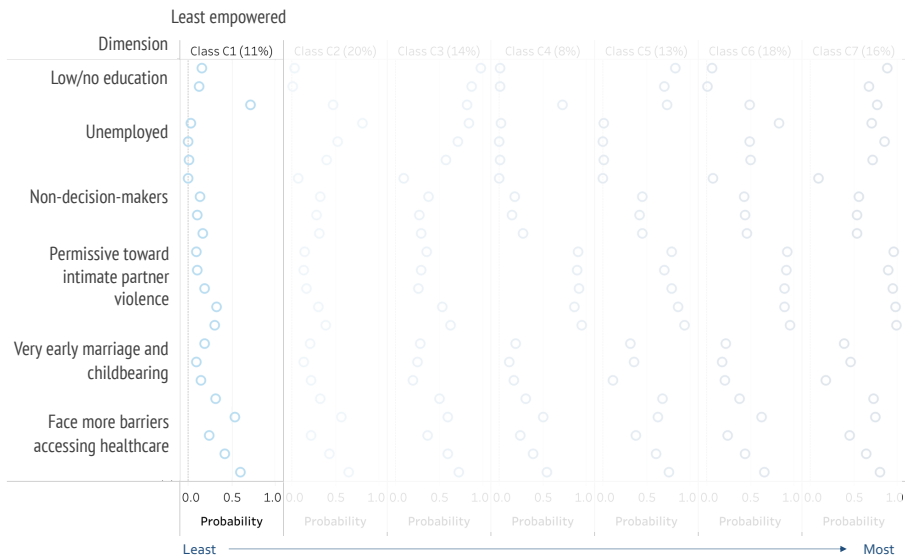
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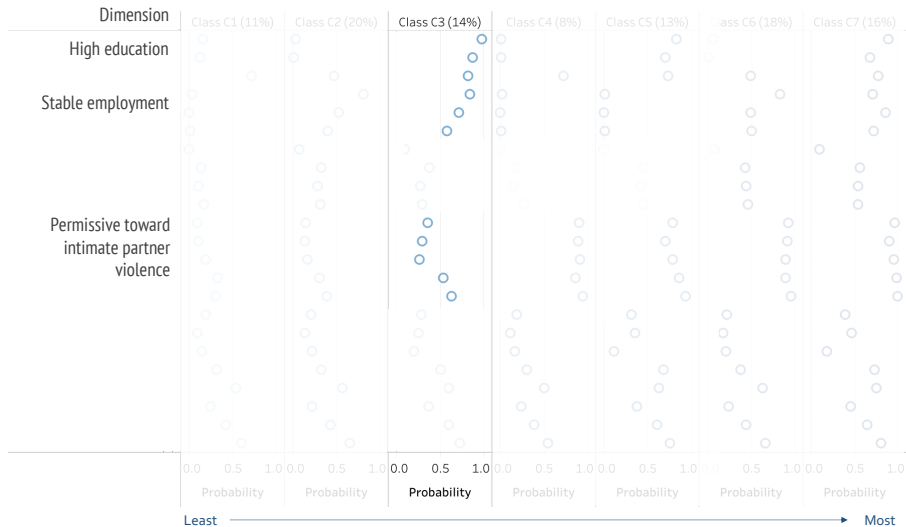
# Central Africa



# Central Africa



# Central Africa: Public/private mismatch

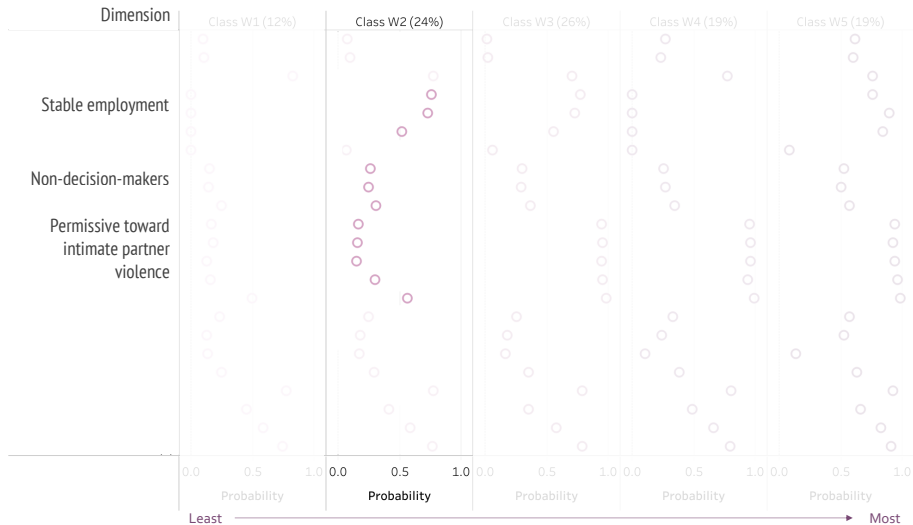


# Eastern Africa: Public/private mismatch





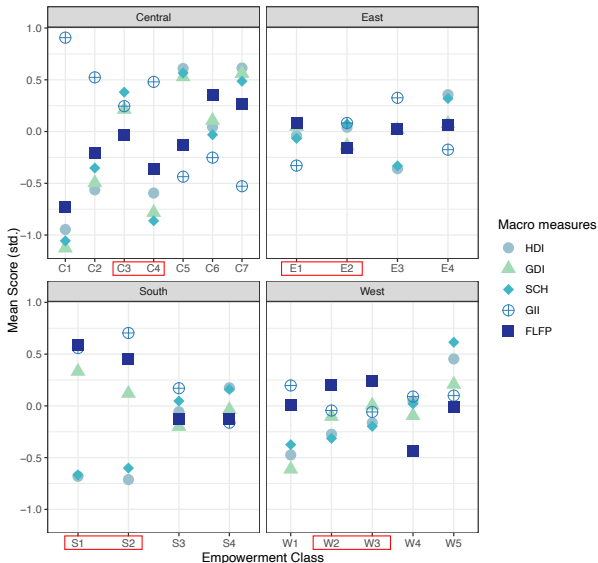
# Western Africa: Public/private mismatch



# Southern Africa: Public/private mismatch



# Comparing macro- and micro-level indicators



# Discussion

- Conceptually, a more precise and context-specific evaluation of progress toward women's empowerment is needed
  - Need for clarification on dimensions within specific contexts

# Discussion

- Methodologically, the LCA approach allows us to consider the interplay between indicators
  - However, there are several factors at the individual, household, institutional, and cultural levels that we were unable to fully assess in this work

# Discussion

- More practically, our findings highlight the importance of re-evaluating common measures of empowerment, which is often based solely on unidimensional and macro-level indices
  - Improvements in the public domain may not necessarily translate into higher levels of empowerment in the private domain

*Thank you*



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