

The Nexus of Women's Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: Evidence from Western Rural China

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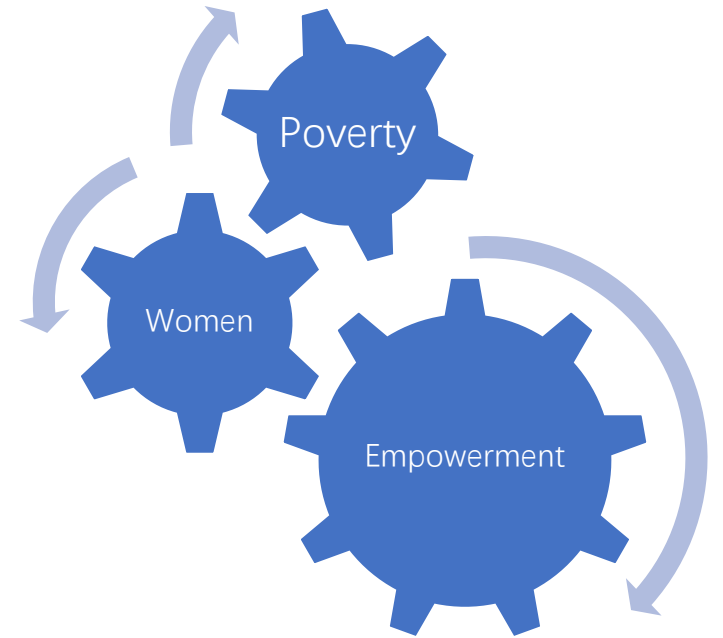
Problem Statement

- **Background**

- Gender equality and poverty reduction are both sustainable development goals; gender disparities are more severe among the poor.
- Research evidence on empowering women benefits poverty reduction, mostly in African countries.
- Gender-neutral poverty evaluation and graduation in China

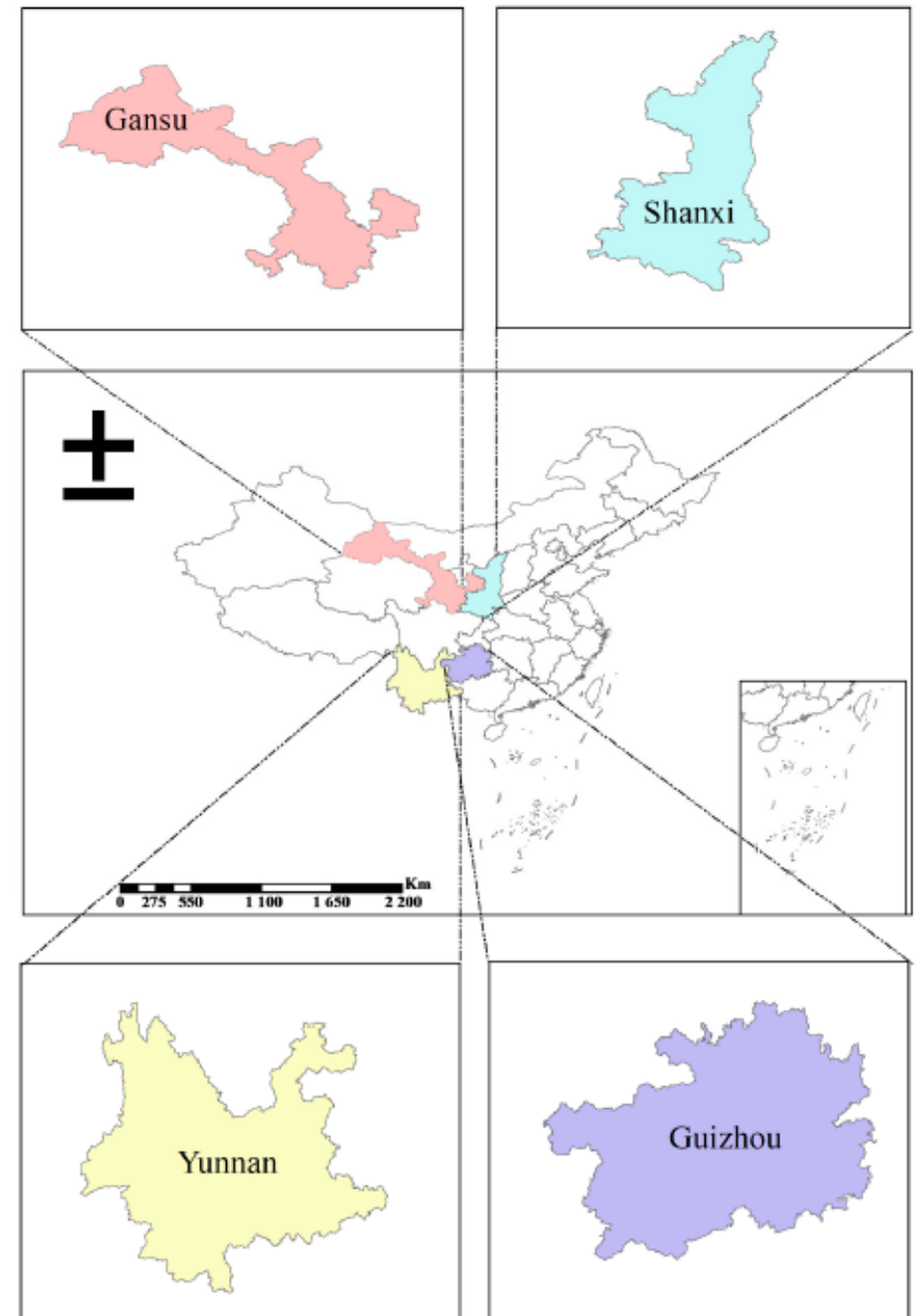
- **Research Questions**

- Did rural women get more empowered as their households were lifted out of poverty?
- Are households empowering women less likely to be poor?



Survey Data

- Panel data from a Food Security Household Longitudinal Survey, by All-CAAS in 2015 and 2021
- 9-module questionnaire: **household characteristics**, housing and living conditions, household wealth, agricultural production, income, **expenditure**, food consumption, shocks and coping strategies & **women's empowerment** at the household level.
- 7 counties in 4 provinces
- 558 dual-adult revisited households



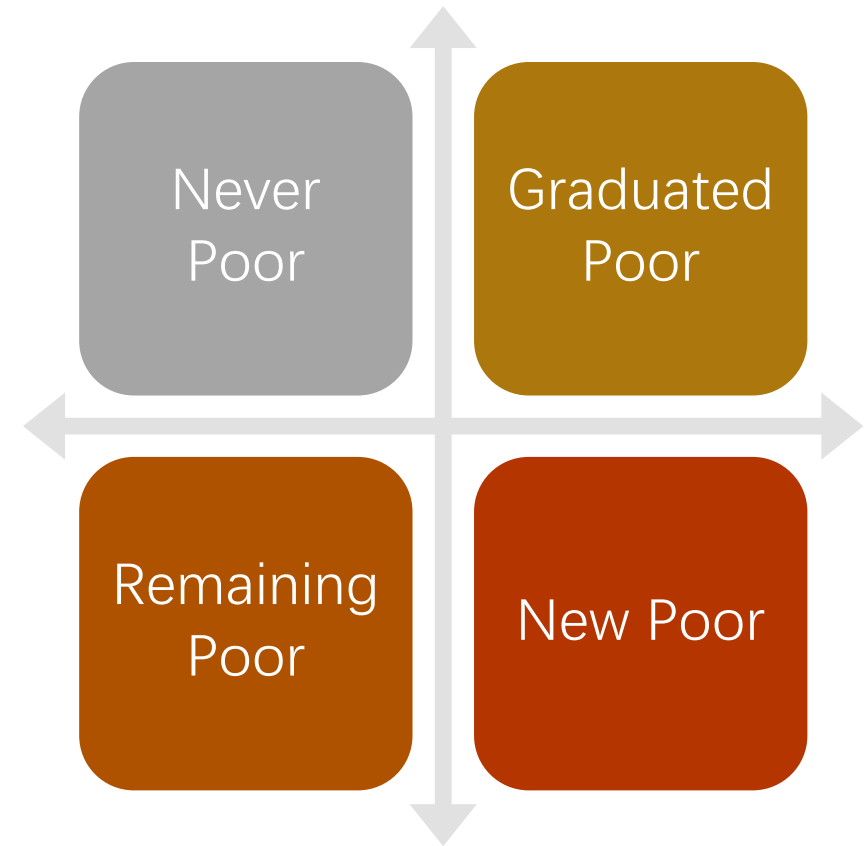
Methods

- Construction of Women's Empowerment Index-----Modified WEAI

Domains	Indicators	Weight of Indicators	Weight of Domains
Production	Input in farm production decisions	1/12	1/4
	Input in market decisions	1/12	
	Input in non-farm decisions	1/12	
Resources	Control over property assets	1/12	1/4
	Control over household assets	1/12	
	Control over land asset	1/12	
Income	Control over the use of income on daily necessities	1/12	1/4
	Input in Money Management	1/12	
	Control over expenditure on seeing doctors	1/12	
Social Connection	Decisions on credit	1/12	1/4
	Decisions on 'favor debt'	1/12	
	Women's Participation in village assemblies	1/12	

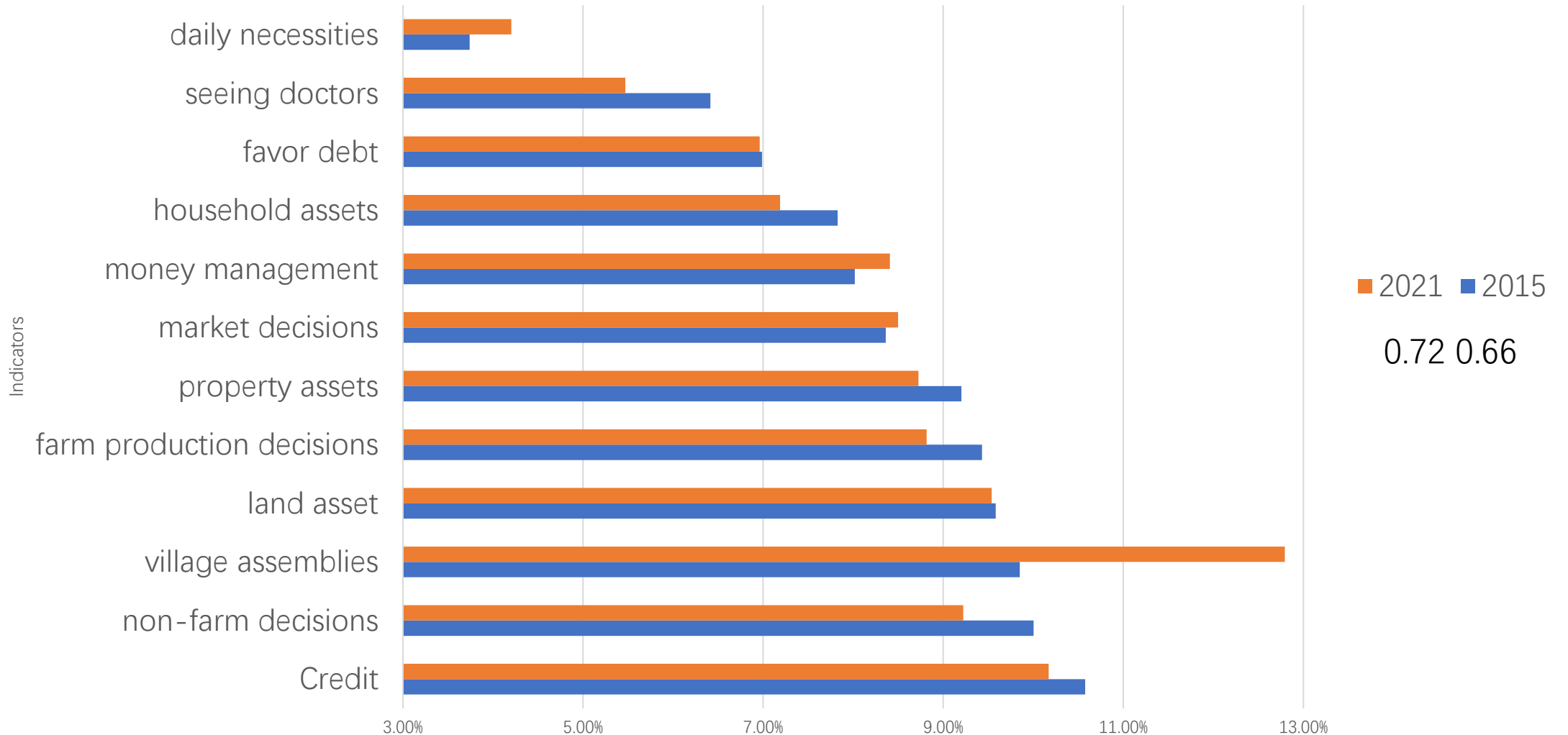
Methods

- Defining Poverty:
 - Household per capita per day expenditure, adjusted by the rural consumer price index in China and PPP in 2011.
 - 8 categories: food, tobacco and alcohol, clothing, housing, living necessities and services, transportation and communication, education and entertainment, medical care and other supplies and services
 - \$1.9, \$3.2 & \$5.5 (World Bank)



Indicators Contribution to WEAI

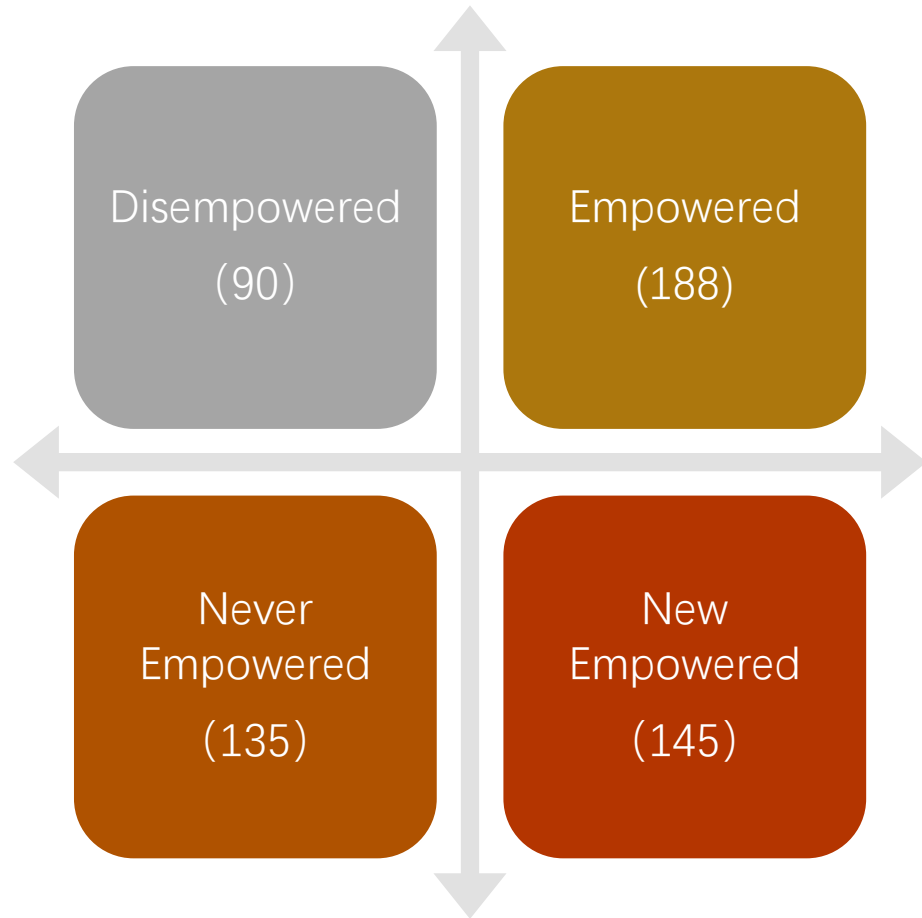
(in terms of disempowerment)



Poverty Status and Women's Empowerment Index

Poverty Threshold	\$1.90			\$3.20			\$5.50		
	n	2015	2021	n	2015	2021	n	2015	2021
Never Poor	543	0.66	0.72	453	0.67	0.73	271	0.70	0.76
Graduated Poor	10	0.49	0.70	74	0.64	0.68	141	0.63	0.68
New Poor	5	0.37	0.33	24	0.47	0.68	61	0.58	0.70
Remaining Poor	0	Na.	Na.	7	0.77	0.58	85	0.61	0.66
Total	558			558			558		

Correlation between Women's Empowerment and Poverty Status



Sample Households: 323
Empowered + Never Empowered

Poverty threshold: \$5.5

Correlation between Women's Empowerment and Poverty Status

Logistic Regression

Poverty Status

Dummy Dependent Variable

Women's Empowerment Status

Dummy Independent Variable

Quantile Regression

Expenditure Per capita Per day

Continuous Dependent Variable

Women's Disempowerment Score

Continuous Independent Variable

Household Characteristics (age, edu...)

Natural Resources (land size)

Health Shock (hospitalization)

Capacity Building (training)

Control Variables

Findings

- The logistic regression revealed significant negative correlations (p-value 0.003) between women's empowerment and household poverty.
- Average marginal effects (dy/dx) showed the probability of being poor for households that empowered women was 13.4% lower than those who didn't.
- The average age ($p < .05$), average education years of husband and wife ($p < .01$) and land size per capita ($p < .01$) also had significant relationship with poverty status, although the marginal effect was minimal.

Findings

- The quantile regression revealed negative correlations between the household per capita per day expenditure and women's individual disempowerment score.
- Significant correlations were found at the 25% (\$5.28, $p < .01$) and 50% (\$8.41 $p < .1$) quantiles of per capita per day expenditure, but not at the 75% quantile (\$15.14).

Conclusions

Do rural women get more empowered as their households were lifted out of poverty?

1. Modified WEAI from 0.66 in 2015 to 0.72 in 2021;
 2. Modified WEAI of the Graduating Poor group increased at all poverty thresholds;
 3. Empowerment difference in indicators; implications for policy-making.
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Are households empowering women less likely to be poor?

1. Households that empowering women have a bigger chance of staying out of poverty, with the average marginal effect at 13.4%.
2. This effect of women's empowerment is relatively stronger for poorer households.

Thank you for your attention!

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