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Yes, I Can: Subjective Legal Empowerment

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Abstract¹

This paper explores critically the notion of legal empowerment and suggests that the currently employed approaches lead to vague concepts which evade measurement and lend little programmatic guidance. Our thesis is that legal empowerment should be sought not in the process of providing legal solutions but in the subjective self-belief that a person possesses and can mobilize the necessary resources, competencies and energies to solve particular problems of legal nature. This model rejects the existence of an overall quantity of legal empowerment. People's beliefs in their ability to solve legal problems differ by type of problem, distribution of power in important relationships, social support infrastructure, language and many other factors. We propose a measurement framework in which the model of task-specific subjective legal empowerment is estimated through a probabilistic assessment of the perceived capabilities to sort out problems from the everyday life which normally could be resolved with legal means. Validity of the tool is assessed through application to convenience samples of beneficiaries of NGOs providing legal aid to vulnerable people in Azerbaijan, Mali, Rwanda, Egypt and Bangladesh. The results suggest that subjective legal empowerment is an observable and measurable psychological state. The major policy implications from the proposed model of subjective legal empowerment is that it could be used as a measurable benchmark for assessing the impact of diverse legal interventions on the subjective legal empowerment of individuals and social groups.

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I. Introduction

A. Brief review of the legal empowerment movement

In 2008 an independent commission backed by the UNDP and chaired by Madeline Albright and Fernando de Soto defined legal empowerment as “the process through which the poor become protected and are enabled to use the law to advance their rights and their interests, vis-à-vis the state and in the market”(Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor 2008). Legal empowerment has been seen as the process of arming the poor with legal tools in their battle with poverty. In this dynamic context every effort to improve the legal position of the poor through legislation, legal institutions, legal aid or public legal information is empowerment and namely legal empowerment. Back in 2003 while coining the phrase, Prof. Stephen Golub also embraced the process approach to legal empowerment: “Legal empowerment is the use of legal services and related development activities to increase disadvantaged populations’ control over their lives“ (Golub 2003). In a similar vein Bruce et. al. (2007) assert that legal empowerment of the poor (LEP) “refers to actions and processes, including but not limited to legal reforms, by which the poor are legally enabled to act more effectively to improve their economic situation and livelihoods, allowing them to alleviate or escape poverty.” Discussing the broader notion of empowerment Aslop et. al. (2006) define the concept again in a discourse of means towards a specific aim – to combat poverty: “the process of enhancing an individual’s or group’s capacity to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.”

Less frequently legal empowerment is conceptualized as an end rather than a means to an end. Palacio envisions the process oriented views on LEP as narrow approaches and offers a wider framework in which empowerment is “understood as part of “political empowerment” that provides citizens with a stake in the state... Ultimately, if legal empowerment is to mean anything for the poor, it has to provide them with security and mobility to enable them to climb the economic ladder” (Palacio 2006). In this view, legal empowerment is understood in terms of sufficient security and mobility which leads to economic prosperity. According to this view the process is not that important, as far as individuals and groups enjoy rights and opportunities which contribute to the improvement of their lives.

Both the process-based and functional definitions of legal empowerment suffer from conceptual ambiguity. On the one hand, the focus is on the individuals who are poor and are allegedly excluded from the law. On the other hand, legal empowerment is moulded into the paradigm of the law and development movement. Thus it is considered as an approach to break the poverty cycle, give people control over their lives or enhance their capacity to make informed choices and achieve desired results. Perceived from a programmatic and policy angle such a definition makes sense, all concerted efforts which are geared towards using the law towards the overarching goal of helping poor people exit the poverty cycle is legal empowerment. The problem, however, is that such a broad understanding could hardly be conceptualized with a sufficient degree of detail

as to be measured appropriately. If legal empowerment is a process of using the law to reduce poverty, then the ultimate indicator of legal empowerment should be the number of people living in poverty and the degree of that poverty. Such a conclusion, however, would be based on a set of difficult if not impossible to test assumptions such as 1) there is a causal link between the legal intervention and poverty; 2) the causation works only one way, 3) there are no other factors that affect poverty and so on. In a situation in which the expected result of legal empowerment cannot be evaluated reliably, the only plausible way to observe legal empowerment is to look at the processes involved, assuming that they contribute to the goal. Obviously, such an approach will tend to attach the legal empowerment label to every effort which looks and feels good in the eyes of the beholder.

The concept of subjective legal empowerment as outlined below aims to mitigate the discussed problems. We conceptualize legal empowerment as a psychological state which can be observed at individual, group and social level. Following this premise, we claim that subjective legal empowerment can be observed and measured. Such a measure of legal empowerment can be used to evaluate and compare the impact of different legal interventions. Moreover, a measurable concept of legal empowerment will facilitate the search for answers to policy relevant questions such as: How people and groups gain or lose legal empowerment? What are the social and personal benefits of legal empowerment? How stable is legal empowerment over time, cultures, jurisdictions and locations? In the following paragraphs of Chapter I we discuss the notion of subjective legal empowerment as internal psychological belief and will offer an approach to its measurement. In chapters II-IV we present the methodology and empirical results from mixed quantitative and qualitative studies of the proposed concept of legal empowerment in five countries – Azerbaijan, Rwanda, Mali, Egypt and Bangladesh. Chapter V discusses the results and chapter VI summarizes the major conclusions.

B. Legal empowerment as an internal belief

Our thesis is that legal empowerment should be sought not in the process of providing legal solutions but in the subjective self-belief that an individual can solve problems of a legal nature had such problems and needs occurred. Most criminal, and perhaps all civil, legal problems concern disputes between two or more parties. Empirical research consistently shows that the most prevalent legal problems in everyday life revolve around important relationships – family, consumer, neighbourhood, property, social benefits and so on (Barendrecht, Kamminga et al. 2008). Inevitably, the outcome of most disputes is determined by the distribution of power between the parties. In our analysis of legal empowerment it is not of primary importance from where the power originates – it could have economic, intellectual, physical, charismatic, informational and so forth origins - what is important is that in their crucial relationships, individuals are more likely to act to solve their problems if they believe that they have sufficient power to achieve a solution. On the contrary, perceived lack of power is a substantial barrier to solving the existing problems. If an individual perceives that the other party in the relationship has more power, he will be less likely to take steps and solve the problem. Examples could be found in virtually every area of the law (Golub 2010). Victims of domestic violence consistently under-report crimes under the pressure of fear and dependence on their spouses. Workers who are dismissed unfairly are unlikely to stand against mighty employers without support of powerful parties who equalize the power in the relationship (unions/lawyers/politicians). Consumers are

frightened to go alone against international corporations which have the ability to mobilize significant resources.

Power is the currency of disputes. In the broad framework of the rule of law doctrine, the law is expected to smooth out the inevitable misbalance of power between the parties. An empowered person will be one who sees his or her position in an important relationship as not less powerful than the position of the other party. In the classical liberal vision the individuals achieve self-empowerment through law (Trubek 1990). Although perfect equality of power in all relationships may not be possible, an empowered person will consider that they will be equal in the process of solving the dispute. The principle of equal access to justice for all signifies the expectation that the legal rules and institutions will provide fair and just resolution even if the disputants have different levels of power. In an ideal situation everyone is indifferent to the distribution of power because the legal mechanisms exist to rectify the discrepancy. However, we do not live in an ideal world and everywhere the *haves* fare better than the *have-not's*. There are people who have more power than others and this has an effect in the resolution of legal problems. As professor Marc Galanter (1974) puts it: "Because of differences in their size, differences in the state of the law, and differences in their resources, some of the actors in the society have many occasions to utilize the courts (in the broad sense) to make (or defend) claims; others do so only rarely."

Power matters, but the political scientists know how difficult it is to observe and measure it. People do not see themselves as equal in relationships, but how can we assess and quantify these perceptions? Moreover, the distribution of power is dynamic – with time the power balance can change under the pressure of slowly acting factors. Think about the relationships between children and parents and how they change along the cycle of life. Power within relationships could also be affected by single events. A new source of income could change the abilities of spouses to affect each other's behaviour and decisions. Sudden changes in the labour market can make an employee more vulnerable or more empowered in her relationship with the employer.

Not only can the power in a relationship change in strength, but it could also take many different forms and nuances. Ultimately we are interested in how this level of empowerment affects the ability of the individual to use the law to solve the emerging problems. We borrow from the findings of self-efficacy theory which states that people who have more belief in their own capabilities are more likely to achieve positive outcomes to their problems (Bandura 1995; Bandura 1997). Can we translate the concept of self-efficacy to the legal domain and define it as subjective legal empowerment? Yes, if we agree that legal empowerment is a psychological state which determines in one or another degree our predisposition to use the law. This would mean that a legally empowered person is not necessarily the one who has experience with responding to legal problems with legal solutions – i.e. filed a law suit when his rights were infringed or sought assistance from the competent authorities. Legally empowered is the person who has sufficiently high confidence that, if a problem appears, there are legal solutions available, and he can use them to solve the problem.

C. Objective legal empowerment

There are two components of this operational definition of legal empowerment. The first dimension signifies the objective existence of legal norms and institutions which can be put into

play when there is a need. Biron and Bamberger (2010) use the term socio-structural empowerment to imply that there is a difference between actual happenings in the world and the way in which these are being perceived. There are plenty of examples in the law and development practice showing how legal institutions and norms are established without producing significant effects (sometimes actually backfiring) among the target groups. In this vein objective legal empowerment should be seen as actual phenomena which take place. Subjective legal empowerment, however, is an internal belief that these norms and institutions relate to the life and well-being of the individual, group or community.

The question which arises is how to assess situations in which norms and institutions are in place but people do not see themselves as empowered. Or the mirror hypothesis of individuals who feel legally empowered in the absence of socio-structural empowerment. It is unlikely that individuals will feel capable of using legal means when such means are perceived as non-existent. The opposite hypothesis, however, is more plausible – despite the presence of premises of legal empowerment, people may feel disempowered. Many failures can explain this scenario; Often people do not know their rights and feel that they cannot solve their problems while illiteracy, lack of information or inability to navigate around the legal system or understand the working of the legal system is common.

D. Subjective legal empowerment

Subjective legal empowerment is the second and more important component of our definition. In order to be legally empowered a person has to see herself as capable of using legal means for solving the problem. The link between objective and subjective legal empowerment is neither straightforward nor unidirectional. An individual who experiences a problem could not know what his legal standing is, but still be fully committed to discovering his options and taking action. Alternatively, others could know what the mechanisms are but still take no action for a myriad of reasons, which could be perceived or substantial barriers. A third scenario is when an individual does not know about the law and does not feel capable of solving the problem with legal means. Each of these scenarios may produce a level of subjective legal empowerment that is distinct and different from a measure of objective legal empowerment (length of court procedures, costs and availability of lawyers etc.) that might currently be used in its place.

E. Task specificity

If subjective legal empowerment is the perceived self-belief that legal mechanisms could be used to solve the problem with legal means, than what is the difference with known concepts such as trust or legal awareness? Unlike trust subjective legal empowerment is task specific. An individual cannot be equally empowered or deprived of power in all of her important relationships. For instance, one can be empowered in terms of family law but see herself in a weak position in the employment relationships. Empowerment could be also related to jurisdiction – ‘in my country I feel legally capable but much less so abroad’. We have already discussed how legal empowerment could change over time and life situations. Therefore legal

empowerment should be considered as a task specific personal trait. It depends on the legal domain and could change over time and place.

Legal awareness is a vague term which is most often used to describe knowledge of norms, processes and institutions. Individuals are aware of their rights when they know about these rights and/or the mechanisms to vindicate these rights. Just like legal empowerment, legal awareness is task specific – a concept such as general legal awareness makes little sense since even the most prodigious legal professionals cannot be aware of all rights and obligation. The difference is that legal awareness is a cognitive category. It tells us whether one knows about his or her rights, but does not indicate whether these rights are seen as actionable. For instance, a detainee who is tortured might be well aware of his right not to be tortured. Knowing this, we could draw little inferences about the likelihood that this person will take action to protect his rights.

If subjective legal empowerment is task specific, the questions which arise are about the feasibility of its measurement. It is apparent that it is not possible to assess the perceived legal capability of a person or social group to all possible problems in all possible legal domains. However, the measurement effort could be based on the assumption that there is a close association between the self-belief within the different legal fields. A person who feels capable of sorting out one legal problem will be likely to feel similarly towards a different problem within the same domain. For example, if an individual feels capable of solving a problem over holidays with her employer, she is also likely to feel capable of solving different problem with her employer, whereas we could not infer anything about the self-perception of her ability to solve a family problem.

Using this assumption we can normatively identify areas of legal interventions, which are considered as important for individuals. Barendrecht, Kamminga et al. (2008) use a combination of six approaches to identify the most important legal needs.² Empirical legal needs studies could also identify the most frequent as well as the most pressing legal problems that people in a given county or community face. Assessment of the level of legal empowerment in these areas will provide sufficient information how the people perceive the law and how accessible it is.

F. How to measure legal empowerment

Measuring subjective belief is a challenging endeavour. How can we know how a person deems his or her abilities to solve a problem with legal means? Serious legal problems are rare life events and often individuals would not have personal experience to base their beliefs on (it should be noted that decisions as to whether to use legal solutions are based on just such ‘weak’ information, regardless of the objective situation). How do we know how an individual perceives his or her legal capability towards a problem which is likely but has not occurred? After the challenges of operationalization come a host of measurement issues. People might be reluctant to share or they might portray a more socially acceptable image of themselves.

² The six approaches are: (1) information regarding the frequency of the problems from legal needs surveys conducted in eight countries; (2) data from these surveys about the typical impact of these problems on people’s lives; (3) court specializations in sixteen countries; (4) estimates of the value of the interests that individuals wish to protect against threats from outsiders; (5) estimates of the typical costs of self-protection; and (6) estimates of the typical size of specific investments that a person will lose if he leaves the threatening situation.

Several approaches are possible to operationalize the subjective legal empowerment. One is to follow the legal needs/justiciable events methodology and assess what people do when a certain problem strikes (Genn 1999; Pleasence, Buck et al. 2004; Currie 2007; Murayama 2007; Gramatikov 2008). This approach however, will exclude those who have not yet experienced (or within the reference period) a significant problem. Another negative side of the approach is the hindsight effect: people tend to see events that already happened as more probable than they actually are. Thus a previous failure to solve a problem will result in comparable future problems being assigned a higher likelihood of failure. Hence, the approach does not tell us how people think about the possible solutions *ex ante* and how capable they perceive themselves. Another way to study perceived ability and willingness to solve problems with legal means is to measure the level of trust in the legal institutions. The problem with trust is that it reflects difficult to interpret mixture of personal experiences, perspective beliefs, ideological, personal and group values, media influence, affective states and so on. Indeed, the proposed approach for measuring legal empowerment is also subjective and thus susceptible to influences and biases but it is task-specific and based on estimation of self-capabilities for solving particular problems.

In this study we adopt a probabilistic approach in the measurement of legal empowerment. When people think about legal problems, they normally assess their chances of success versus the chances of failure. This evaluation could take many different forms – from simple and not very precise assignment of likelihoods to the possible outcomes of the problem to complex cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness forms of analyses. Because we are interested in discovering what the majority of the people think we will use another assumption – that most individuals do a simple and straightforward assessment of their chances. Using a simple and unified approach provides for comparability of the measured concept across individuals, groups and societies.

Using the operational definition of legal empowerment, and specifically its subjective legal empowerment part and the probability approach, we drafted a set of questions consisting of several clusters. In each of the clusters the respondents were asked about specific problem (employment, family relations, neighbour relations, land, ID documents, crime, business) and the research instrument assesses their perceived probabilities of solving the problem with their own resources. A five level Likert-scale like response scale measures the perceived probability from *very low chance* to *very high chance*. Then the respondents were asked where would they look for help had such a problem appeared, and how risky it would be to receive support from this source.

II. Methods

The purpose of this research was to learn about and from the ways in which local projects in different countries cope with their legal problems and to explore the potential for improvement. For the diagnosis and learning process, the methodology of action research was chosen. Action research aims to let a ‘community of practice’ - “a group whose members regularly engage in sharing and learning, based on their common interests” (Lesser & Storck, 2001) - reflect on current practices, address issues, gather data and solve problems. Action research is an interactive process, during which members of a community of practice share information and experiences in order to learn from each other. For this research we decided to use a mixed methodology of both

qualitative and quantitative. This was selected as it provides the greatest opportunity to collect all appropriate data (Yu, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

The research was carried out in five countries, and within each country one organization was made the subject of the action research. The organizations were selected by Oxfam Novib because they were (part-)funded by Oxfam Novib, provided legal aid services, and worked in countries where there were significant rule of law problems. As a result of this selection the following organizations in the corresponding countries were selected; Ain O Salish Kendra (Bangladesh); CEWLA (Egypt); Haguruka (Rwanda); Praxis (Azerbaijan); Deme So (Mali). The action research took place over a period of 6 months between 22nd November 2009 and 12th May 2010. A separate trip was made to each organization within this period, and 10 days were spent within the organization carrying out the action research. Each field trip was carried out by at least two members of the research team.

A. Quantitative Data Collection

Quantitative data was collected using a legal needs survey (see Appendix A). This was a measure devised for the action research based on the Measuring Access to Justice methodology (Gramatikov, Barendrecht et al. 2010). Prior to the field trip, each organization was asked to collect data using the same measure. They were requested to collect data from both service users of the organization, and also non-service using members of the community.

Convenience sampling was used throughout each of the field-trip sites as this kept the costs in terms of time to a minimum for the host organization, who undertook this research in addition to their normal practice. The questionnaire contained questions on the prevalence of legal problems, strategies for coping with these problems, legal empowerment and attitude towards key concepts of microjustice. Prevalence of legal problems and strategies for coping were surveyed with a standard methodology for legal needs studies (Genn and Beinart 1999; Genn and Paterson 2001; Pleasence, Buck et al. 2004; Barendrecht, Kamminga et al. 2008). For legal empowerment and microjustice, a new set of survey questions was developed. Table 1 below gives the number of participants from each country.

Table 1: Legal Aid Status of Respondents from Each Organization

Country	Received Legal Aid	Have Not Received Legal Aid	Unsure if Received Legal Aid	Total
Praxis (Azerbaijan)	79	0	0	79
Deme So (Mali)	49	0	0	49
Haguruka/LAF (Rwanda)	61	3	1	65
CEWLA (Egypt)	42	26	2	70
ASK (Bangladesh)	16	58	2	76
Total	247	87	5	339

B. Qualitative Data Collection

Qualitative data was collected in a number of different methods. At each site the following methods were used to gather information;

Observations

These were made throughout the action research by members of the research team. These observations were used to provide context to the findings and to stimulate areas of investigation through the remainder of the research.

Focus Groups

- Client Focus Groups

The focus groups consisted of between 2 and 12 individuals who had used, or were in the process of using, the services of the host organization. Focus groups were held in a location away from the offices of the host organization, and were conducted by two members of the research team. Where possible, members of the host organization were not present during the focus groups. In these focus groups the experiences of the clients in relation to legal needs and also methods of addressing these legal needs were explored.

- Non-Client Focus Groups

These focus groups consisted of between 6 and 10 individuals who had never used the services of the host organization. The focus groups were held in a location away from the offices of the host organization, conducted by two members of the research team, and, where possible, members of the host organization were not present. In these focus groups the legal needs of the participants and the methods of addressing these needs were explored.

The number of focus groups carried out with each organization are given in table 2.

Table 2: No. of Focus Groups in Each Country

	Praxis	Deme So	Haguruka	CEWLA	ASK	Total
Client Focus Groups	3	3	2	5	2	15
Non-client focus groups	0	0	1	0	1	2
TOTAL	3	3	3	5	3	17

In order to capture as much information as possible, each of these events was videotaped where permission was received from the participants, photographs were taken, and notes were taken by the researchers. In the case of the workshops, any materials completed by the participants were collected and used as primary sources of information. These materials included post-it notes, flip-chart pages, and selections made by the participants.

III. Quantitative Results

The subjective legal empowerment of participants was measured through a sequence of questions which asked 'Imagine you had a problem with ... how likely do you think it is that you would reach a solution to this problem?'. Table 3 shows the overall means for each of the scenarios given.

Table 3: Overall Mean Subjective Legal Empowerment by Problem

Problem	Mean likelihood of solving the problem (Very Unlikely (1) to Very Likely (5))
Problem in the relationship to your employer	2,90 (range 1-5)
Problem in the relationship to a neighbour	2,82 (range 1-5)
Problem in the relationship to your husband, wife, father or mother	2,80 (range 1-5)
Problem with others regarding the land	2,93 (range 1-5)
Problem regarding a business	2,61 (range 1-5)
You become a victim of crime	2,77 (range 1-5)
You need documents to prove your status	3,36 (range 1-5)

This table demonstrates that for most problems, the populations that were sampled felt that they were not very likely to solve the problem. All but a problem with documents to prove your status have means below 3, indicating that these individuals felt that they were unlikely to solve the problem.

When we look in more detail at each of these problems with the results divided by organization (Table 4), we can see interesting differences. The table is colour coded to show the means in the following way:

1,0 to 1,9	2,0 to 2,9	3,0 to 3,9	4,0 to 5,0
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Table 4: Mean Subjective Legal Empowerment by Problem and Organization

Problem in relation to...	Praxis (Azerbaijan) (range 1-5)	ASK (Bangladesh) (range 1-5)	CEWLA (Egypt) (range 1-5)	Deme So (Mali) (range 1-5)	Haguruka (Rwanda) (range 1-5)
relationship to your employer	2,6	2,2	3,0	3,8 (range 1-5)	3,3
relationship to your husband, wife, father or mother	2,2	2,1	3,1	4,1 (range 2-5)	3,0
land	2,4	2,7	2,8	3,7 (range 2-5)	3,4
ID Documents	2,3	2,8	4,0	4,4 (range 4-5)	3,9
a business	2,1	2,5	2,9	n/a	3,1
become a victim of crime	1,4	1,5	2,0	n/a	2,3
relationship to a neighbour	2,4	2,5	3,5	n/a	3,0
Mean Score	2,2	2,3	3,0	4,0	3,1

Table 4 shows that our participants from Azerbaijan and Bangladesh suffer from a much lower level of subjective legal empowerment than Egypt, Mali or Rwanda. None of their scores are above the centre point of 3 (neither likely nor unlikely to reach a solution), and both groups of respondents demonstrate a distinct lack of legal empowerment in relation to becoming a victim of a crime. The overall low level of legal empowerment is reflected in the mean scores from Azerbaijan and Bangladesh, which are 2,2 and 2,3 respectively.

Although respondents in Mali were not asked about business problems, being a victim of crime, or problems in relation to neighbours, they demonstrate a comparatively high level of legal empowerment, with scores all of 3,7 or higher, and an overall average of 4,0. Egyptian and Rwandan respondents have mean scores of 3,0 and 3,1 respectively, placing them in the centre of the scale.

The data was then examined for differences between male and female respondents. Of the five organizations visited, 3 had a specific focus on women's rights and issues. This led to a majority of respondents to the survey being women. In addition, information on gender was not collected from the samples from Azerbaijan and Mali. These two sample populations are not included in the analyses in Table 5.

Table 5: Differences in Subjective Legal Empowerment in Men and Women

Problem in relation to...	Females	Males	p-value of the difference
Relationship to your employer	2,9 (N=149)	2,6 (N=49)	,362*
relationship to your husband, wife, father or mother	2,7 (N=156)	2,8 (N=51)	,545*
land	2,9 (N=156)	3,0 (N=51)	,774*
ID Documents	3,5 (N=157)	3,5 (N=51)	,997*
a business	2,8 (N=152)	2,8 (N=48)	,942*
you become a victim of crime	2,9 (N=156)	3,0 (N=50)	,593*
relationship to a neighbour	3,0 (N=157)	2,8 (N=50)	,342*

*Non-significant difference

As can be seen, there is no significant differences between males and females in their responses to any of these issues. Although the sample is small, the largest difference found between the group means is 0,3, indicating that if there is any difference between these groups on an international level, it is very small.

Analyses were also run on the populations within the organizations. Of these analyses, there were no significant differences, except for Haguruka in Rwanda, Table 6.

Table 6: Difference in Subjective Legal Empowerment in Rwandan Respondents

Problem in relation to...	Females	Males	p-value of the difference
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relationship to your husband, wife, father or mother	2,8 (N=53)	4,0 (N=9)	,019**
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**Significant at the $p < 0,05$ level

Although this result should be treated with caution, given the sample size, it does follow the expected direction of men having more power, and thus being more likely to expect to gain a solution if they had a problem with a family relative. That the noted effect is a result of power imbalance is supported by the fact that this expectation to find a solution is not replicated in problems with relationships outside of the family (neighbor, business or land problems) where power balances might be more even between individuals.

The Bangladeshi, Egyptian and Rwandan surveys, also included questions relating to which type of community the respondent lived in. This enables us to examine whether there are any differences in subjective legal empowerment, depending on whether the respondents come from urban, suburban, or rural locations (see Table 7).

Table 7: Difference in Subjective Legal Empowerment by Community Type

Problem in relation to...	Significance
...the relationship to your employer	,014**
...the relationship to a neighbour	,826*
...relationship to your husband, wife, father or mother	,862*
...land	,281*
...a business	,259*
...you become a victim of crime	,090*
...ID documents	,984*

*non-significant

** Significant at the $p < 0,05$ level

As can be seen, only one problem group (problem with an employer) has a significant difference between those who live in urban, suburban and rural locations. To further investigate this difference, a Tukey test was conducted to see where the differences lied, the results of which are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Tukey Test Results for Problem with an Employer by Community Type

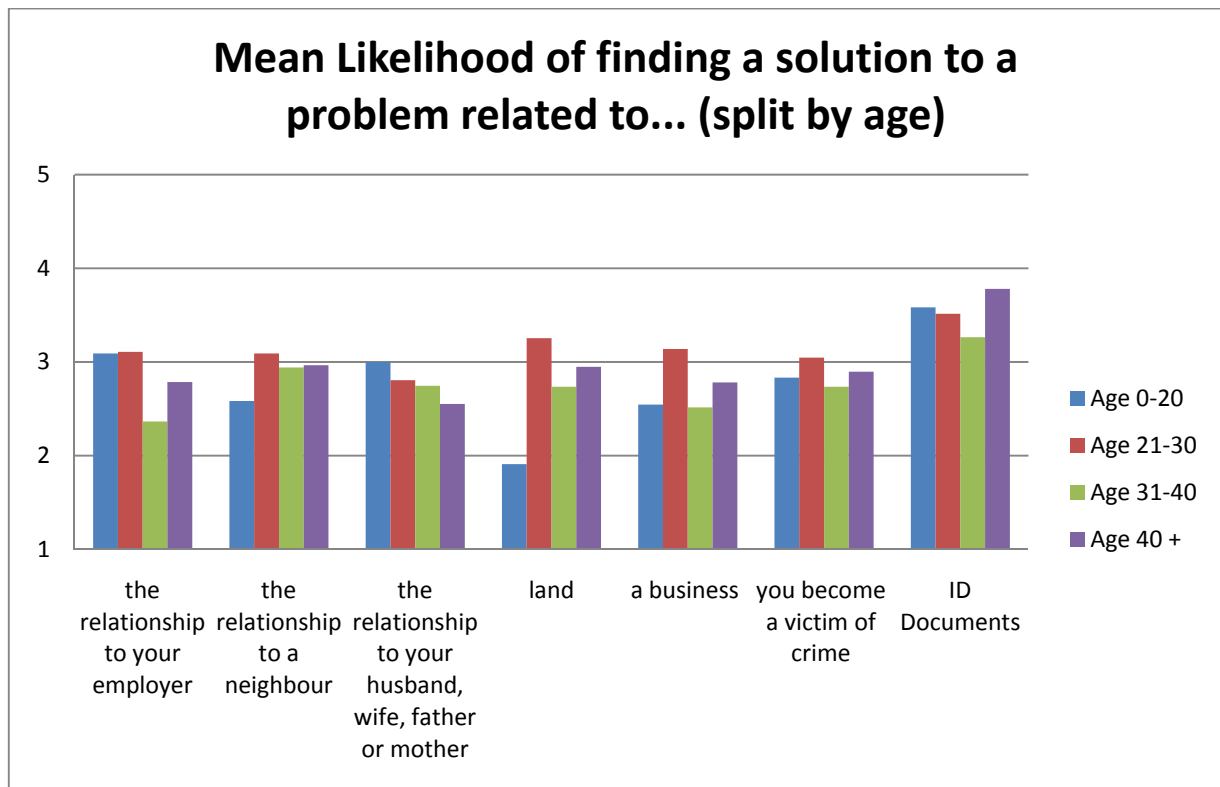
D2 Type Community	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Urban	129	2,58	
Rural	46	3,09	3,09
Suburban	24		3,38

This table demonstrates that the urban and rural groups, when taken together, are significantly different from the rural and suburban groups when taken together. This post-hoc test result tells us only that the suburban group felt more empowered in relation to problems with their employer than urban individuals. Those from rural regions were not different from either of the other two groups.

This result is likely to be in part due to the low and unequal sample sizes of the groups, and a larger sample may clarify these results further.

Data was also collected on the ages of the individual respondents from these same three organizations. In Chart 1 we show the mean perceived likelihood of solving a problem for a range of age groups.

Chart 1: Subjective Legal Empowerment by Age Group



As can be seen, there appears to be little difference between the age groups in terms of their perceived likelihood of finding a solution to different problems. This pattern is replicated when the countries are examined individually.

Once the subjective levels of likelihood of reaching a solution had been assessed, parties were asked who (if anybody) they would ask for help in relation to this problem. Table 9 lists the results for each of the legal problems. The table is colour coded to the following scheme

0,0-4,9% of	5,0-9,9% of	10,0-19,9%	20,0-29,9%	30,0-39,9%	40,0-49,9%	50,0%+ of
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respondents	respondents	of respondents	of respondents	of respondents	of respondents	respondents
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Table 9: Proportion of Respondents Asking specific Individuals for Assistance with different Problems

	Employment	Neighbour	Family	Land	Business	Crime	Average
Member of my family	42,3%	47,2%	65,5%	40,7%	30,8%	39,4%	44,3%
Lawyer	29,4%	22,8%	25,9%	37,4%	30,1%	38,1%	30,6%
NGO	31,2%	23,4%	31,3%	31,2%	19,7%	28,0%	27,5%
Court	22,5%	20,0%	24,7%	30,3%	24,4%	35,6%	26,3%
Friend	26,4%	24,8%	33,0%	22,3%	23,7%	17,3%	24,6%
Local authority (municipality)	16,5%	27,9%	16,7%	28,8%	17,9%	18,3%	21,0%
Colleague	32,7%	14,5%	17,9%	12,8%	24,4%	12,1%	19,1%
Police	7,8%	20,3%	9,8%	13,1%	12,9%	36,3%	16,7%
Central public authority	12,3%	12,1%	4,8%	13,1%	12,5%	10,0%	10,8%
Professional association	12,3%	6,2%	10,1%	10,7%	7,5%	4,8%	8,6%
Other	7,5%	10,3%	9,2%	7,1%	9,7%	8,0%	8,6%
Powerful third party (informal)	4,5%	5,9%	4,2%	5,0%	7,2%	3,8%	5,1%
Village elder	2,4%	10,3%	6,0%	3,9%	3,9%	2,4%	4,8%
Politician	3,0%	4,8%	2,7%	4,5%	2,2%	4,2%	3,5%
No, there is no such person	3,6%	2,8%	2,4%	2,1%	3,6%	2,1%	2,7%
Do not know	1,8%	1,0%	1,2%	1,8%	3,2%	1,0%	1,7%

As we can see from this table, overall families are the most popular source of protection across the range of legal problems. Family members are particularly, perhaps predictably, popular as a source of protection in family issues, where 65% of respondents would go to a family member for protection, but are also popular with other legal problems. Lawyers are widely favoured across the range of legal problems, and particularly in cases of crime, land and business. The police come 8th with an average of just 16% of respondents using them across all legal problems. In cases of crime, however, this percentage jumps to 36%, but is still below family and lawyers, and very similar to the score given to courts.

On average, under 3% of respondents did think there was a person who could protect them, while under 2% did not know, or did not want to answer. The following table gives the average percentages of respondents who would ask each of these people for assistance across all legal problems, for each country. The table is ordered from the most selected source of assistance.

Table 10: Proportion of Respondents Asking specific Individuals for Assistance Split by Organization

Source of Assistance	Praxis (Azerbaijan)	ASK (Bangladesh)	CEWLA (Egypt)	Deme So (Mali)	Haguruka (Rwanda)	Average
Member of my family	37,1%	62,0%	48,2%	38,0%	22,4%	44,30%
Lawyer	43,9%	33,0%	21,9%	15,9%	22,3%	30,60%
NGO	39,5%	14,9%	10,0%	43,3%	30,7%	27,50%
Court	25,5%	17,4%	4,4%	25,3%	55,7%	26,30%
Friend	13,5%	40,0%	20,9%	31,4%	14,0%	24,60%
Local authority (municipality)	23,0%	22,2%	0,7%	1,6%	46,5%	21,00%
Colleague	11,2%	30,1%	10,4%	27,8%	15,3%	19,10%
Police	18,1%	17,1%	7,5%	1,2%	27,6%	16,70%
Central public authority	26,2%	6,2%	0,2%	0,0%	12,6%	10,80%
Professional association	1,3%	7,0%	7,8%	25,7%	8,1%	8,60%
Other	9,1%	6,8%	17,7%	0,0%	3,4%	8,60%
Powerful third party (informal)	2,5%	8,8%	5,6%	6,1%	1,1%	5,10%
Village elder	3,2%	14,9%	0,7%	0,0%	0,8%	4,80%
Politician	0,2%	10,5%	0,7%	2,4%	2,1%	3,50%
No, there is no such person	1,1%	5,9%	3,9%	0,0%	0,8%	2,70%
Do not know	1,5%	2,6%	1,7%	0,0%	1,4%	1,70%

Table 10 shows interesting differences between some of the countries involved. In Egypt, fewer respondents considered going to official bodies (court, local authority, public authority, police) than on average. This is not compensated by proportionally greater numbers selecting alternative sources of protection however, and the proportion of people who think there is no such help is not the highest out of the 5 countries. Similarly, Malinese respondents indicated that they would

infrequently turn to local authorities, public authorities or the police for protection, instead looking to professional associations, NGO's, friends and family. In contrast to Egypt and Mali, Rwandan respondents indicate they would go to courts, local authorities or the police for protection more than any of the other country respondents, while turning to family members and lawyers proportionally less.

Bangladeshi respondents indicate that they would approach village elders and politicians much more frequently than the other 4 countries while friends and family members are the most popular source of protection in this group. In Azerbaijan, lawyers would be turned to most frequently, with NGOs and family members next.

Table 11 shows the respondents perceptions of the extent to which they are able to make this protection happen on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = very small extent, 5 = very large extent). Each type of legal problem is split by country and the mean of the responses is given. The table is colour coded using the following scheme:

1,0 to 1,9	2,0 to 2,9	3,0 to 3,9	4,0 to 5,0
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Table 11: Perceived Ability to Make Protection Happen Split by Problem Type

Country	Employer	Neighbour	Husband	Land	Business	Crime	Average
Praxis (Azerbaijan)	2,9	3,0	2,9	3,0	2,9	2,9	2,9
ASK (Bangladesh)	2,9	2,8	3,0	2,7	2,6	2,7	2,8
CEWLA (Egypt)	3,3	3,5	3,5	3,2	3,4	3,4	3,4
Deme So (Mali)	3,9	N/A	4,1	3,1	N/A	N/A	3,7
Haguruka (Rwanda)	3,6	3,3	3,4	3,4	3,4	3,5	3,4

As can be seen from this table, Bangladesh has the lowest perception of their ability to make this happen, while both Rwanda and Egypt have relatively high perceived ability to make this protection happen. It should be noted, however, that almost all of the ratings are in the middle section of the possible range, which may indicate that participants were not able to fully understand and respond to the question.

Respondents were also asked about the risks involved in asking the parties to provide protection in each of these cases. The respondents were asked to what extent it was risky on a Likert scale from 1 (very small extent) to 5 (very large extent). The table is colour coded using the following scheme:

1,0 to 1,9	2,0 to 2,9	3,0 to 3,9	4,0 to 5,0
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Table 12: Perceived Level of Risk Associated With Asking For Assistance

Country	Employer	Neighbour	Husband	Land	Business	Crime	Average
Praxis (Azerbaijan)	2,3	2,3	2,4	2,3	2,2	2,3	2,3
ASK (Bangladesh)	2,8	2,9	2,6	3,0	3,1	3,0	2,9
CEWLA (Egypt)	2,4	2,3	2,1	2,3	2,4	2,4	2,3
Deme So (Mali)	2,2	N/A	2,4	2,4	N/A	N/A	2,3
Haguruka (Rwanda)	2,5	2,4	2,5	2,1	2,4	2,4	2,4

As can be seen from table 12, there is little difference in the level of risk perceived in seeking protection for any of the categories of legal problem, in any of the countries. It is noticeable, however, that Bangladesh has the highest score (indicating greater risk) in each category of problem. This indicates that there is greater problem with seeking help in general in Bangladesh than there is in the other countries.

These Bangladeshi responses on the risks associated with asking for protection, and the responses on the likelihood of making this protection happen, are consistent with the overall finding that Bangladeshi respondents were one of the least legally empowered countries (Table 4).

IV. Qualitative Results

A. Evidence for a valid measure

Before we look at the manner in which legal empowerment is described and constructed by participants, it is important to ensure that the data that is collected through the quantitative measures is a true evaluation of the empowerment of individuals. It is not possible to achieve this conclusively, however the observations and experiences that were made through the course of the action research can provide an initial indication of the accuracy of the quantitative data collected. It is of particular interest if the countries that are indicated in Table 4 as having low or high overall levels of subjective legal empowerment have these findings reflected in the responses and information given to us through the action research. In order to demonstrate this, we provide overall reflections from both Azerbaijan and Bangladesh, which give an indication that the data collected by the quantitative measure is reflective of the real situation.

- Azerbaijan

“Here we met and talked mainly to Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs). This is an unfortunate group of the population who see their children and grandchildren born and raised in uncertainty. They massively hope to return to their land but many or at least those who are more realistic have lost hope long time ago. Although, no one would dare to admit this publicly. Secondly, most of the IDPs feel as pawns in the geo-political game which takes place in the conflict Azerbaijan-

Armenia. Again, no one would say it, but informally I got some signs of discontent of the governmental policy to keep them into IDP conditions using a carrot and a stick approach. They think that the government wants them in this situation to maintain the *casus belli* and to be able to parade their return to the world media had the occupied land was returned back. So the IDPs live in very bad conditions and most importantly see their lives captured in a conflict on which they have no say.

“Secondly, there are important processes going on in the Azerbaijanian society. For the last 20 years social stratification developed in a fast pace. Those who are in their mid 30s and above live with the memories of the times when the society was assumed to be equal. They remember the order and the lack of visible divisions (although the real picture is far from perfect). Now, people are concerned with the growing divide and the majority find it appallingly unfair. One can see pictures of inequality everywhere – very rich living areas versus very poor, police stop mainly old cars, ridiculously expensive stores with people manifesting status. The general feeling is that they’re shifted from one extreme to the other. Most people to whom we spoke were concerned that now money (but also political power although this is another taboo in Azerbaijan) can buy everything. This is a normal concern everywhere, but in Azerbaijan, as well as in other transitioning countries, there is the strong attitude of social injustice and falling order which are fueled by the memories from the past. This makes many people, who under the Azerbaijani standards should be something like middle class, think of themselves as oppressed and exploited. This sentiment clearly affects the self-assessed legal capabilities. Together with the “feeling small” mentality they tend to think that the justice system is a luxury item which works for the rich and powerful and inevitably castigates ‘folks like them’.”

- Bangladesh

“In Bangladesh we talked only to female respondents. These included women who had received assistance from ASK, and those who had not. The primary concern reflected to us by these women was domestic violence and issues of Dower (money to be paid by a husband to his wife) and Dowry (an illegal payment from the wife, or wife’s family, to the husband). They reported that domestic violence was frequent, and that there was little that could be done about it. Many women had experienced significant injuries from this violence, and all agreed that men were the more powerful parties in any marriage.

“The overall impression given by the women was that the justice system worked against them. The corruption in all institutions (police, lawyers, judiciary) provided an easy opportunity for men to avoid any sort of meaningful prosecution, while community courts would always support people with influence, regardless of right or wrong. The formal court systems, where the respondents had an understanding of them, were considered good in theory, but that the corruption, cost, and extensive time delays, rendered them of minimal use.

“Women we spoke to told us that they all worked in order to raise money, usually in shops or in the production of something. We were told how they were afraid for their businesses and themselves, as they felt that if they were seen to be successful, they would be targeted by criminals, and they did not know what they could do to prevent this happening or to seek redress after the event. The overall impression given was of a group of people who felt that they received little or no support from the formal institutions, and who were largely resigned to simply accepting their ‘lot’ as unable to retaliate effectively when they were wronged.”

Although these impressions are far from empirically gathered, they provide evidence of the link between the results of the quantitative measure and the impression given by the members of that society in relation to subjective legal empowerment. This gives us confidence that in continuing the process of developing a quantitative measure, we are accessing a genuine construct of subjective legal empowerment.

B. Legal empowerment and belonging to social groups

In the quantitative sections above legal empowerment is measured through a probabilistic tool based on perceived ability to solve specific problem which has legal connotations. Despite the limitations of the quantitative data and the atypical populations from which the samples were drawn we see that legal empowerment as internal belief could be conceptualized and quantified. Our interest in the following sections is to describe the images of subjective legal empowerment. We use data from the focus groups to find out how the people think about their abilities to use the law.

From the data collected in the course of the focus groups, we identified verbal and symbolic representations of legal disempowerment but also notable instances of empowerment. The participants in the focus groups predominantly belonged to the most vulnerable groups of the respective societies – internally displaced persons in Azerbaijan, genocide victims in Rwanda, victims of domestic violence in Mali, Egypt and Bangladesh. However, there were numerous occasions in which specific situations requiring legal interventions were not seen as specifically troubling. Speaking of crime, a participant in a focus group in Azerbaijan asserts that police effectively handles problems related to crime:

“If there is a crime, the police will take care of that. There is local police here.”
Participant, focus group-clients, Azerbaijan

This particular participant contemplates the problem with crimes without referring to her personal situation. She is somewhat confident that police will provide protection against crime but is not assessing potential circumstances in which she needs protection. As in many other cases, the participant talks about how she thinks the community experiences a particular problem. Interestingly, the quantitative data reveal a different picture – the respondents from Azerbaijan are grossly unconfident in their abilities to solve crime-related problems (see Table 4).

Another quote from a focus group in the Azerbaijan informs us how the internally displaced people collectively think about discrimination:

“We do not feel discriminated [with regard to jobs]. There are simply not enough jobs.” Participant, focus group-clients, Azerbaijan

“If there is a family problem like a divorce or domestic violence, we solve it here. People come to me with such problems. Then I talk to both of them. I am the community leader.” Community leader, focus group-clients, Azerbaijan

In all these quotes legal empowerment is contemplated at group level. Individuals who belong to recognizable social, ethnic or geographical group with many shared similarities and who perceive the group as distinct from the rest of the society seem to tend to have shared beliefs in their group-level legal capabilities. To a certain extent their perceived capabilities are reinforced but also capped by the subjective legal empowerment of the whole group. In Azerbaijan, the internally displaced people have strong feeling of belonging to a community. They all come from the region of Nagorno-Karabakh and most of them live close together in dwellings which are perceived as temporary. IDPs share the common dream of returning to their homeland as well as the feeling that their interests are not really considered in the important decision making processes. When group members contemplate the possible uses of the law to solve problems, their point of reference is the group – what the group can do, are the group members capable of employing legal strategies to the problems of the everyday life etc. Certainly, there could be a great deal of variation within the group. The more diverse the group, the less its members relate their perceived legal capabilities to the perceived legal empowerment of the whole group. In loosely knit groups the members will be more reluctant to associate with the group level of empowerment.

What does group-level empowerment tells us about the measurement of the subjective legal empowerment concept? In close groups and communities the individuals have a strong reliance on their belief of what the group as a whole could achieve. The self-efficacy theory has an explanation for the phenomenon – people use predominantly primary and vicarious experiences to form their perceived legal capabilities (Bandura 1997). When individuals live physically together or feel strong connections between each other, they would be more reliant to accept vicarious experiences of the other members of the group. The practical implication is that one can expect significant between-group variance between the levels of legal empowerment of different groups, given that their perceptions are influenced by different factors. Another corollary of the existence of group level empowerment is that legal empowerment interventions targeting members of the groups but not the group as a whole will be unlikely to result in the desired outcomes. Such interventions could have short-term effect but in the longer run, their effects will be neutralized by the effect of regression of the individual levels towards the central tendencies of the group.

In Azerbaijan our respondents came from a well defined group of individuals with a lot of commonalities within the group. In the other four countries the pools of respondents represented the interests of the partners organizations to provide legal advice and assistance to women. Thus the selection reflects not social groups but gender division. Women might feel that they belong to a social group. Examples from the focus groups abound:

“In the Rwandan culture men say [think] that women are not equal” Participant, focus group-clients, Rwanda

“There is no help, men can do what they want” Participant, focus group-clients, Bangladesh

“Younger women will be harassed, if they are divorced” Participant, focus group-clients, Egypt

Women feel discriminated and less empowered in gender unequal societies. Inequalities permeate the personal dimensions and affect the subjective beliefs of the group members in their legal capacities. Another example of group influenced subjective legal empowerment are the genocide orphans in Rwanda who were first deprived of their families and normal childhood and many when entering adulthood have to engage in disputes with their extended families over property and inheritance:

“The big problem of orphans are that the other members of the family are not prepared to help. If they approach the family the family says that they have no right to the property” Participant, focus group-clients, Rwanda

Perceived legal empowerment could also be influenced by feeling of belonging to a smaller and more dynamic groups. Being a member of a profession or work environment could have an effect on how people perceive their abilities to solve a problem. A female participant in a focus group conducted in Egypt recalls the following experience:

“I work in a hospital. If we speak up, we are threatened with being fired. We protested [massively] with 80 employees and finally we got a contract.” Participant, focus group-clients, Egypt

This respondent immediately thinks of herself as member of a group which is not defined by gender but by occupation. In her workplace, her subjective legal empowerment is mediated by the subjective empowerment of the people who live in similar conditions and face the same type of problems. She is very uncertain in her likelihood of success in negotiating her employment conditions. What is reported as success is linked to the fact that she and her co-workers achieved more bargaining power through consolidation of the individual interests.

C. Images of Legal Empowerment/Disempowerment

Under our definition a person is legally empowered when she believes that she can cope with immediate or likely problems using the law. Above we discussed a tool to identify the level of empowerment using a probabilistic framework and the data which it produced. In this paragraph we will explore in further detail the qualitative data from the conducted focus groups to identify the images of legal empowerment or its mirror concept – legal disempowerment. Despite the significant differences in the socio-economic, cultural, political and legal circumstances of the five visited countries we find recurring trends of how people think about and describe legal empowerment.

The respondents in the focus-groups use four distinct but interrelated images to describe their views on legal empowerment and the impediments thereof – resource deficiencies, lack of skills and/or abilities, power imbalances and institutional failures. There are no clear lines between the images of disempowerment. A person could describe his or her empowerment or lack thereof as result of institutional gaps or as product of unequally distributed power. Lack of skills and abilities is often linked to shortage of critical resources. Our research design does not allow for exploration of causal inferences but provides a good overview how people think about their legal capabilities in relation to actual or perceived legal problems.

1. Resource deficiencies

Money is the most frequently mentioned resource that a person must possess in order to use the law to solve the problems of the everyday life. The underlying assumption for this thinking is clear – if I have enough money I can buy what I need to solve my problems. Contrary to the findings from the empirical studies on legal needs and justiciable events (Pleasence, Buck et al. 2004; van Velthoven and ter Voert 2004; Gramatikov 2008) some respondents think that possession of money as a sign of social or economic position is negatively correlated to the likelihood of appearance of specific problem:

“If you have money, you cannot get into trouble, you can have a house, your children go to school, you will have no legal problems” Participant, focus group- nonclients, Rwanda

What money has to do with legal empowerment? First, as the quote clearly indicates, money signifies not merely possession of legal tenders but also social, group or family position and the associated power. Those who have money have the power. If you have money you can solve your legal problems. The opposite is also true – if you do not have money you cannot use the law or at least not against someone who has more money.

“X came to Haguruka because he has no money and it is not easy to go on trial with someone who has money. Therefore he needs the support of a lawyer.” Participant, focus group-clients, Rwanda

“If the other party has much more money than you – you know that you cannot enforce the judgment.” Participant, focus group-clients, Rwanda

“[I had] not enough money, [and was] not able to issue an ID for [claiming] handicapped money.” Participant, focus group-clients, Egypt

Individuals who think that they do not have sufficient monetary resources are pessimistic about their abilities to use the law to solve their problems. Money itself cannot solve legal problems but is used to procure means that people find important. Our research highlights that most often money is needed for access to professional legal advice and securing cooperation from the actors who are involved in the dispute resolution processes. Legal advice and representation is valued but expensive resource. When assisted by lawyers, paralegals or officers from civil society organizations, people feel more empowered. It is not only the information provided but the degree of self-confidence associated with the availability of professional provider of legal services:

“With the advocate from Haguruka I can go everywhere” Participant, focus group-clients, Rwanda

“If we go anywhere else, we need a lot of money. We do not have that ability.” Participant, focus group-clients, Bangladesh

According to participants in the focus groups money also can buy cooperation or overcome resistance of those who are authorized to resolve disputes. Reflecting on personal experiences, the respondents told stories about bribes given to secure certain outcome or to implement the outcome.

“If you have money you can go and see the judge before the trial” Participant, focus group-clients, Rwanda

“Husbands can bribe lawyers to prevent divorces or going to court” Participant, focus group-clients, Bangladesh

“If I give them 2000 Tk, they come with me, but the other person gives them 2200Tk, so they go with him” Participant, focus group-clients, Bangladesh

2. Personal skills, abilities and knowledge

Money can buy legal assistance and secure cooperation from neutral decision makers but people also need variety of personal skills and abilities in order to perceive themselves as capable of solving problems with legal means. Investing money and other resources to overcome the personal deficiencies is a possible strategy but rarely those with least developed skills and abilities can afford to do that. Theoretically, an illiterate person could mobilize enough legal resources as to see himself as legally empowered. In real life however, it is unlikely that such a person would be able to afford the expenses. Many legal problems will not be seen as serious enough to justify the expenses for professional legal advices. If the person does not have the resources or the cost-benefit analysis does not justify significant expenses, the personal skills and abilities are the only remedies. A person who perceives himself as capable of dealing alone with the situation will be more likely to take action and persist in the face of the difficulties.

Often the lack of personal skills, abilities and knowledge is concealed behind the demand for help and assistance from others. People need help because they cannot achieve specific tasks themselves:

“Expert can help, [one] who knows how [to furnish the tasks].” Participant, focus group-clients, Egypt

“If you have an education, you will be well-off” Participant, focus group-clients, Bangladesh

“[In order] to know your rights, you have to talk to attorneys.” Participant, focus group-clients, Azerbaijan

“Haguruka helps vulnerable people and has lawyers who know the law, so they can help.” Participant, focus group-clients, Rwanda

“Without bribes nothing can be achieved.” Participant, focus group-clients, Azerbaijan

Previous research suggests that people from the low-income brackets hardly benefit from legal information and services delivered through innovative channels such as internet, radio or mobile phones (Buckley 2010). Individuals who have legal problems value legal information but expect that it is delivered in useful and comprehensive way. Respondent from a focus group in Azerbaijan asserts that “To know your rights, you have to talk to attorney”. Another user from Rwanda makes similar remark: “Haguruka helps vulnerable people and has lawyers that know all about the law, so they can help”. Availability of professional legal advice is contemplated as empowering practice because the professional knows the law and knows what to do. However, in most situations and particularly in developing or transitioning countries availability of lawyer is unrealistic except for the most important issues (Kritzer 2007). What matters for legal empowerment than is 1) whether the individual can secure professional advice and 2) whether the personal skills and abilities are perceived as sufficient for achieving the task.

3. Power imbalances in important relationships

Most of the legal issues and disputes occur in relationships on which people depend because of the significant amount of tangible and intangible investments made in these relationships. Barendrecht, Kamminga et al. (2008) add that another reason for the importance of some relationships is the high cost of leaving the situation. The existence of power imbalances in relationships such as family, employment or neighborhood have significant effect on the perceived capabilities of the parties to solve the problem with legal means. Together with lack of resources and personal abilities, the unequal distribution of power in lasting relationships is another recognizable image of legal empowerment deficiencies.

Relationships within families and with public authorities were the two most visible problematic areas. Women from the focus groups in Egypt, Bangladesh and Rwanda emphasized on the unequal position of men and women. As result of many social and institutional factors women are considered as less powerful in the relationships with their husbands and the larger family. Using the law as a tool for solving problems is only one of the areas in which this power imbalance materializes. Women who are stuck in unequal relationships have very low beliefs in their capacity to institute change with the mechanisms of the law. There are two main avenues for instilling the feeling of lack of power and helplessness. First, the skewed power within the relationship makes the weaker party wary of her physical and emotional well-being:

“There is no help, men can do what they want.” Participant, focus group-clients, Bangladesh

“Younger women will be harassed, if they are divorced.” Participant, focus group-clients, Egypt

“She claimed divorce, and got a decision regarding support for her and the children. Her husband did not comply and threatened to become violent. He moved to another governorate, in order to make it more difficult to collect the money.” Participant, focus group-clients, Egypt

“Before [I] was very afraid, after the seminars, I was empowered to get all the papers and even to go to the police station.” Participant, focus group-clients, Egypt

“Because there is no punishment for the husbands, they do it more, they feel that they are entitled to.” Participant, focus group-clients, Bangladesh

Fear is the first factor which affects the ability of the affected person to look for and apply legal solutions to the problem. The dominant position of one of the parties in the relationship could provoke different kinds of fears – violence, deprivation, exclusion, stigmatization, loss of perspectives etc. Even if fear is not the leading motive, lack of power within relationship can negatively affect the perceived ability to solve the problem with legal means. When one of the parties sees the relationship in terms of subordination, the predominant power of the other party will reduce its perceived capacities to deal with the problem. An individual who perceives herself as overpowered by the other party in a relationship which is costly to leave, is unlikely to persist and look for legal remedies:

“There is no help, men can do what they want.” Participant, focus group-clients, Bangladesh

“The owner of the garage is wealthy and has 30 shops. We have no way out and will not leave without an alternative. We can do nothing. The owner was to be a member of the state commission for privatization.” Participant, focus group-clients, Azerbaijan

“Because there is no punishment for the husbands, they do it more, they feel that they are entitled to.” Participant, focus group-clients, Bangladesh

The quotes above reveal how the greater power of the other party is limiting the standings of the other party. In a way, most of the respondents who feel oppressed in their important relationships describe the dispute with the other party as a zero sum situation – the loss of one party is gain for the other. Understandably, the losses are absorbed exclusively by the weak party. Less power within important relationships also leads to procedural distortions. Those who are in weaker positions see their disadvantages plaguing the fairness of the procedures:

“If the claimant is a woman - that’s a problem at the level of the Abunzi committee [community justice type of adjudication committee]. Example: she went to Abunzi committee and the chairman [of the Abunzi committee] asked her man to come. He came and told to the president: ‘This is my wife - look at her, do you think she has problem - she looks good.’ Women know that they are not equal in the process.” Participant, focus group-clients, Rwanda

“Courts are corrupt and we have no power.” Participant, focus group-clients, Azerbaijan

4. Institutional failures

Every society has structures for solving disputes in a manner which is supposedly fair and just. These could be social norms, traditions, habits, formal or informal institutions. The primary function of these institutions is to make sure that the rules of the society are maintained and applied. From the perspective of subjective legal empowerment the institutions play another important goal – they have to reassure that the rules are applied regardless of the personality, resources or powers of the involved parties. If the individual believes that there are institutions out there which will provide protection and these institutions are accessible, he will be more certain in his legal capability. However, when the dispute resolution institutions are not accessible and/or not functional, this important source of support disappears and the vulnerable individual is left on her own. What is important here is how the people perceive the institutions. Even if the institutions are effective but are perceived differently, the individuals will factor this perceived failure in their level of subjective legal empowerment.

There is plenty of evidence in the qualitative data from the five visited countries that the respondents identify significant gaps in the dispute resolution processes and procedures:

“She then contacted the police, but they would do nothing about it.” Participant, focus group-clients, Bangladesh

“The public authorities do not help. They rather hinder you.” Participant, focus group-clients, Azerbaijan

“The executive secretary of the village did not want to help.” Participant, focus group-clients, Rwanda

It is easy to portray the effect of perceived institutional failures on subjective legal empowerment. A victim of domestic violence in Bangladesh who believes that police does not help, has little alternatives for resolving her problems. Similarly, IDPs in Azerbaijan are largely dependent on performance of various public authorities but largely regard them as ineffective. Just like the women in Bangladesh, their restricted options for using the law to solve existing problems are limited by the perceived institutional gap.

The perceived institutional failures affect negatively subjective legal empowerment. Ideally, functional dispute resolution infrastructure provides shadow of a law which leverages the bargaining position of the individuals with less powers. When the infrastructure is perceived as inaccessible or not properly functioning individuals will be less likely to use it as part of their problem-solving strategies. As direct result the less powerful party will see its positions deteriorating and the more powerful party will gain even more. Second negative effect of the failing dispute resolution institutions is the effect of the vicarious experiences on subjective legal empowerment. Even if someone did not have direct contact with given institution, the negative experiences of others will have a debilitating effect on the perceived abilities to use legal means to solve problems.

V. Discussion

Before we continue to discuss the findings given in this paper, it is important to acknowledge the shortcomings in the data. Foremost it should be noted that our quantitative samples in each country are very small ($n < 90$ in each case) and far from random. The participants were taken for

the most part from the client group of the organizations visited. This produces a bias towards individuals who firstly have had some form of legal problem, and secondly have felt sufficiently empowered to at least attempt to solve that problem. It is also very likely to produce data which emphasizes the area of the host organizations' expertise, a client of ASK in Bangladesh, who deal predominantly with family issues, is more likely to report problems with family matters than the general public. In addition this bias may result in an under-reporting of other issues, such as employment problems or crime.

The second major limitation that must be highlighted is the limited inferences that can be made from this data. Alongside the limitations to the quantitative data highlighted above, our qualitative data is predominantly taken from focus groups with clients of the host organizations. This enables us to highlight the problems that are experienced by these clients, but any extrapolation to wider communities should be treated with extreme caution. With these limitations in mind, the following discussion highlights the key points to be taken from these data.

Subjective legal empowerment is a valid measure of personal abilities to use the law

It has been demonstrated above that the quantitative measure of subjective legal empowerment is a valid measure of a person's perceived abilities to use the law to solve problems. The questions formulated in the measure access this construct and, additionally, reflect experiences from the countries in question. This gives confidence that a comprehensive measure can be developed that will provide accurate and useful information on the perceptions of a target group of their subjective legal empowerment.

Importance of legal empowerment

What is the practical value of knowing how people think about the law and their abilities to use it? Discovering that lack of financial resources undermines perceived abilities to use the law to solve problems is neither a surprising nor revealing finding. What is valuable in the approach is that it quantifies a central indicator of the way in which people think about the law. It is important that law is not contemplated as an abstract concept but as rules and processes which can be applied to particular situations from the everyday life. In every society people have to deal with similar types of problems. Clearly the quantitative and qualitative data show that the national samples even though small and drawn from untypical populations, differ significantly. IDPs in Azerbaijan are most dependent on the process of obtaining identity documents and assess their chances of solving the problem themselves lower as compared to the responses from the other countries. This does not mean that IDPs cannot obtain proper documents. What we can infer from the figures in Table 4 is that the respondents in Azerbaijan have doubts about their capabilities to solve the problem themselves.

Subjective legal empowerment could be interpreted at two levels – identification of country-specific areas of concern, and benchmarking of populations across countries. In the paragraphs above we look at the quantitative differences between the samples from five countries and triangulate the differences with qualitative data. Estimated levels of subjective empowerment contain valuable information about specific legal domains in each of the countries where measurement took place. For instance, the data from Bangladesh reveals noticeably low levels of

empowerment on indicators which are gender specific. Respondents in this sample (only women, most of whom looked for legal assistance for domestic violence problems) rated very low their abilities to solve the problem if the dispute concerned family relationships (Table 4). Several explanations could be explored. First, the power imbalances at family level discussed above (section IV C 3) significantly challenge the abilities of the weaker party to rectify the situation. Victims of domestic violence might be afraid to take action or simply take the situation as normal. With that respect, our sample includes women who actually sought legal assistance from ASK in an attempt to solve the problem. Certainly, there are many more women in Bangladesh who did not have the chance, or simply did not find it worthy, to try to solve the problem. Second, even though the respondents feel disempowered in their family relationships, the respondents still turn to their family and social network for solutions. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but certainly implies that the legal institutions are not seen as help in the case of a problem within family relationships. The severity of the disbelief and the indicated lack of remedies is a clear indication of perceived lack of legal powers and abilities.

Obtaining ID documents could be used as an example of subjective legal empowerment in all countries except in Azerbaijan and to some extent Bangladesh. In Egypt, Mali and Rwanda the probability of solving an issue which revolves around ID documents is significantly above the middle of the scale. The respondents thought that if they have a problem with ID document they can easily fix it with their own resources. Apparently there the respondents are more confident than pessimistic that if they have the need, the solutions, including legal solutions, are available and accessible.

Methodological implications of subjective legal empowerment

Subjective legal empowerment could be used for identification of areas of disempowerment or for comparisons between types of problems, populations and countries. One of the greatest potentials of the measure is in the area of impact assessment. Effects of legal policies and interventions are notoriously difficult to measure. A particular challenge is to isolate the effects of legal programs on one or more meaningful indicators. With the concept of subjective legal empowerment we can measure how a policy or intervention affects the perceived abilities of the targeted population to use the law to solve its problems. The measure is valuable because it reflects the perceptions and preferences of those who are supposed to benefit from the intervention. It is difficult to prove cause and effect relationships, but if the intervention is followed by an increase in the perceived level of legal capabilities, then it is likely that the beneficiaries are positively impacted. It is also possible that an intervention sets up promising regulatory and institutional solutions but the beneficiaries do not see the results as relevant to their own problem. This would mean that the program intends to, but still does not, impact legal empowerment.

Variation and consistency of subjective legal empowerment

Table 4 also contains an important trend – people who see themselves as disempowered in one task-specific area will likely see themselves as disempowered in other domains. The respondents from Bangladesh and Azerbaijan consistently assess their chances lower than those from Mali and Rwanda. Within the samples from the five countries we observe relatively little variation between the task-specific legal problems. An immediate conclusion that can be drawn is that

subjective legal empowerment could be observed as a universal concept. If individuals “regress” their abilities to solve legal problem to some value which indicates their level of legal empowerment we should be able to measure this general belief. Two arguments advise against such an approach. First, the data shows that although there is a unifying trend, there is also certain amount of variation between the different categories. For instance, the obtaining ID documents in Rwanda has been seen as a rather easy task (average score: 3,9) but solving a crime problem is much more unlikely to be solved event (2,3). Differences as big as this indicate that the people from the sample perceive their legal capabilities differently in the two situations.

A second argument against the universal approach could be sought in the composition of the samples. Those who are most vulnerable in a given society have less resources to mobilize in the wake of a serious problems. At the same time they more frequently have negative experiences with the legal system. The impact of these problems could be much heavier than the impact of similar problems on those who are less vulnerable. Even if they do not have primary negative experiences, the other vulnerable people around them will exercise influence with their experiences. When facing all these problems, understandably the vulnerable individuals report consistent levels of subjective beliefs in their abilities to deal with the legal problems.

A further explanation may be found in general problems which are endemic throughout the justice system in many countries. If individuals do not believe the police will help them, due to corruption or other issues, this is likely to universally lower their subjective legal empowerment in many or all domains, as problems in all domains are likely to require the involvement of the police. Overarching factors such as these may reduce the apparent variation between domains within a country when compared to variation between countries.

Depending on how large we evaluate the amount of variation in Table 4 we can draw conclusions on the theoretical proposition that task-specific legal empowerment could vary significantly. In further research the instrument could be applied to more social segments in order to test the hypothesis that the vulnerable people report less inter-task legal empowerment.

Policy implications of subjective legal empowerment

Both quantitative and qualitative data indicate that in all of the five countries power misbalances in the important relationships generate disbelief in the perceived personal capabilities for using the law to solve problems. This trend is likely most visible in the family area due to the over-representation of women in four of our samples. Women who see themselves as legally disempowered strongly believe that their problems are a consequence of their position in the family, the community and the society. They outline a picture of relationships in which one of the parties dominates the relationships. We have very little data and personal observations to be able to judge whether these distortions are backed by social, legal or economic rules. What we can say is that in the studied samples, power misbalances trigger significant amount of problems and these problems are experienced exclusively by women.

However, the mere fact of unequal distribution of authority within the family relationships is not what makes women feel disempowered. Power imbalances cause escalation of problems but what really shapes the perception that the concerned individual can do nothing is the failed institutional response. Women go to courts or police and see that the lack of power extends from their private

to the public domain which is supposed to provide protection. At this stage, the vulnerable individuals realize that they have little if any powers in their relationships and that there is no balancing mechanism to provide relief. Similar is the situation with the IDPs in Azerbaijan. Those who live in temporary dwellings look for protection from the administrative authorities or the judicial system and think that these are letting them down. In other situations they are dependent on different public services and see that public officials could exploit the magnitude of the dependence to pursue their private interests.

In this way the individuals whom we interviewed outline two important levels of interaction which influence their subjective legal empowerment – a relationship troubled with power misbalances and an institutional framework which fails to provide remedy. Between these two stages we can distinguish the role of the provider of support and assistance. In this particular study we observed the role of NGOs specialized in the delivery of legal advice and representation. What people expect from the support organizations is help with solving the problem. Metaphorically, they expect that the organization lends to them part of its power and authority. There are many different ways of power transfusion: provision of information, representation to the other party or in public institutions, referral to other sources of support etc. Importantly, people also expect support in the phase of their relationships. They want the organization not only to help as intermediary to the institutions but also to interfere in their misbalanced relationships. Some of the organizations that we studied were more willing to do so, others were more keen on keeping the more traditional model of provision of legal services.

What are the practical implications of the two formative stages of subjective legal empowerment? First, the sequence between: imbalanced power relationships → problems → failing frameworks for institutional remedy hints that interventions should target the early steps of the chain. Concentrating only on the remedy stage is a form of treating the symptoms and overlooking the causes of the disease. No legal system can effectively deal with misbalanced relationships in which the skewed distribution of power constantly breeds conflicts. The practical question here is how could the providers of legal and other services increase the effectiveness of their interventions? Traditionally they focus their efforts on the remedies stage. Our findings suggest that even more important from the perspective of the client is the intervention at the earlier stage which generates the problem. Impacting important relationships however, is not an easy task. Often there is a strong resistance against interferences in the relationships which underlie the social order. There could be many different reasons for opposing power changes – social, political, religious, economic etc. It is unrealistic to think that any given organization could interfere in the most important relationships.

What the providers of assistance could do is to look for Microjustice approaches to mitigating the power misbalances in a cheap and accessible way. Microjustice is an approach that focuses on providing community based solutions to conflicts using facilitated dispute resolution. This focus ensures that problems are dealt with as early as possible (prior to escalation to litigation) and produces solutions which are sustainable and effective, as both parties are involved in decisions over how the problem should be resolved. This approach mitigates power imbalances through placing both parties on an equal footing in the dispute resolution process, and is cheap and accessible due to the community based, non-adversarial approach utilized.

VI. Conclusions

Subjective legal empowerment is a valuable indication of how people think about the law, not as an abstract idea, but as concrete steps and processes which individuals can use to solve problems in their lives. Subjective legal empowerment has been presented as a valid and measurable construct. Using quantitative methodologies we can access meaningful data relating to this construct which can be of use to all parties involved in legal empowerment.

Differences in subjective legal empowerment have been demonstrated in different countries using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Further these differences have been demonstrated to relate to each other, supporting the proposal that subjective legal empowerment is a valid and measurable construct. The importance of subjective legal empowerment as a measure has been highlighted in terms of its use as both a tool to identify areas of concern for further work within countries or particular target groups, and also its potential to be used as an outcome indicator for all legal empowerment programs. Additionally it is of value in the investigation of what legal empowerment means and how different aspects are related.

Further elaboration of the concept of subjective legal empowerment and improvement of its measures can be a powerful tool for assessing the general access to justice situation for a particular group, gender or society. Observing the perceived belief that the law can be used to solve problems will reveal areas of concern or sub-groups who are particularly empowered or disempowered. Another use of the subjective legal empowerment concept is in the area of impact assessment. The effect of the work of the governmental and non-governmental legal assistance organizations can be measured on the impact they work has on the subjective legal empowerment of their target groups.

This paper has highlighted the variations and consistencies found within the data presented and described these in terms of a universal or individual view of subjective legal empowerment. It also found distinct ways in which the beneficiaries of the five observed organizations think about their legal empowerment. Insufficient financial and personal resources make the respondents disparage their opportunities for solving problems with legal means. Deep power imbalances in the important relationships trigger problems but the distant likelihood of institutional response reinforces the gravity of the problems. The paper concludes that it is best to consider subjective legal empowerment in reference to individual legal domains (for example family matters and employment) rather than as a universal root concept which is applied to all types of problem.

The policy implications concern the performance and perception of the formal legal institutions. Regardless of their factual performance, belief that these institutions are providing a fair and just service is vital to perceptions of legal empowerment. Failures of the formal institutions highlight the vulnerability of individuals, and exacerbate feelings of a lack of legal empowerment.

Our analysis of the available quantitative and qualitative data suggests that there are two major elements of the process of legal disempowerment: skewed distribution of power in important relationships and perceived lack of legal solutions to problems which are triggered by the power imbalances. Legal interventions could deliver results in both directions. However, it is unrealistic to expect that unequal relationships can be entirely changed with legal tools. There will always be bonds between individuals or groups which are unequal. What is more important for subjective

legal empowerment is that the weaker parts in such relationships know that there are solutions which can solve problems in a neutral and objective manner.

One method proposed for achieving this is the use of microjustice approaches, which focus on bottom-up, community based justice systems which utilize mediation and negotiation to create fair, effective and sustainable solutions to an individual's problems (Barendrecht and Van Nispen 2008; Barendrecht 2009). Such an approach minimizes the impact of power imbalances through removing the inequality of arms (as both parties have equal say in the mediation), while focusing on providing solutions which work on a practical level. This encourages individuals who may be in an unequal power relation to bring such problems forward and seek a solution. This is the essence of legal empowerment.

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VII. Appendix A

Quantitative research instrument

Q1. During the last 3 years, have you encountered any of the problems listed below? (Please mark all that apply)

Type of problem:	Date (mm yyyy)of the most recent:	How many problems in the category?
1. Problems related to your personal security (violence, threats, other)	_ _ month _ _ _ _ year	
2. Problems related to family relationships: divorce/separation - parental rights, property rights, alimonies, domestic violence	_ _ month _ _ _ _ year	
3. Problems related to employment - dismissal, discrimination, terms of employment, pay	_ _ month _ _ _ _ year	
4. Problems with neighbors – anti-social behavior, damage to property, nuisance	_ _ month _ _ _ _ year	
5. Problems obtaining identification documents – birth, marriage and death certificates, ID card, passport, driving license)	_ _ month _ _ _ _ year	
6. Problems related to use, ownership and claims on the house you live in or regarding land	_ _ month _ _ _ _ year	
7. Problems with claiming social security benefits – child benefits, unemployment benefits, disability benefits etc.	_ _ month _ _ _ _ year	
8. Purchase of defective or dangerous goods and services	_ _ month _ _ _ _ year	
9. Business disputes with other businesses	_ _ month _ _ _ _ year	
10. Business disputes with public authorities	_ _ month _ _ _ _ year	
11. Problems with accidents – road accidents, work accidents, medical	_ _ month _ _ _ _ year	
12. Debt problems	_ _ month _ _ _ _ year	
Other:	_ _ month _ _ _ _ year	

If no problem has been reported go to Q16

Q2. Write down the code of the problem which will be discussed bellow.....(the codes are in Q1)

Q3. How did the problem impact your life? (more than one answer is possible)

1. Loss of employment
2. Loss of money
3. Stress
4. Health problems
5. Damage to relationship
6. Loss of time
7. Other
8. Do not know/Do not want to answer

Q4. Did you make any effort to resolve the problem?

1. Yes, I did
2. No, I did not (Go to Q8)

Q5. Did you contact the other party?

1. Yes
2. Tried but without success (Go to Q8)
3. No (Go to Q8)

Q6. Did the other party agree to cooperate?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Do not know/Do not want to answer

Q7. Did you manage (alone or with intermediary) to reach an agreement with the other party for the resolution of the problem?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Do not know/Do not want to answer

Q8. At this moment, is the problem solved?

1. Yes, completely
2. Yes, partially
3. No Go to Q10
4. Do not know/Do not want to answer

Q9. To what extent was the resolution of the problem fair/just in your opinion:

1. Very small extent
2. Small extent
3. Moderate extent
4. Large extent
5. Very large extent

Q10. What is (are) the major reason/s for the problem to remain unsolved? (more than one answer is possible)

1. Did not have sufficient money
2. Did not have enough time
3. The problem was not worthy the expected costs

4. The other party has more power
5. It was difficult to find out what to do
6. Other
7. Do not know/Do not want to answer

Q11. Where did you go for information, advice and personal support for solving the problem? (more than one answer is possible)

1. Family members, friends, colleagues;
2. Lawyer
3. Municipality
4. Central public authority
5. Police
6. Employer
7. NGO
8. Village elder (will not be applicable in some countries)
9. Professional association
10. Politician
11. Internet
12. Newspapers/press
13. Court/other dispute resolution mechanism
14. Other
15. Did not look for information
16. Do not know/Do not want to answer

Q12. Why did you decide not to seek advice? (more than one answer is possible)

1. The problem was insignificant
2. The problem was solved without advice
3. Do not think advice would have help me
4. Nobody provides advice to people like me
5. It would have taken too much time
6. It would have cost a lot
7. Do not trust the provider of the advice
8. Other
9. Do not know/Do not want to answer

Q13. Which person/organization did you ask to intervene and to influence the other party so that he/she would cooperate to a fair solution? (more than one answer is possible)

1. Family members, friends, colleagues;
2. Lawyer
3. Municipality
4. Central public authority
5. Employer
6. NGO
7. Police
8. Village elder (will not be applicable in some countries)
9. Professional association
10. Politician
11. Court
12. Powerful third party (informal)
13. Gave money to the other party to solve the problem;

14. (attempted to) Solved the problem alone with own actions
15. Other
16. Did nothing
17. Do not know/Do not want to answer

Q14. Why didn't you do anything to solve the problem? (more than one answer is possible)

1. Did not have enough money
2. The problem seemed to be insignificant
3. Don't think I would achieve any result
4. Our legal system is not effective
5. It would have taken too much time
6. The other party did not have money/resources
7. I did not know where to go
8. I had to travel a lot to reach the proper people/institution
9. The working time was unsuitable
10. People like me have no rights
11. Other
12. Do not know/Do not want to answer

Q15. Which costs were a significant barrier for you to obtain a just outcome to the problem? (more than one answer is possible)

1. Payments to lawyers or other helpers/advisers
2. Court fees or payments to other neutral persons that can influence the other party
3. Travel expenses
4. The costs of the lost time
5. Communication costs
6. The expected stress and negative emotions
7. Other
8. Do not know/Do not want to answer

Q16. *Imagine you have a serious and difficult to resolve problem in the relationship to your employer (a person you regularly work for) in the coming year. How do you assess your chances that you will be able to solve the problem with the money, power and contacts that you have?*

1. Very unlikely
2. Somewhat unlikely
3. 50-50/Neither unlikely nor likely
4. Somewhat likely
5. Very likely

Q17. Is there somebody you can go to for protection, to whom the other party will surely listen and who will help you to obtain a fair solution? (please name that person: if there are more than one, please rank the answers giving 1 to the most likely option)

Option	Rank
1. Member of my family	
2. Friend	
3. Colleague	

4. Lawyer	
5. Local authority (municipality)	
6. Central public authority	
7. NGO	
8. Police	
9. Village elder (will not be applicable in some countries)	
10. Professional association	
11. Politician	
12. Court	
13. Powerful third party (informal)	
14. Other	
15. No, there is no such person at all	
16. Do not know/Do not want to answer	

Q18. To what extent do you feel able to make this protection happen?

1. Very small extent
2. Small extent
3. Moderate extent
4. Large extent
5. Very large extent

Q19. To let this person protect you, may be risky (retaliation by the other party, the person you ask to intervene turning against you, high costs, damage to the relationship, matters becoming worse). To what extent is this risky?

1. Very small extent
2. Small extent
3. Moderate extent
4. Large extent
5. Very large extent

Q20. Imagine in the coming year you have a serious and difficult to resolve problem in the relationship to a neighbour (a person or organization living/working close to you). How do you assess your chances that you will be able to solve the problem with the money, power and contacts that you have?

1. Very unlikely
2. Somewhat unlikely
3. 50-50/Neither unlikely nor likely
4. Somewhat likely
5. Very likely

Q21. Is there somebody you can go to for protection, to whom the other party will surely listen and who will help you to obtain a fair solution? (please name that person: if there are more than one, please rank the answers giving 1 to the most likely option)

Option	Rank
1. Member of my family	
2. Friend	
3. Colleague	

4. Lawyer	
5. Local authority (municipality)	
6. Central public authority	
7. NGO	
8. Police	
9. Village elder (will not be applicable in some countries)	
10. Professional association	
11. Politician	
12. Court	
13. Powerful third party (informal)	
14. Other	
15. No, there is no such person at all	
16. Do not know/Do not want to answer	

Q22. To what extent do you feel able to make this protection happen?

1. Very small extent
2. Small extent
3. Moderate extent
4. Large extent
5. Very large extent

Q23. To let this person protect you, may be risky (retaliation by the other party, the person you ask to intervene turning against you, high costs, damage to the relationship, matters becoming worse). To what extent is this risky?

1. Very small extent
2. Small extent
3. Moderate extent
4. Large extent
5. Very large extent

Q24. Imagine in the coming year you have a serious and difficult to resolve problem in the relationship to your husband, wife, father or mother. How do you assess your chances that you will be able to solve the problem with the money, power and contacts that you have?

1. Very unlikely
2. Somewhat unlikely
3. 50-50/Neither unlikely nor likely
4. Somewhat likely
5. Very likely

Q25. Is there somebody you can go to for protection, to whom the other party will surely listen and who will help you to obtain a fair solution? (please name that person: if there are more than one, please rank the answers giving 1 to the most likely option)

Option	Rank
1. Member of my family	
2. Friend	
3. Colleague	
4. Lawyer	

5. Local authority (municipality)	
6. Central public authority	
7. NGO	
8. Police	
9. Village elder (will not be applicable in some countries)	
10. Professional association	
11. Politician	
12. Court	
13. Powerful third party (informal)	
14. Other	
15. No, there is no such person at all	
16. Do not know/Do not want to answer	

Q26. To what extent do you feel able to make this protection happen?

1. Very small extent
2. Small extent
3. Moderate extent
4. Large extent
5. Very large extent

Q27. To let this person protect you, may be risky (retaliation by the other party, the person you ask to intervene turning against you, high costs, damage to the relationship, matters becoming worse). To what extent is this risky?

1. Very small extent
2. Small extent
3. Moderate extent
4. Large extent
5. Very large extent

Q28. *Imagine in the coming year you have a serious and difficult to resolve problem with others (landlord, owner, other user, community) regarding the land you are using or the house you are living in. How do you assess your chances that you will be able to solve the problem with the money, power and contacts that you have?*

1. Very unlikely
2. Somewhat unlikely
3. 50-50/Neither unlikely nor likely
4. Somewhat likely
5. Very likely

Q29. Is there somebody you can go to for protection, to whom the other party will surely listen and who will help you to obtain a fair solution? (please name that person: if there are more than one, please rank the answers giving 1 to the most likely option)

Option	Rank
1. Member of my family	
2. Friend	
3. Colleague	
4. Lawyer	

5. Local authority (municipality)	
6. Central public authority	
7. NGO	
8. Police	
9. Village elder (will not be applicable in some countries)	
10. Professional association	
11. Politician	
12. Court	
13. Powerful third party (informal)	
14. Other	
15. No, there is no such person at all	
16. Do not know/Do not want to answer	

Q30. To what extent do you feel able to make this protection happen?

1. Very small extent
2. Small extent
3. Moderate extent
4. Large extent
5. Very large extent

Q31. To let this person protect you, may be risky (retaliation by the other party, the person you ask to intervene turning against you, high costs, damage to the relationship, matters becoming worse). To what extent is this risky?

1. Very small extent
2. Small extent
3. Moderate extent
4. Large extent
5. Very large extent

Q32. *Imagine in the coming year you have a serious and difficult to resolve problem regarding a business you are operating. How do you assess your chances that you will be able to solve the problem with the money, power and contacts that you have?*

1. Very unlikely
2. Somewhat unlikely
3. 50-50/Neither unlikely nor likely
4. Somewhat likely
5. Very likely

Q33. Is there somebody you can go to for protection, to whom the other party will surely listen and who will help you to obtain a fair solution? (please name that person: if there are more than one, please rank the answers giving 1 to the most likely option)

Option	Rank
1. Member of my family	
2. Friend	
3. Colleague	
4. Lawyer	
5. Local authority (municipality)	

6. Central public authority	
7. NGO	
8. Police	
9. Village elder (will not be applicable in some countries)	
10. Professional association	
11. Politician	
12. Court	
13. Powerful third party (informal)	
14. Other	
15. No, there is no such person at all	
16. Do not know/Do not want to answer	

Q34. To what extent do you feel able to make this protection happen?

1. Very small extent
2. Small extent
3. Moderate extent
4. Large extent
5. Very large extent

Q35. To let this person protect you, may be risky (retaliation by the other party, the person you ask to intervene turning against you, high costs, damage to the relationship, matters becoming worse). To what extent is this risky?

1. Very small extent
2. Small extent
3. Moderate extent
4. Large extent
5. Very large extent

Q36. *Imagine in the coming year you become a victim of crime (property/violent – a scenario could be read out).* How do you assess your chances that you will be able to solve the problem with the money, power and contacts that you have?

1. Very unlikely
2. Somewhat unlikely
3. 50-50/Neither unlikely nor likely
4. Somewhat likely
5. Very likely

Q37. Is there somebody you can go to for protection, to whom the other party will surely listen and who will help you to obtain a fair solution? (please name that person: if there are more than one, please rank the answers giving 1 to the most likely option)

Option	Rank
1. Member of my family	
2. Friend	
3. Colleague	
4. Lawyer	
5. Local authority (municipality)	
6. Central public authority	

7. NGO	
8. Police	
9. Village elder (will not be applicable in some countries)	
10. Professional association	
11. Politician	
12. Court	
13. Powerful third party (informal)	
14. Other	
15. No, there is no such person at all	
16. Do not know/Do not want to answer	

Q38. To what extent do you feel able to make this protection happen?

1. Very small extent
2. Small extent
3. Moderate extent
4. Large extent
5. Very large extent

Q39. To let this person protect you, may be risky (retaliation by the other party, the person you ask to intervene turning against you, high costs, damage to the relationship, matters becoming worse). To what extent is this risky?

1. Very small extent
2. Small extent
3. Moderate extent
4. Large extent
5. Very large extent

Q40. Imagine in the coming year you need documents to prove your status (birth certificate, identity documents etc.). How do you assess your chances that you will be able to obtain these documents with the money, power and contacts that you have?

1. Very unlikely
2. Somewhat unlikely
3. 50-50/Neither unlikely nor likely
4. Somewhat likely
5. Very likely

Q41. What is (are) the major reason/s for this being difficult?

1. Do not have sufficient money
2. Do not have enough time
3. Do not expect to be helped by the persons who should issue the documents
4. Being registered may have disadvantages (taxes or other contributions)
5. Other

Q42. Now think again about the justice problems we discussed and the persons you might have problems with (employers, neighbours, violent people, family members). To what extent would you welcome a neutral service that would have as his/her job to help you and others to solve such problems in a mutually satisfactory way?

1. Very small extent

2. Small extent
3. Moderate extent
4. Large extent
5. Very large extent

Q43. Would you like to get more help with contacting, talking, and negotiating with the other party? To what extent?

1. Very small extent
2. Small extent
3. Moderate extent
4. Large extent
5. Very large extent

Q44. Would you like to have more information about fair and just solutions to such problems (rules, how other people solved similar problems)? To what extent?

1. Very small extent
2. Small extent
3. Moderate extent
4. Large extent
5. Very large extent

Q45. Would you like to see improvements in the way neutral persons (wise persons, judges, leaders, others) investigate the problem and make the other party cooperate to a fair solution? To what extent?

1. Very small extent
2. Small extent
3. Moderate extent
4. Large extent
5. Very large extent

Q46. Would you like to receive help with letting the other party do what he/she has promised or should do? To what extent?

1. Very small extent
2. Small extent
3. Moderate extent
4. Large extent
5. Very large extent

Q47. *Imagine the most serious and difficult to resolve problem that could happen to you in the next 3 years. Would you be willing to pay for such helping services afterwards, provided that you are satisfied with the way such a problem is solved? To what extent?*

1. (Equivalent of) \$1 or less per problem
2. \$1-3
3. \$3-10
4. \$10-30
5. \$30-100
6. \$100+

