How do local gender norms interact with local conceptualisations of empowerment to shape women's engagement in local dairy value chains in Tanzania?

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Introduction: Women play important roles in the dairy sector in Tanzania yet many women face local gender norms which inhibit them from benefitting from their enterprises. This affects women's empowerment and the development of effective livestock businesses.

Methods: This study addresses the question: How do women's empowerment and gender norms affect women's engagement in livestock business? To respond, this study explores how women attempt to negotiate gender norms in order to create a niche for their agribusiness, and thereby to empower themselves. Since gender norms are diverse, research was undertaken in 2021 with agripreneurs running dairy-related businesses in two regions of Tanzania. Gender-disaggregated focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and individual interviews were carried out in Kilimanjaro and Tanga regions which had been target sites for the bigger Maziwa Zaidi Phase II project in Tanzania. In total, 24 women dairy farmers, 25 men dairy farmers, 20 women agripreneurs and 22 men agripreneurs involved in selling feeds, milk collection and agro-veterinary goods and services such as artificial insemination and livestock extension participated in the FGDs. Twelve women and 16 men were interviewed as KIIs while 12 women and 15 men were interviewed individually.

Results and Discussion: The findings show that women agripreneurs are active in selling milk and earning an income, and a few women provide AI services. However, local gender norms significantly reduce potential gains. Normative sanctions are applied to women who are perceived to be moving beyond acceptable gender norms in their efforts to establish their dairy related livelihoods. Yet this picture is not uniform. The presence of traditionally more favorable local gender norms towards engagement in smallholder dairy related businesses allows women in the Kilimanjaro Region to openly exercise more decision-making power and secure more benefits compared to women in Tanga Region where local norms largely limited women's engagement because dairying is a rather novel concept and was introduced in the 1990s as a men's income generation enterprise.

Our own findings indicate that local patriarchal contexts remain powerful in both study sites. However with sustained empowerment efforts, women and men fairly express an understanding of empowerment as a process, involving building capacity, supporting, creating an enabling environment for achieving of one's goals. Women note that an empowered woman faces more barriers than an

empowered man because if married, she has to consult with her husband prior to making big investments. Empowered men are however free to do as they like with their resources. Patriarchal norms guiding social ordering in Tanzania therefore place a cap on achievement as well as expression of empowerment by women. Moreover, through gender norms gatekeeping, significant relations such as husbands and community members can also act as empowerment gatekeepers reining in women's expression and experience of empowerment, especially if her husband is economically disempowered while she is.

Introduction

The dairy livestock sector in Tanzania supports nutritional diets for cattle-rearing households and dairy consumers (Covarrubias et al., 2012). Women and men smallholders are significant actors in the dairy value chain, though their involvement differs significantly due to gender norms that restrict women and men to specific roles. Women tend to be concentrated in lower nodes of the milk value chain, particularly in production (Nombo and Sikira, 2012) and are under-represented or absent from financially lucrative nodes of the value chain such as provision of animal health services (Galiè et al., 2017; Campbell et al., 2021), from transportation, and commercial processing (Sikira et al., 2018). In a few parts of Tanzania, though, women smallholders sell more milk than men at the farmgate (Katjiuongua and Nelgen, 2014).

Gender norms are a component of social norms defining acceptable and appropriate actions for women and men in a given group or society (Cislaghi and Heise, 2020). Gender norms differ across groups or communities (Rolleri, 2013; Cislaghi and Heise, 2020), across time (Rolleri, 2013), and can be specific to particular social groups within a community or society (Burrell et al., 2019; Dietrich et al., 2021). Whilst not all gender norms are negative, harmful and discriminatory gender norms undermine women's opportunities to develop their agency and capabilities (Harper and Marcus, 2018), thereby reducing women's ability to empower themselves (Idris, 2018; Marcus, 2021; Were et al., 2021; Christopherson et al., 2022). Community level assessments – and associated sanctions – of the efforts individuals and households make to align with, or challenge, local gender norms can impact upon their ability to achieve their desired empowerment outcomes (Galiè and Farnworth, 2019).

Given this specificity, there is increasing interest in understanding how local gender norms interact with, and influence, gendered interventions aiming to strengthen women's empowerment (Luttrell et al., 2009; Sexsmith, 2019). This article contributes to this body of work by posing an overall research question: How do women's empowerment and gender norms affect women's engagement in livestock business? It responds to this question by asking the following questions (i) How do local gender norms influence women's engagement in dairy related businesses in two locations in Tanzania? (ii) How is the concept of empowerment understood within the local communities engaging in dairy related businesses? and (iii) What strategies do women use to engage in dairy-related business activities

within the target communities given prevailing gender norms and conceptualizations of empowerment?

The article commences with a literature review exploring how gender norms influence women's participation in agricultural value chains, how empowerment processes need to engage with gender norms, and a brief overview of women's empowerment policies and efforts in Tanzania. The methodology section presents the qualitative methods used, the sampling strategy, and the study locations. The findings highlight local gender norms in dairying, and the strategies women are developing to negotiate with and around these norms to strengthen their economic empowerment. This is followed by the discussion and conclusion.

Literature review

Social and gender norms in relation to agricultural value chains

Social norms provide groups with informal rules of appropriate behavior. They consist of shared beliefs about which behaviors are typical and appropriate within the group (Heise and Manji, 2016). A social norm exists when a practice is considered typical and approved of within a group. They are maintained by social sanctions signaling approval or disapproval for engaging in a behavior (Andrighetto et al., 2015; Cislaghi and Heise, 2018; FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2022). Gender norms are a subset of social norms. They constitute informal rules and shared social expectations which determine, assign and also regulate (through the application of social sanctions) acceptable roles, behaviors, responsibilities and expectations to male and female identities. By influencing expectations for masculine and feminine behavior considered socially acceptable and appropriate (Dahal et al., 2022; FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2022), gender norms directly, and differentially, affect the choices, freedoms and capabilities of women and men in the various arenas in which they live their lives – in the home, the field, their businesses, the market place, and others.

Gender norms mediate women's economic empowerment in value chains. For example, gender norms often limit women's access to more profitable value chain segments (Ihalainen et al., 2021) and shape women's access and control over the assets needed for effective participation in value chains (Hillenbrand and Miruka, 2019). Norms which confine women to specific nodes in the value chain can reinforce

perceptions of these sectors as low-pay and low-status occupations (UN Food and Agriculture Organization, 2011), and limit women's ability to move out of these nodes to develop their careers and their income generation capacity (Katothya, 2017; Christopherson et al., 2022). Within households, gender norms frequently assign core decision-making power over lucrative economic enterprises to men (Badstue et al., 2020). They affect how women and men understand the meaning of 'ownership' in terms of the bundle of rights and entitlements they have over assets (Galiè et al., 2015) and dictate differential treatment of men and women in property inheritance regimes (Christopherson et al., 2022). Norms affect women entrepreneurs in ways which significantly affect the way they conduct their business. For instance, mobility is an essential element of effective participation in value chains, including when sourcing inputs such as concentrate for cattle feed and water, veterinary care, through to milking, processing, marketing, and sale of the final product. Yet gender norms frequently restrict women's mobility through beliefs focused on the need to keep women safe (Markel et al., 2016), or ensure women remain faithful to their husbands (Rietveld and Farnworth, 2018). Norms frequently determine that certain modes of transportation such as bicycles in some contexts, are unsuited to women (UN Food and Agriculture Organization, 2011) even though bicycles and motorbikes provide some of the most affordable and accessible modes of transport in rural developing contexts such as Tanzania.

Nevertheless, individuals do not live out their lives by surrendering completely to the guidance of norms or submitting to social sanctions. For instance, although men are typically socialized into gender-discriminatory behaviors with respect to women, this does not mean that all men hold gender-discriminatory attitudes or that every man enacts discriminatory behaviors over women. Thus, neither women nor men are completely molded by the norms and values of their culture (Wrong, 1961). In Tanzania, as in other parts of the world, rural communities are diverse and complex (Twikirize and Spitzer, 2022), and multiple sets of norms can co-exist (Roccas and Amit, 2011). This in itself opens up scope for reflection on one's own gender norms, and thus potential leverage points for challenging them. Furthermore, gender is one ever-present part of people's experience of themselves, others and the world, and a key frame for social relations (Cislaghi and Heise, 2018) yet it is not the only part. Intersectional identities including ethnicity, age, disability, and others combine with gender norms to create multiple expressions of norms which provide people living intersectional identities with scope to question and challenge who they are, and who they want to be.

Individuals are faced with the reality of trying to, for example, make money and achieve a secure livelihood (Collier, 2018) which may propel them to try and negotiate with gender norms to provide themselves with enough space for effective action. At the same time, people value belonging and esteem (Collier, 2018) which means compliance with gender norms is also important – and people typically fear sanctions (Andrighetto et al., 2015). These feelings and fears have the potential to brake entrepreneurial behaviors. Observed behaviors might also be driven by a multitude of different preferences and beliefs (Hoeft, 2019) including, but not restricted to, gender norms. Good and Sanchez (2010), for example, observe that gender norms may be incorporated into a person's self-concept and therefore be autonomously motivating, such that a gendered behavior is freely chosen when it reflects what people believe to be their true inner desires. The attempts of value chain actors to optimize profits may

be partly confounded by what they consider to be their true inner desires – including their attempts to fulfill local gender norms which prescribe how they are to behave, and the benefits they are legitimately able to draw from their work.

These conflicting beliefs, attitudes and behaviors are likely to co-exist, interact with, and be influenced by the presence of norms gatekeepers – who may be community or religious elders or other people with a locus of power – who consider it their role to enforce compliance to social and gender norms (O'Rourke, 2014; Cheema et al., 2023). The ability of such people and their associated institutions (such as a community council, farmers' group, church, etc.) to sanction norm deviance – for instance, women trying to make money in dairy chains or take on new roles in a context where these behaviors and goals were previously denied – will depend in part on their own standing and power in the community.

From gender norms to women's empowerment

Gender norms are intrinsically related to empowerment processes. Gender norms define the negotiating spaces and the informal rules within which people attempting to empower themselves must contend in their efforts to improve their lives. There is no "empowerment rule book" because gender norms differ so widely, though guidance based on experience and theory can provide some impetus. At the conceptual level, it is widely accepted that empowerment is the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in situations where they were previously denied this ability (Kabeer, 2003). Empowerment is a multi-dimensional process as well as a goal (Okesina, 2020). Beyond these basic definitions understandings of what empowerment means and involves vary by context (Mganga et al., 2021). On the ground, people rarely hold abstract concepts of empowerment. Rather, they develop their understandings through reflecting upon their lived experiences of the development processes unfolding in their communities. They will be influenced by "what happens" in their own sense of being, in their households, and in their community, when women's empowerment projects are unrolled (Kelsall and Mercer, 2003; Goldman and Little, 2015). They will observe and reflect upon how such interventions have affected gender norms and behaviors among the people they know (Goldman and Little, 2015; Eaton et al., 2021).

Conceptualizations of women's empowerment in Tanzania

Following Independence, the Government of Tanzania attempted to set out its own path to development in a process called Ujamaa (Nyerere, 1977) which it later abandoned (Ibhawoh and Dibua, 2003). Since then, the Government of Tanzania has broadly subscribed to, and aligned, its domestic development strategies with the policies set out by international development partners. It has mainstreamed gender equality in national legislation and policy and adopted a wide range of affirmative actions to promote women's representation in the public sector (Chan and Mbogoh, 2016). During political campaigns, women are promised political returns such as special seats (Meena et al., 2017) as well as gender parity gains (Mushi, 2011). Attempts to acknowledge and move towards women's empowerment and gender

equality have featured alongside other development objectives addressing social, political and economic objectives (UN General Assembly, 2015). Today, Tanzania hosts hundreds of domestic and foreign development actors with numerous objectives (Sundberg, 2019). These frequently adopt participatory approaches in their work (Kamuzora and Toner, 2002; Magombeyi and Odhiambo, 2016). The Government of Tanzania has attempted to institutionalize participation in its local governance system (Green, 2010). Commonly, interventions focus on women's economic empowerment. These include cash transfer, micro-credit, women business development, and access to assets schemes (Sigalla and Carney, 2012; Goldman et al., 2016; Ibanez et al., 2017; Montanio, 2017). Economic empowerment is defined as both the ability to succeed and advance economically and the power to make and act on economic decisions (Golla et al., 2011). It covers "objective" dimensions that refer to measurable factors relating to women's economic activity and "subjective" dimensions reflecting women's own, subjective experiences of economic empowerment (Quisumbing et al., 2016).

In Tanzania, as elsewhere, communities interact perforce with high level agendas through being targeted for women's empowerment projects, and through their engagement with lower level political and policy processes. Different definitions of power contribute to understandings of what empowerment means and how it is achieved (VeneKlasen and Miller, 2002; Luttrell et al., 2009) and these are explored in the following discussion. *Power over* describes the ability to influence and coerce others. It defines a hierarchical form and understanding of power. *Power within* is widely understood to be a pre-requisite to change in power relations. It describes the power derived from changes in individual consciousness and how this is expressed in a will to change. *Power with* describes the power achieved when people work together towards a common goal (a synergetic, horizontal form of power). *Power to (act)* focuses particularly on the agentic aspect of empowerment – that people can act to achieve their goals as opposed to formulating them. *Power through* describes a form of power which is achieved without personal agency; women or men become empowered or disempowered through the actions of others, for example becoming empowered through marriage into a respected family, or becoming disempowered when a family member is perceived by the wider community to have brought disgrace upon their family (Galiè and Farnworth, 2019). These definitions of power attempt to capture what the terms empowerment and disempowerment constitute, and how they are enacted formally and informally between individuals, households, communities, formally structured organizations, and other institutions (Galiè and Farnworth, 2019).

Understandings of empowerment vary widely in Tanzanian smallholder communities, and these understandings are self-evidently partly formed by external interventions in dialog with local social and gender norms. In Western and Eastern parts of Tanzania (Ruottinen, 2014), for instance, a community considers itself empowered if it feels independent, active, equal to other actors, and if it exists as a harmonious collective with possibilities to develop further and reach prosperity. Beneficiaries of empowerment interventions across regions in Tanzania understand empowerment as entailing capacity building and acquisition of physical resources in the form of inputs (Mwaseba et al., 2009). Adolescent girls and young women in Shinyanga region, Tanzania conceptualize empowerment as independence, hope and aspiration (Wamoyi et al., 2020). Yet in many parts of Tanzania patriarchal social ordering signifies that men are superior and women

inferior (Hjelmström, 2017). Women's empowerment in such contexts is considered to threaten this ordering (Badstue et al., 2021; Eaton et al., 2021). Men in Babati district Tanzania report feeling threatened by women's empowerment. They believe women are exerting increased influence both within and outside the household and in so doing are disempowering men in their role as head of household and key decision-maker (Rörström, 2011).

Some communities attempt to remedy this by working out an 'acceptable' version of empowerment. For instance, in some communities in Tanzania men and women explain that women can be empowered "even though," or indeed "only when" women have no final decision-making in households. This is because having final decision-making is considered incompatible with women assuming their normative role as a "good wife." Nevertheless, the study shows that women may exhibit high levels of intra-household decision-making power behind the scenes, commensurate with their improved financial capacity. The key is not to exhibit this openly – a phenomenon the authors term the "gender norms façade" (Galiè and Farnworth, 2019).

Since empowerment is an unending process (VeneKlasen and Miller, 2002) there is constantly room for refining and redefining conceptualizations of empowerment within communities as well as its enactment (in experiences) by men and women. Empowerment is a process of negotiation, and it is a conversation between many actors. Empowerment is necessarily an intricate process, which involves renegotiating roles and, responsibilities – and personal values – many times over an individual's lifetime (Ali, 2014). Ali (2014) further notes that in contexts of prominent social and gender normative constraints, empowerment may not involve open defiance against these norms, or open resistance against coercion; rather, disempowered people on their journey towards empowerment may be strategically acting in ways that makes them feel more secure within their circumstances.

Methodology

The study is part of a larger International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) intervention-The Maziwa Zaidi Phase II (2019–2021) project. This project was centered around a catalytic core project titled "Agri-entrepreneurship, technology uptake and inclusive dairy development in Tanzania" and aims to catalyze uptake of "proven" dairy technology packages that improve the livelihoods of small holder farmers (ILRI, 2020). Inclusive approaches particularly take into account the constraints faced by informal actors such as women (Bingi and Tondel, 2015) and also recognize the different vulnerabilities of different categories of smallholder farmers (Twine et al., 2017). While participation in value chains can deliver positive empowerment outcomes to women (Ihalainen et al., 2021), Galiè and Kantor (2016) recommend that projects understand local conceptualizations of empowerment in order to be able to assess strategic progress towards empowerment and gender equity in ways which hold meaning to local women and men. At the same time, deriving an understanding of progress towards more global definitions of what empowerment can mean is useful (Nussbaum, 2000).

Two intervention regions of the project, Tanga Region and Kilimanjaro Region, were selected for the research conducted of this study because these include districts within which Maziwa Zaidi Phase II was implemented, these are highlighted in Figure 1. In
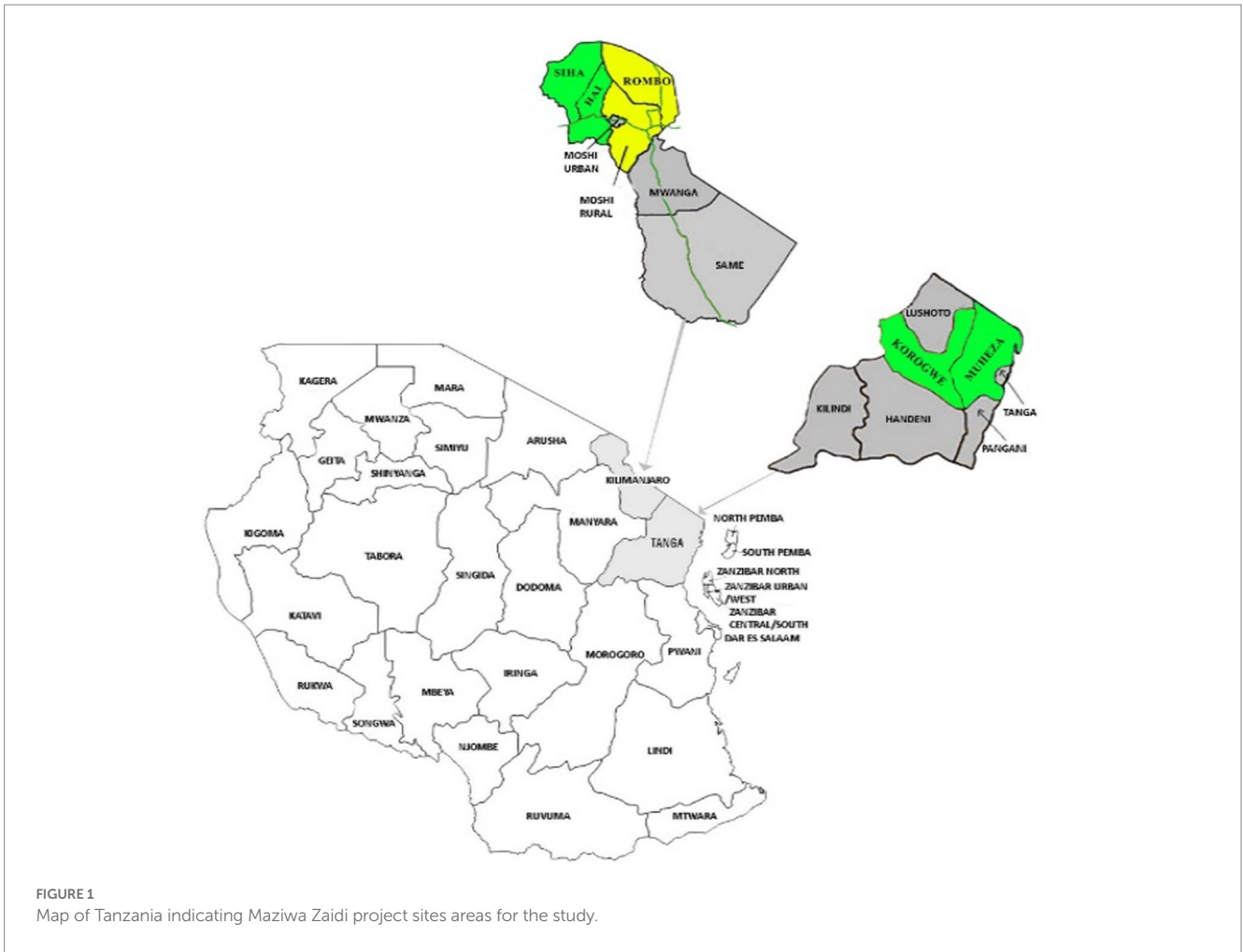
FIGURE 1
Map of Tanzania indicating Maziwa Zaidi project sites areas for the study.

Kilimanjaro Region, Siha and Hai districts were selected. In Tanga Region, Korogwe and Muheza districts were selected. A control district where there were no project intervention activities, Moshi Rural district, was also selected to provide additional information for this paper, and in the hope the baseline data thus secured can inform future exploration of the of planned interventions such as in the more recently launched (Sustainable Animal Productivity for Livelihoods, Nutrition and Gender Inclusion) SAPLING initiative-with a number of interventions and an interest to explore normative change from these interventions. Earlier findings from the broader Maziwa Zaidi intervention indicated that Siha and Hai districts in Kilimanjaro Region, and Korogwe and Muheza districts, exhibit similar characteristics – within each Region – in terms of ethnicity, cultural norms or religious affiliation, and level of dairy value chain development. Consequently, the study team combined FGDs for participants from each study region hence, respondents from Siha and Hai were interviewed together and so were those from Korogwe and Muheza. Respondents from Moshi Rural were interviewed separately.

A qualitative research study design was prepared to address the research questions. Conducted in 2021, the study targeted women and men smallholder dairy value chain actors engaging dairy farmers, two categories of agripreneurs in dairy-related businesses including a) small scale dairy processing and sale of dairy products and b) input providers such as actors engaged in agro-veterinary retail shops, artificial insemination (AI), veterinary services and livestock extension services. Also targeted were non-dairy related actors such as religious leaders knowledgeable about norms in the community.

The study methodology is qualitative and used focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs) and individual interviews (II) with the precise method varying according to respondent typology. All discussions were conducted in Kiswahili by a facilitator assisted by a note taker, and with respondents' consent these were recorded and later transcribed. Transcripts were then translated into English.

FGDs were conducted with men and women smallholder dairy farmers (with an average of 1 to 7 dairy cattle) and agripreneurs identified through the district livestock officer. The criteria were that target respondents engaged in either smallholder dairy farming or dairy-related agripreneurship activities such as small-scale dairy processing and sale of dairy products, input provision such as agro-veterinary retail, feed stocking, artificial insemination (AI), veterinary services and livestock extension services. FGDs for women respondents were conducted separately from those for men respondents. While FGDs for farmers were conducted separately, other agripreneurs such as feed stockists, AI technicians and agro-veterinary officers were interviewed together in joint FGDs because some offered goods and services to dairy farmers from within their single units providing them as a bundle of services from which clients could select. A semi-structured questionnaire guide was developed to help guide discussions. This focused on defining respondent

characteristics, understanding the kinds of behavior determining the normative ideal husband or good wife, definitions of empowered and disempowered entrepreneurial women, social expectations about women in dairy-related businesses and lastly, a discussion how to define women and men's empowerment.

Key informant interviews using an interview guide were conducted with dairy agripreneurs at the community level, and with people who have been in the community for a considerable amount of time and are regarded as influential. Interviewees included religious leaders, veterinary doctors, dairy traders, owners or employee of agrovet shops, and leaders in dairy farmer groups. Both women and men were interviewed and questions were asked regarding their activities; labor that female dairy agripreneurs access; location of business (premises) for female dairy agripreneurs; products that female dairy agripreneurs typically provide; cultural norms around about activities performed by women dairy agripreneurs; modes of transport; sanctions for gender norms transgression, gender norms gate keepers, and the elicitation of instances when a person could transgress gender norms without suffering sanctions, and why. Each key informant interview ended with observations as to whether gender norms are changing.

Individual interviews, likewise using an interview guide, were conducted with agripreneurs engaged in dairy-related businesses in the selected districts, including running agro-vet shops, providing artificial insemination (AI), selling animal feeds, provision of veterinary services/livestock extension services, milking processing, and selling fresh and fermented milk. The questions centered around the nature of agripreneurial businesses and experiences of gender norms regarding business related tasks and activities.

NVivo (2020) Rel. v1.x. for qualitative data analysis was used for analysis. FGDs, KIIs and IIs transcripts were uploaded into the software. Coding was done following from the transcripts and emerging themes were then identified. By running queries in NVivo, key thematic areas were compared, and summaries based on patterns from coded notes were highlighted.

Table 1 shows that in Kilimanjaro region (Siha, Hai and Moshi Districts), 6 FGDs were conducted – 3 with women agripreneurs and farmers (an average of 9 participants in Siha and Hai; 6 in Moshi and a total of 30 participants) and 3 with men agripreneurs and farmers (an average of 9 participants in Siha and Hai; 6 in Moshi and a total of 32 participants). In Tanga region (Korogwe and Muheza districts) 4 FGDs were conducted; 2 with men (an average of 7 participants per group and 15 participants in total) and two with women (an average of 7 participants per group and 14 participants in total) while ensuring that each gender group of agripreneurs was interviewed separately.

Sixteen KIIs were interviewed in Kilimanjaro while 12 were interviewed in Tanga region. Additionally, 14 individual interviews were conducted in Kilimanjaro (Siha and Hai) while 13 were conducted in Tanga region (Korogwe and Muheza districts). No key informant nor individual interviews were conducted in Moshi Rural district.

Results

The results presented cover: (i) local gender norms and women's engagement in dairy related businesses in Kilimanjaro and Tanga (ii) Conceptualization of empowerment within local communities engaging in dairy-related businesses, and (iii) Strategies women use to engage in dairy-related business activities given prevailing gender norms and conceptualizations of empowerment.

Local gender norms and women's engagement in dairy-related businesses in Kilimajaro Region and Tanga region

The findings from women's and men's FGDs in Kilimanjaro Region indicate that gender norms in relation to dairy businesses differ by ethnic community and religious affiliation. The Chagga, the dominant ethnicity in this region, believe that women are central to smallholder dairying. It is considered shameful for a woman to fail to take care of a cow properly as this is core to her gender role. It is indeed considered a high honor for women to keep dairy cows and produce milk and market milk. If a woman does not have any cows to care for other women generally do not want to associate with her. Dairy cattle constitute an important form of wealth; men prefer to marry a woman with livestock.

Dairy value chain activities across Kilimanjaro Region are broadly the same across districts. Agripreneurs are primarily women. They engage in milk production; milk trading (buying milk from the farmers/collection centers and selling to urban consumers); milk processing (fermenting milk, making yoghurt, cheese and butter); and selling these products milk in the market. Other activities, primarily included within men's agripreneurial activity sets, include selling agrovet products and the provision of AI and veterinary services; making and selling silage; and selling locally mixed animal feeds and animal fodder. This said, a few differences are emerging between districts, with men in Moshi Rural becoming increasingly engaged in

TABLE 1 Number of respondents interviewed by category.

| Interview type | Kilimanjaro | | | | Tanga | | Total |
| | Siha & Hai | | Moshi | | Korogwe & Muheza | | |
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
FGD*	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
No. of participants in FGD**	18	19	12	13	14	15	91
Key Informants**	8	8	–	–	4	8	28
Individual interview**	6	8	–	–	6	7	27

* numbers of research events held; ** number of individuals interviewed.

dairy-related activities compared to men in Siha and Hai. Nevertheless, women still dominate milk marketing in all three districts.

In Tanga Region, FGD women and men respondents explained that dairying was introduced in the 1990s with interventions targeting men from indigenous ethnic communities long present in the region. These initiatives presented dairying as a commercial income-generation (as opposed to livelihood or nutritional support) enterprise. As a consequence, in Tanga Region the dairying business is normatively associated with men. The situation is more complex still, though, because traditionally only the Sambaa, an ethnic community who has long lived in the region, raised cattle. Other long-standing ethnic communities including the Zigua, Bondei, and Digo traditionally engaged in other livelihood activities. More recently, other ethnic communities including the Chagga, Pare, Hehe, Ha, and Sukuma ethnic communities have immigrated into Tanga Region. The situation is that, today, the majority of women engaging in dairy related businesses come from these immigrant communities. Within the households of indigenous ethnicities, only men engage in dairying. Furthermore, religious norms and practices associated with Islam play a role in determining the potential scope of women's dairying activities. Women from local indigenous ethnic communities which practice Islam, or women who marry into religious households, normatively do not engage in dairy. This said, small changes are afoot, with some women from indigenous ethnicities practicing Islam beginning to enter the sector. One such woman, for instance, bulks and sells milk but due to purdah requests that suppliers bring milk to her home.

Kilimanjaro Region and Tanga Region hold some gender norms in common, and these remain persistent over time. The most significant of these is that women are responsible for taking care of the household and the husband and therefore are expected to be physically present within the domestic sphere for much of the time. Women engaging in dairy-related businesses typically opt to locate their businesses near home. Interestingly, respondents put forward economic rather than normative rationales for this. They cited examples of women who locate their businesses close to home as being able to avoid spending money on transport, and that they can draw upon their children's help during school holidays. Other women try to locate their business between their home and market, and still others depend on buying milk from the community around their home.

Although women attempt to run dairy businesses around their household responsibilities, their right to do so is often challenged through reference to normative concepts of a good wife and a good husband. Women respondents in both regions noted that a woman's freedom to do business depends on her husband preferences in his role as head of household. It is up to him to decide whether he wants her to stay indoors or not. Men enforce norms compliance in a number of ways, for example a husband can blackmail his wife by spreading word that she is a prostitute if she earns from business but does not share income with him (women farmers' FGD, Tanga Region). If she starts a business and works outside the home without her husband's permission he might lock her out of the house (women farmers' FGD, Kilimanjaro Region). Women agripreneurs (FGD, Kilimanjaro Region) further explained that women's engagement in business can result in conflict with her in-laws. For instance, one respondent recalled that when she started her dairy business, her in-laws called and cautioned her about going into business because it

was something not expected of her at the time. A number of respondents in the same FGD called out mothers-in law for similar behavior, though one explained that her father-in-law had been the most resistant.

These findings are notable in that Chagga women, particularly, are normatively encouraged to engage in the dairy business. Yet they need to strategize carefully around gender norms that expect them to remain largely at home and fulfill normative expectations of being a good wife. Since milk production is a normatively women's activity, Chagga women are increasingly attaining higher economic positions within the household through enlarging the scale of their dairy production and marketing. However, in order to retain the positive image of being good wives, they simultaneously take care of their families' needs and ensure they involve the husbands in making big investment decisions using dairy income (Women agripreneurs' FGD, Moshi, 2021). Although Chagga women need to strategize in ways that impact negatively upon their time and which force them to compromise on their goals, they nevertheless have a strong breakdown position. Women explained that. "In Chagga culture, for a woman to leave with the cow is a divorce by default and cannot be discussed" (women agripreneurs' FGD Kilimanjaro Region).

In Tanga Region men are at risk of sanctions if they overtly encourage their wives to enter the dairying business. In communities expressing strong religious observance, for instance, elders and other men condemn husbands who let their wives go out to do business, while religious women will condemn the women concerned. Women agripreneurs' FGD, Korogwe and Muheza (2021) discussing consequences a woman from a religious family can face if she decides to do business said, "The elders will call the man (husband) and talk to him and religious women will call the woman to talk to her reminding her about religious ethics."

Local conceptualization of empowerment within local communities engaging in dairy-related businesses

In Tanga Region, a woman FGD respondent said, "empowerment means giving support to enable someone to do something he or she cannot do without that support." Another added, "empowerment is like giving someone education and thereafter enabling that person to put to practice the knowledge obtained." A third woman commented, "Empowerment is of different kinds, it does not mean only giving capital, but also creating awareness." According to respondents in Kilimanjaro Region, empowerment similarly involves supporting someone to move to another stage.

Other women attempted to define what an empowered women looks like, yet interestingly painted a portrait of someone facing – due to their empowered position – a number of significant normative constraints. For example, women agripreneurs in Kilimanjaro Region characterized an empowered woman as being able to do everything she needs to do to run her business effectively. They added though, that if she gets a lot of money from her business, she should not do anything big that will scare her husband and should only undertake such investments together with the husband. She, therefore, has more barriers compared to an empowered man whom they describe as free to do anything with his money without being questioned. However, women agripreneurs

in this region agreed that an empowered woman exudes self-confidence, enjoy good relationships with family and community, has big business networks, and she experiences an increase in the number of friends.

Women FGD respondents were then asked to discuss factors which empower and disempower women. In Kilimanjaro Region they argued education is a key empowering factor and argued that supportive social and gender norms are necessary for empowerment, as is sufficient capital. They added that women need sufficient time for conducting productive activities, require support from their spouse and other household members to carry out domestic and care work, and they need sufficient capacity. Women referred to unfavorable gender norms as a key constraint to women realizing their latent capacity (power within), with one woman arguing "A woman can be capable of doing something bigger, but the norms do not allow her. Men are not affected by norms."

Men FGD respondents were similarly asked define empowerment. As with women, men defined empowerment as a verb-something on-going thus a process. "Empowerment means someone was not capable to do something, so you boost him or her to do that thing, giving him/her the capability of doing something" (men agripreneurs' FGD, Moshi Rural). Other men defined empowerment as creating a suitable environment for someone to achieve their goal, boosting their capacity, and strengthening their confidence (men agripreneurs' FGD, Tanga Region). Talking specifically of women's empowerment, men agripreneurs (FGD, Kilimanjaro Region) describe an empowered woman as one who does not rely on village community banks (VICOBA) because she has her own business to focus on to generate income. Disempowered women, they argue, conversely join multiple VICOBA and ends up borrowing money from one VICOBA to repay loans from the other instead of using the loan for business. Men in Kilimanjaro Region further argued that factors contributing to women's empowerment include education, good quality dairy cattle breeds, willingness among women themselves, education on dairy production and handling are key to enhancing women's empowerment, as is the presence of a local good market for selling milk. Men FGD respondents (in Kilimanjaro) added that women's biological roles (pregnancy, childbirth, lactation etc.) form an important constraint to their empowerment. They suggested a major solution would be for men to assist women with household and care roles.

However, when an empowered woman was described in the FGDs, men respondents in both Kilimanjaro and Tanga regions indicated that she would be perceived by men and women alike as controlling of her husband. The husband is perceived to be disempowered-having no voice and exerting no influence as the traditional husband should, when a woman expresses evident characteristics of being empowered. Men FGD respondents note that the woman's mother-in-law would incite the husband against supporting her. Women FGD however clarify that if the empowered woman's husband is doing well in his agricultural engagements according to the standards of the community, the community will applaud him. If he is not doing well economically while the wife is empowered, the man can be frowned upon in the community, his relatives can accuse the wife of mistreating him, bewitching him or having an affair with other men who are supporting her. She bears the blame for his appearance of being disempowered although no attribution of such blame seems to be heaped on the husband of a woman who appears disempowered.

Strategies women use to engage in dairy-related business activities given prevailing gender norms and conceptualizations of empowerment

We build on the previous two sections by examining how women attempt to leverage their agency and strengthen their empowerment in three domains: (i) Challenging gender norms around cattle mating and artificial insemination, (ii) Challenging gender norms around women's mobility, income earning and decision making around income at the household level and, and (iii) Challenging gender norms around managing dairy income.

Challenging gender norms around cattle mating and artificial insemination

Women face name-calling when they perform an activity not commonly performed by women. Such woman are called *jikeduma* [a she-male, meaning that someone is half female-half male] by the community for doing something that is not normally done by women (male dairy agripreneur KII, Muheza). As a consequence, women themselves generally try to comply with norms, or sanction fellow women who decide to ignore them.

Cattle mating and artificial insemination (AI) is an interesting example of this, and specifically of how a new technology is allowing women to negotiate normative constraints. In both Kilimanjaro and Tanga Regions, a husband who allows his wife to take a cow on heat to mate with a bull is typically regarded as an incomplete man, with people commenting that he is a *mwanaume suruali* [a man who is controlled by his wife]. In such cases, clan elders call the man to warn him against this behavior, and to request him to do something to remove the curse arising from the woman's behavior which is believed to affect the whole community. Women who take cows to mate with bulls are frequently called prostitutes, and older women are expected to counsel younger women not to engage in this practice.

However, due to necessity women in Kilimanjaro Region try to find ways to negotiate around these norms and evade sanctions. Women respondents explained that if a man is not at home and the cow is on heat, a woman can ask a boy to take the cow to mate. Although normatively it remains the case that watching the mating process is considered shameful for women and is sanctioned, some women insist on watching the process to ensure that mating has occurred since successful mating is clearly critical to the dairying business. It remains the case that if a boy is not available it is not possible for women to ask an adult married man to help her take the cow to mate as people are likely to conclude that she is in a romantic relationship with that man. In such a situation, a woman can pay a man to take the cow to the bull on her behalf. In Tanga Region though, women never take cows to a bull. This remains normatively impossible.

Artificial Insemination (AI), however, is proffering women with new opportunities to try and express their agency and to become more successful in their business. To date, these efforts remain scattered and have not resulted in significant challenge to gender norms. Nevertheless, the study found signs that these challenges could start to accrue a critical mass for change in Kilimanjaro Region. Here, there are a few women AI technicians who typically offer AI to women dairy cattle owners. Unlike men technicians, they allow women farmers to buy AI on credit. Women farmers thus benefit from this service, and they find it easier to explain the signs of their cows being on heat – and

feel able to pose a wide range of questions – to women technicians. Women farmers demanding cattle AI are therefore a niche market for women AI technicians because women-to-women interactions are less suspect than male technician-female farmer interactions around delivery of cattle AI services. An important normative change is that whereas in nearly all cases women are debarred from watching cattle mate, this stricture does not apply to when AI is applied. However, gender norms swing back into action when men technicians provide AI. Women are not supposed to watch, nor do they feel able to ask questions. A few women AI technicians ride motorbikes to reach clients, although this is generally considered unsuitable for women. Women technicians also try to associate themselves with men technicians when they first enter communities. Through working together with men technicians they hope to build community level confidence in their capacities and to win their own clients.

In Tanga Region however, no women technicians currently offer AI and the only one who served for a short while was not originally from Tanga. Women respondents expressed discomfort with AI service provision, they do not stay to watch the technician performing AI, and they tell children not to observe the process. A man key informant argued that, "If woman performs AI nobody will punish her but she will be looked down on within the community." However, other men FGD respondents argued that men are likely to boycott women trying to provide AI. The effect of gender norms is such that many women veterinary students decline to be trained. One man in Tanga Region, speaking about his experience as a veterinary student, noted, "…during the practical sessions, female students were not doing AI practicals. Even now, if you tell women to inject the cow, some cannot do that although AI courses were given to both women and men, women were not interested in taking them."

Challenging gender norms around women's mobility, income earning and decision making around income at the household level

Across both regions, gender norms hamper women from maximizing their mobility. In terms of transport, this makes it difficult and time consuming for them to provide cattle with sufficient water and fodder, to sell their products, and to manage their other household responsibilities. Although women in some parts of Tanzania ride bicycles, this does not happen in the study sites. Men in both regions explained that it is "unexpected" for a woman to ride a bicycle or motorcycle to fetch water and carry fodder from the field. For their part, women argue it is hard for them to ride motorbikes because they are too big and uncomfortable, making it difficult to negotiate the mountainous terrain – particularly in Tanga Region. Men observed that even men in remoter parts of Kilimanjaro Region did not see bicycles growing up and therefore did not learn to ride them. Women agripreneurs therefore are forced to incur the expense of hiring bodabodas (motorbike riders) to secure their inputs and help move product. For fodder transportation, women hire young men with carts who load the fodder onto the carts and pull it from the field.

Attitudes to the forms of transport which women can or cannot use combine with norms focused on the role of a good wife that enjoin women to stay around the house. Taking care of their husband and children is considered a woman's primary role, and their ability to generate income is of secondary importance. Even among the Chagga community men normatively expect their wives to remain in the immediate vicinity of the home. A few men are now permitting their wives more freedom on condition that women limit their time away so that they can return home early to take care of household chores, the home and the husband. In Tanga Region, very few women are able to move beyond their community to buy and sell milk, and some are restricted to their homes. Some women use WhatsApp to market their milk from home. Others are beginning to push against normative constraints. In Tanga Region, milk is sold to milk collection centres (cooperatives) or within the community. Though men mostly take milk to the collection centers, some women are beginning to engage in this activity, sometimes through sending a son or a hired male laborer under their supervision.

In both regions, women are increasingly investing in kiosks located near their homes to sell fresh hot milk, fermented milk and milk tea. This allows them to conform with gender norms around personal mobility.

Challenging gender norms around managing dairy income

In Kilimanjaro Region women typically produce and sell milk. The picture when it comes to deciding how to spend dairy income is more nuanced, however. Some women are able to spend their income freely without having to talk to their spouses. The condition is that men are earning sufficient money themselves, and that women are using income from dairy to cover household expenses. It is only when men are not earning money that they seek to influence how dairy income is spent. Other women and men insisted that deciding how to spend dairy income was a joint decision. In these cases women attempt to push forward their spending agendas in a non-antagonistic way given the perception of men as heads of the households and decision-makers. Women who sell milk to milk collection centres find it hardest to conceal precisely how much they have earned because they are paid monthly. In this case, women need to agree with men on how to spend money together through discussion over the income received. Some women attempt to exert agency through buying household items on the way home from collecting milk revenue, in which case men cannot ask about income from sales.

In Tanga Region, dairy income and spending is generally considered to be under men's jurisdiction though with some nuancing. In households where cows and milk are owned by women, they keep the money from dairy trade often using it to do business and to support the family. When men own dairy cows, they can give some money from milk trade to their wives. However, when men collect and sell milk (as milk aggregators collecting milk from farmers, rather than from their own farms and selling to the collection center), they often keep the money to themselves (Male Agriprenuers' FGD, Korogwe and Muheza).

Discussion

This article addresses this question: How do women's empowerment and gender norms affect women's engagement in livestock business? It explores local gender norms in the dairy business and attempts to understand the ways in which women agripreneurs attempt to strategize and negotiate around these norms in order to promote their business. The study was conducted in two regions in Tanzania in the understanding that they are likely to exhibit some differences in gender norms, and therefore allow a more nuanced

appreciation of gender norms and women's empowerment strategies to emerge. We now reflect on each of our research questions. In so doing, we discuss our findings in relation to empowerment last because these observations draw upon observations relating to the other two questions.

The influence of local gender norms on women's engagement in dairy related-businesses

It is evident that local gender norms in both regions place important constraints on the exercise of women's agency. Their enforcement relies on men having significant "power over" women. As husbands, men are normatively awarded considerable power through their role as head of household and lead decision-maker. In this role, they are able to determine whether or not a wife can start a business, the size of her investment, and they can determine the extent of her mobility. All of these factors are critical components of women's efficacy as value chain actors. As community members and as community leaders, men sanction women who are deemed to step too far outside culturally acceptable limits to women's behavior. The few husbands who are perceived to have permitted their wives to transgress local gender norms are called to account by community members and leaders. Many men maintain unequal gender relations and thus limiting women's agency, voice, freedoms and resources. They act as "empowerment gatekeepers" who play a key role in maintenance of the current gender order (Flood, 2015).

Yet this picture is not uniform. Gender norms merge with cultural norms to create an understanding of what it means to be a woman or man member of a specific ethnic community or religious group. Our data shows that the Chagga ethnic group, which dominates our respondent group in the Kilimanjaro Region, has a long tradition of women's involvement in dairy cattle. Chagga women bring cattle into their marriage, and they can end a marriage by simply walking out with their livestock. Chagga women who do not appear interested in raising cattle are considered normative deviants. Community women visit them to attempt to put them back on track. In Tanga Region, however, raising dairy cows is relatively new and is primarily considered a man's activity. In this region, women's agripreneurship is more often frowned upon than in the Kilimanjaro Region. In this ethnically diverse region, people appear to build their identity more around a shared religion than their ethnic community; this succeeds in creating rather cohesive norms which can be difficult to question, particularly as religious representatives appeal to a higher non-human authority for their legitimacy.

Despite some openness to women's agripreneurism in dairy, particularly in Kilimanjaro Region, women who exhibit agripreneurial traits are frequently sanctioned through hostile words in both regions – though to a greater extent in Tanga Region. Sayings and remarks imply that women unleash their sexuality when transgressing norms that have quite a different purpose (such as obtaining inputs like AI or selling products). Non-entrepreneurial women, too, act as gatekeepers. They help to continually rebuild gender norms around what it means to be a woman, and how a woman should behave.

Thus far, our findings broadly suggest that gender norms are fully known to everyone in the community, that the sanctions for transgression are therefore known to all, and are considered legitimate.

However, some thinking around norms suggests that some norms are so implicit as to be invisible to the norm holder. The concept of *doxa* argues that in some cases a concept (in our case a norm) is so fully naturalized that it is taken for granted (Bourdieu, 1977). An objective understanding of one's state is not possible. No one can experience complete autonomy from doxa because our choices are shaped by who we are at a specific historical juncture and in a specific place. Consequently, it is not possible to stand entirely outside our historical selves. Bourdieu terms this state of being *habitus*. The idea of habitus suggests that there are boundaries or limits beyond which a person cannot act or think (Risseeuw, 2005). "Habitus plays an important role in shaping a woman's character, beliefs, preferences and choices, and in framing her conceptualization of what the process towards—and the achieved state of—empowerment might actually look like" (Farnworth et al., 2021, p. 531).

In our study, the use of local sayings is one proxy for the existence of habitus. Such sayings – which do not have any clear source of origin and appear timeless – help to keep norms hostile to women's freedoms in place. Alemu (2007) in a study of oral narratives in an Ethiopian community, found that local stories present men and masculine attributes positively whereas women are portrayed as sexually rapacious and lacking mental capacity. These narratives "prescribe gender-appropriate behavior. Women should be obedient, subservient, respectful, and faithful to men, whereas men should be powerful and authoritative" (Farnworth et al., 2018, 228). Novitz (1997, p. 146 cited in Alemu, 2007) argues that narratives like these undermine positive views that people (in this case women) might hold of themselves whilst allowing men (in this case) to assert and maintain their gender interests. Stories are examples of invisible power which influence how individuals think about themselves in the world – their beliefs, sense of self and their degree of acceptance of the status quo (Farnworth et al., 2018, 228). Our findings lack the detail of the Ethiopian study, yet they hint at similarities in how narratives in various Tanzanian communities may contribute to shaping gender norms around local concepts of how women and men should be, and are to behave.

Strategies women use to engage in dairy-related business activities given prevailing gender norms and conceptualizations of empowerment

Despite the gender normative constraints just discussed, we provide evidence that women are negotiating carefully with gender norms to develop their dairy-related businesses. This is a complex process. Our findings suggest that there is a strong degree of habitus around women's reproductive role in the household and care work, particularly of children but also husbands. The gender division of labor – at least in our data – is never challenged by respondents. There is no suggestion that men could help out at home (even though some respondents mentioned this would be helpful). However, women agripreneurs seek to demonstrate that they successfully meet the demands of their role as housekeeper and carer whilst simultaneously carefully developing and maintaining limited strategies to deepen their agency and thereby promote their power to act. These strategies are designed to allow women to conduct business close to home and to manage time constraints. They include managing kiosks selling milk products, engaging children to help in school holidays, and

employing motorbike drivers to transport their produce. The use of kiosks is a particularly interesting example. They enable women to perform a "household task" – preparing food, thereby emphasizing their alignment with gender norms (albeit in a slightly different physical location) whilst obtaining income to empower themselves, thereby subverting the norm. Nonetheless, women and their communities are constantly aware of how their empowerment reflects on or affects their husbands and how the husbands are perceived in the community.

Other domains previously subject to habitus also appear to be creaking open slightly. The most evident of these is taking cows to mate. The tradition remains strong that women should not view mating. However, given male mobility it is increasingly understood that a husband may not be available to take his wife's cow to a bull. In such cases, the husband is substituted for someone of the same gender, almost always a boy in order to avoid suggestions of romantic engagement. Marcus (2018) cautions that women often are subject to considerable gossip with hints that their economic relationship can serve to mask a sexual one. In some cases, though, entrepreneurial necessity trumps gossip. In Kilimanjaro Region, women are sometimes permitted to watch mating to make sure it has occurred and to legitimize payment to the owner of the bull, but this remains rare. Interestingly, though, habitus has not found time to develop around artificial insemination. This is affording scope for some women to become AI technicians, for livestock women owners to be present when their cows are inseminated, and – importantly – to build their capacity by asking questions of the technician. Even so, AI women technicians recognize the stickiness of gender norms around their work, and thus seek out under-served markets. For example, they offer AI services on credit to women farmers who are unable to obtain such services from men technicians, and they build links with men technicians by initially working with them. This aims to create a sense respect and trust among community members that women can also act as effective AI technicians.

Overall, however, our findings suggest that women agripreneurs face an extremely difficult environment. Their lives are largely circumscribed by gender norms within which they try to carve out tiny niches to enable them to act. Kandiyoti (1988) holds that women's strategies play out in the context of patriarchal bargains. These are implicit scripts which define, limit, and inflect women's options (*ibid.*, p. 285). A patriarchal bargain allows an individual woman to negotiate the system to achieve an advantage, but it leaves the essential elements of the system untouched. The negotiating strategies of most of our women respondents clearly adhere to the concept of patriarchal bargaining. They are careful to ensure that their husbands feel confirmed in their role of lead decision-maker, particularly through making sure that men are involved in discussing how to spend dairy income. This said, some women attempt to reduce men's freedom of manouevre (and the potential for them to take the money) by spending dairy income on the way home from selling milk or obtaining a payment from the dairy collective. Such women, however, make sure to conform to their reproductive role through purchasing household items rather than spending on themselves. Chagga women experience a little more freedom regarding how to spend dairy income because they are already considered to be primary managers of dairy cows. Their freedom holds true provided dairy income remains low and is not perceived to challenge men's normative role as breadwinners (see OECD, 2019).

conceptualization of empowerment within local communities engaging in dairy-related businesses

The literature review indicated that development partners in Tanzania, and the Government of Tanzania, have long rolled out women's empowerment projects in the field, and created an enabling policy framework through gender mainstreaming. No community in Tanzania is untouched by all this activity. As a consequence, it would seem that women's empowerment should be a well-established and well-rooted concept across the country, including in the two study regions. Yet the findings suggest that respondents conceptualize of empowerment processes as externally driven, and not led by the person to be empowered. Empowerment appears to involve someone doing something to someone else in order to empower them – to "boost their capacity" as one respondent put it. The respondents thinking that empowerment is primarily promoted through skills development relates to classic empowerment approaches pushed by the development community. For instance, Alvarez (2013) highlights how women's status can be boosted through literacy, education, training and raising awareness.

There is no reference in respondent accounts to a sense that empowerment processes start with "power within." In our study, women agripreneurs exhibit some power to act – this involves careful pushing and tugging at the normative constraints just described to create some space. There is a strong sense, too, that these actions are highly individualized. Women are not drawing much upon each other for support. For instance, men in Tanga Region recalled a woman AI technician who operated for a while then disappeared without trace, leaving in place norms that women should not conduct AI intact in their community. There is however limited evidence of "power with" networks in the study site. Power with is a concept of power which aims to bridge, associate and multiply individual skills and knowledge to create enduring change in gender norms, usually at the community level. Power with involves creating mutual support networks, to promote solidarity and collaboration between women, and to engage supportive men (and social institutions like community councils, extension services, and others). The potential case of power with is described with different examples such as that of village savings, which men respondents sarcastically described as a poverty trap whereby poor women obtain money from one society to pay off debts at another. Their assessment is probably largely correct. However, the evidence of women AI technicians targeting women farmers as a niche market as well as initially working alongside male AI technicians cannot be totally ignored and provides possible avenues through which "power with" can be harnessed.

Acosta et al. (2019) review empowerment efforts in Uganda to try and understand why national efforts have failed to create much change on the ground. They find that "the formulation of a global strategy will likely not suffice in dealing with highly localized and context specific gender dynamics, and in dealing with structurally embedded gender inequalities that are often spread through all aspects of a society. In this way, the assumption that international gender norms could significantly affect local patriarchal contexts needs to be reassessed" (Acosta et al., 2019, 17). The authors make a number of recommendations focused on working with promising practices at local level which are reshaping gender relations, working with women's movements, and working with improved monitoring and evaluation processes – among others. Batliwala (2007) takes a historical

perspective, noting how radical empowerment objectives in the 1970s and 1980s transmuted into gender mainstreaming projects which framed communities as recipients of empowerment rather than core actors. Kabeer (2003) and Cornwall (2016) suggest that for many years empowerment was seen as a handmaiden to wider development objectives, with empowered women being seen as key actors to reduce fertility, improve household nutrition, and other objectives – rather than being empowered in themselves in their own ways.

Such an enactment of empowerment within the context of perceptions of women's inferiority in social ordering as is the case in much of Tanzania (Hjelmström, 2017) seems to impact on how women express and experience and, are expected to express their empowerment. There was an emphasis among both women and men respondents that women should spend their income on the household and not on themselves. An economically empowered woman is quite frequently viewed negatively by both men and women, particularly if her husband is not doing well economically and can be accused of mistreating him, bewitching him or having an affair with other men who are supporting her. However, no attribution of such blame seems to be heaped on the husband of a woman who appears disempowered.

Our own findings indicate that local patriarchal contexts remain powerful in both study sites, and decades of work on women's empowerment appears to have elevated concern around the practicality of empowerment – rather than excitement, particularly in Tanga Region. Women graphically, and surprisingly to the authors of this study, describe an empowered woman as someone who faces more barriers than an empowered man, and urge that she work to keep men onside by submitting to his authority. Chagga women, though, generally describe empowered women in ways more attuned to international concepts – they brim with self-confidence, have a lot of friends, and business contacts. Men FGD respondents, describe empowerment as a process that involves boosting of one's aspirations, confidence, capacity and entails creation of an enabling environment for one to achieve own goals-largely capturing the importance of an external actor in the process. Talking specifically of women's empowerment, men describe an empowered woman as attuned to business and income, knowledgeable and having capacity and skills in dairy production and marketing. They do acknowledge women's biological roles as a key constraint for to their empowerment with a possible solution being men's help to women.

The sense that the concept of "empowerment" refers to an external agenda is strong but with subtle calls for attention to local cultural and gender norms moreso, through highlighting the local environment and relational aspects. The local perceptions also seem to pick up on the trend in empowerment projects being closely linked to building of individual human capital and economic capacity which has been the trend in interventions observed in Tanzania.

Taken together, our findings suggest that dairy value chains interventions in Tanzania which aim to empower women need to be cognizant of local gender norms, and they need to be alert to the ways in which women are already strategizing around these norms. It is important to be aware of the sanctions both women and men face if women's attempts to empower themselves are considered to transgress gender norms. Gender norms and cultural norms inculcate and inform each other differently in Kilimanjaro and Tanga regions, and these processes are in turn informed by national dialogs as well as the long history of empowerment interventions in communities. Working closely with communities in ways which empower both women and men to start changing restrictive and discriminatory norms, is key to the successful design of dairy value chain interventions. Such interventions need to be tailored to specific regions.

Conclusion

This paper considers the interactions between local gender norms and constructions of empowerment. The focus is on women agripreneurs in dairy chains, with women and men among the respondents in two regions of Tanzania, Tanga and Kilimanjaro. Overall, women's empowerment gains are limited yet they are happening – particularly in Kilimanjaro Region where local gender norms among the Chagga come together favorably with understandings of empowerment to award agripreneurial women more agency than women agripreneurs in Tanga Region. Here, adherence to the same religion in ethnically diverse communities appears to play an important role in circumscribing women's power. Religion is the glue binding ethnically diverse people. It can be speculated that in more ethnically diverse communities (in which inter-marriage is frequently common), social norms relating to a specific ethnic community cannot be enforced through the application of sanctions as effectively as in communities which are mostly comprised of just one ethnic community.

Our data shows that women in both study sites nevertheless face considerable constraints to enacting their agency effectively. They develop gendered strategies which both acknowledge gender norms yet simultaneously try to push out the boundaries of these norms. In so doing women continually risk potent sanctions which impugn them and their husbands. Their strategies are reminiscent of the two-faced god, Janus, of ancient Roman religion. He was the god of beginnings, gates, time, transitions and endings. He could look back into time and forward into the future. Our Tanzanian women respondents seem very much to be perched in the same place, looking forward and looking back while adopting negotiating strategies around the status quo.

Regarding future work, it is now evident that this study did not engage sufficiently with unpacking local understandings of empowerment, despite this being one of its objectives. (This is due to the wide range of topics covered in FGDs.) It would be interesting to pursue this theme in more depth. A study by Østebø (2015), for instance, conducted with the Arsi Oromo ethnic community in Ethiopia, showed how the Government of Ethiopia's gender machinery translates gender equality as to mean "sameness" between women and men and that this is to be achieved through equalizing the gender division of labor. However, on the ground women and men argue for gender complementarity. In their view, this means working collaboratively together and securing agreement through conjugal dialog. Importantly, people neither assimilate nor reject concepts of gender equality put forward by development brokers. Rather, they translate and recreate gender equality concepts in terms of their local values, needs and priorities.

In our case, it would be valuable to deepen our understandings of such dialog processes in rural Tanzania through exploring the interactions between cultural norms and gender equality narratives in more depth. Upon this understanding, empowerment strategies which leverage local gender norms and which deliberately create and build on dialog processes could be developed. Community conversations

provide one mechanism, among others, for creating change in norms in ways which are led by local people (Mulema et al., 2020).

Data availability statement

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Ethics statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by IREC Secretariat International Livestock Research Institute P.O. Box 30709, Nairobi, Kenya Phone: +254 20 422 3887 Email: ilriresearchcompliance@cgiar.org. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Author contributions

EA, CF, AG, AO, and AJ contributed substantial contributions to the conception of the work, analysis and provision of insights in interpretation of data for the work. EA, CF, and AG contributed to drafting the work and revising it critically for important intellectual content. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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