Measuring Women's Empowerment through Migration

By Amie GAYE and Shreyasi JHA[1]
(United Nations Development Programme, Statistics Unit)

Abstract

Currently, nearly half of international migrants are women, and evidence suggests that migration flows and their impacts are strongly gendered. However, there is a striking lack of quantitative analysis of international migration's impact on gender. This paper attempts to examine the challenges in cross-national measurement of women's empowerment through migration as a contribution to an informed policy debate around gender, migration and empowerment. Since the focus of this paper is on identifying challenges in quantitative measurement of women's empowerment, we use individual-level data from the Luxemburg Income Study (LIS) to examine migrant women's socio-economic characteristics. Data on educational attainment is used as proxy for social empowerment, while economic empowerment is measured using individual-level data on migrant's occupation, job status, property ownership and net wage. Although aggregate data on female migration is essential to improve our understanding of cross-country differences in aspects of women's migration, this paper emphasizes the need for more longitudinal data to identify barriers to women's empowerment in destination and origin countries. The paper makes several forward-looking conclusions that summarize the major findings and links them to data and measurement issues that need to be addressed in future research.

1. INTRODUCTION

"Migration can be both a cause and consequence of female empowerment."
Hugo. (2000).

Since 1950, the female share of international migrants has been more than 40 per cent. Initially, women moved as 'accompanying family dependents', however, currently more women are migrating independently in search of jobs[2]. This change is a result of a combination of factors—changes in the demographic structure, increasing demand for cheaper caregivers in rich countries, more visible inequalities in wealth and opportunities across countries, globalization and aggressive policies of private recruitment agencies[3].

Improvement in women's education, change in societal perceptions of women's role in the family and differential wages for the same profession across countries, have all been drivers of independent migration of women. For instance, a doctor from Côte d'Ivoire can raise her income six folds if she moves to France (HDR 2009). As the 2009 Human Development Report notes, "movement both within and between nations is predominantly driven by the search for better opportunities." In addition to income gains, migration has the potential to improve

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[2] INSTRAW, 2007

[3] Ibid.

women's self respect, their dignity and enhance their freedom to act in pursuit of their personal goals[4].

The important role of women as remittance senders and the role of migration in re-shaping gender power relations has become an important research theme in recent years. However, as Hugo (2000) notes, whether or not migration results in increased empowerment of women depends on the context in which the migration occurs, the type of movement, and the characteristics of the female migrants.

With the changing trend in international migration, there is a growing awareness in social science research that the consideration of gender is critical when studying the motivations, outcomes, and barriers to international migration. Nevertheless, there has been little effort to explicitly model the differences between men and women with respect to the determinants and outcomes of international migration. This is a serious shortcoming in the existing literature. Unless we are able to measure adequately how migration affects women's status, it would be difficult to advocate for migration policies that are sensitive to the specific needs of female migrants. This paper highlights some of the challenges to quantitatively measure the impact of migration on women's empowerment.

Theoretical models and empirical findings focusing on male migration are not likely to adequately describe experiences of females migrating independently and studies that do not distinguish between males and females may misstate the effect of independent variables on migration for both genders. The lack of a structured and coherent gender focus has compromised our understanding of how even basic characteristics, including human capital, affect international migration by men and women. What little we do know makes it clear that gender cannot be ignored or represented simply as a dummy variable in econometric models. A lack of cross-country panel data has further impeded research on international migration by gender, because such data permit researchers to investigate how trends in migration have changed and differed by gender over time.

While there are an increasing number of qualitative studies, there are limited quantitative studies on the impact of migration and women's empowerment. Most studies that have examined this issue tend to focus on gender-determinants of migration and on economic impacts. Lack of good quality data on migration, specifically sex disaggregated data, is a major hurdle in measuring the impact of migration on women's empowerment.

As a concept, empowerment is difficult to define because it is context specific. This poses problems for consistency and cross country comparability, and may explain the lack of literature on migration's impact on women's empowerment. Past studies have attempted to measure different aspects of women's empowerment—either using indicators or through composite indices.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the measurement challenges posed in quantifying women's empowerment through migration. We focus on how migration as a means of female empowerment can be measured. The broad question that this study attempts to answer is: what are the appropriate indicators to assess the impact of migration on women's empowerment? In doing so, we examine potential social and economic indicators that can be used to construct measures of migrant women's empowerment. We then examine several explanatory variables that affect empowerment of migrant women, such as their education level and so on. We use household level data from the Luxemburg Income Study (LIS) for 36 countries in our analysis. The LIS datasets are selected for three key reasons—first, though limited in its country coverage, LIS is one of the few international datasets that includes indicators that allow cross-country comparison of migrants and non-migrants; secondly, we had access to the dataset through the Human Development Report Office and finally, they include questions on migration status of respondents and these responses are often disaggregated by gender.

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[4] HDR 2009.

The paper also assesses the extent to which the human development gender indices (the gender inequality index (GII), the gender-related development index (GDI) and the gender empowerment measure (GEM)) capture migrant women's levels of empowerment.

By attempting to measure migrant women's empowerment for a small group of countries, we highlight the challenges faced in measuring women's empowerment through migration. We propose indicators that better reflect migrant women's empowerment and future data collection efforts on female migrants. The quantitative analysis presented in this paper contributes to the small but growing field of literature on this topic.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: section 2 reviews literature on migration and on women's empowerment focusing on measures of empowerment used in past studies. Section 3 focuses on data for assessing women migrants' empowerment. First, the section discusses the human development gender indices as potential measures of migrant women's empowerment. Second, it reviews indicators and data sources that can be used to assess migrant women's empowerment, and finally, we use the LIS data focusing on indicators to measure our dependent and independent variables. Section 4 provides empirical evidence on migration's impact on women's empowerment based on LIS data. It does so by comparing migrant women's characteristics (levels of education, labour market participation, occupation, levels of income, etc.) with native born females in the host countries. Section 5 concludes and makes recommendations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There exists a small but significant body of literature that examines the relationship between international migration and the empowerment of women. The relationship between migration and the empowerment of women hinges on the definition of empowerment used. In this section we review selected literature on the basis of the context in which empowerment is defined and their analyses of migration's impact on women's empowerment.

Empowerment is a multidimensional concept which means different things in different contexts. Malhotra (2003) argues that one of the constraints to measuring women's empowerment is its context specific nature. For example, in some contexts women's participation in household decisions is considered empowerment while this may be the norm in other societies. This poses problems for consistency and cross country comparability. Empowerment is often seen as "a process with elements such as conscientization, agency, ownership of and control over resources, ability to make choices; and to participate in decisions that affect one's life" (Charmes and Wieringa, 2003). Measuring process with standard data collection tools adds another difficulty in assessing women's empowerment through migration. For example, proxy indicators such as women's participation in political structures are not adequate in measuring women's empowerment unless they are complemented by a qualitative sense of the nature of political participation. Another difficulty Malhotra points out is that behavioural and normative boundaries that define empowerment indicators keep evolving, changing the relevance of some indicators. For instance, if female participation in the labour market becomes the accepted norm, there is little reason to expect that it would be influenced by an individual's level of empowerment.

Data limitations are also a major constraint to quantitatively assess women's empowerment. This problem is further exaggerated when assessing migration's impact on women's empowerment. Often pre-migration information on labour force participation, income levels, engagement with political processes and asset ownership are not available. As stated earlier, some unobservable characteristic of the migrant rather than movement alone may account for the differences in levels of empowerment of migrant women and those who stay behind. Various methodology and data sources to measure migrant women's empowerment from previous studies are discussed in the following section.

2.1 Measuring migration and women's empowerment

Since the focus of this paper is on identifying measurement challenges, we limit this literature review to examining how previous studies have attempted to measure women's empowerment as affected by migration. Literature on migration and empowerment can be broadly classified into two groups based on their methodology: quantitative and qualitative data and methodology.

A number of studies have used primary data to quantitatively analyse the impact of migration on women's development and empowerment. For example, Connelly et al. (2010) used a survey of more than 3,000 married female migrants and returned migrants in rural Anhui and Sichuan provinces of China, to explore women's views on male-female relationships, women's role in household decision-making, women's relationships with their husbands and women's views concerning parents and children. Comparing migrant and non-migrant women's positions in their households, they concluded that migration has statistically significant, lasting effects on women's position in the household, though the effects are neither always positive nor universal. They argue that the impact of any specific migration pattern on women's empowerment depends on the circumstances of the move and the economic context of both sending and receiving areas. However, rural women migrants experience more autonomy in urban areas than they did at home.

Using household survey data from Mexico's National Rural Household Survey (ENHRUM, 2003), Pfeiffer and Taylor (2010) examined the impact of female and male migration on household investments in education and health. They find that effects of migration on migrant-sending households depend significantly on migrants' gender. Guzman et al. (2010) obtained similar results using Ghana's Living Standard Survey data to assess the impact of migrant remittances on household expenditure allocations and found that households receiving remittances from females inside Ghana allocated more money to health and education compared to households with male remitters. This may suggest that the preferences of the remitter do influence the outcome of expenditures, but proximity increases control over whether these preferences are reflected in actual allocations. Based on a review of a number of gender-focused studies on migration that primarily use econometric analysis, Morrison and Schiff (2010) also confirm that female migrants may not have control over monies they remit in countries where there is male dominance in household decision-making.

Findings from a migration mapping of Cambodian female migrant workers in Malaysia show that migrant women tend to have negative experiences, which include harsh working conditions, sexual harassment, lack of freedom and inability to access their own funds for emergencies. Rural migrants who work as 'beer promoters' in urban areas also suffer stigmatization and are perceived as 'sex workers'. More than a third of 640 'beer promoters' surveyed reported having been coerced to perform sexual acts (Lee Chen Chen, 2006). Traditional mores and value systems often make it difficult for women who have migrated into urban areas to return to their villages and face derogatory remarks such as 'srey kroc'—which means 'broken women' (ibid).

Özden and Neagu (2010) used a sample of the 2000 U.S. census covering migrants from 130 countries to jointly analyse female migrants' labour market participation and their performance levels using two proxies—skilled level of occupation and wages—for two migrant cohorts; those who arrived in the U.S. in the 1980s and those who came in the 1990s. They found that the higher levels of education and the location where migrants obtained their education had some impact on labour market outcomes. Migrants who completed their education in the U.S. were more likely to be employed, with the exception of those from Jamaica, Ghana and Nigeria. Of those who completed their education in their home countries, those from Eastern Europe and from Africa had higher levels of participation but lower levels of performance (wages and salaries).

In contrast, Asian and Middle-Eastern female migrants had lower levels of participation but higher levels of performance. Migrants from Latin America had low levels of employment due mainly to low levels of education. Özden and Neagu concluded that education levels are the most important variables influencing labor market outcomes, regardless of where they were obtained.

A few studies have also examined the issue qualitatively using primary data. Tastsoglou's and Miedema (2002) used data from 40 semi-structured interviews to examine the integration process of immigrant women in two major urban centers in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and to document the organizational activities of immigrant women assessing their significance in the integration process. They find that immigrant women in Canada are not well integrated. Even though they often have higher levels of education than Canadian-born women, their average earnings are lower, they are over-represented in lower status jobs and they are often unemployed or underemployed.

Van Eyck (2004) uses a mix of quantitative and qualitative data from 13 sending (including Barbados, Ecuador, Kenya, Ghana, Fiji, the Philippines, Poland and Sri Lanka) and receiving countries (including UK, Antilles, Barbados, Canada and Chile). Using survey data from over 600 surveys and 20 in-depth interviews, this report examines the impact of migration of public health workers on health service delivery and their conditions of employment. Van Eyck (2004) argues that migration has high social costs for women in particular and the benefits are often over-estimated. Van Eyck asserts that "gender acts as a basic organizing principle of labor markets in destination countries, reproducing and reinforcing pre-existing gender patterns that oppress women in their origin countries". For example, women migrants still perform 'women's work'—as nannies, maids and sex workers, with low remuneration, poor working conditions, and little or no legal protections.

2.2 Migration, self-selection and women's empowerment

Several researchers point out that selectivity bias is a major problem in existing data on migration. They argue that selection bias rather than migration itself explains the differences between migrants and non-migrants. In other words, women who venture to migrate independently may already be more empowered. The 2009 HDR points out that comparisons of groups with similar observable characteristics such as gender and education, can shed light on migrants and non-migrants but omit potentially important unobservable characteristics such as attitudes towards risk.

Brücker and Defoort (2006) used data from six OECD countries (Australia, Canada, France, Germany, UK and USA) for the years 1975-2000 (one observation for each five year period) and extended the Roy model[5] to assess how differences in the structure of earnings affect the skill distribution of migrants. They concluded that migrants tend to be positively self-selected with regards to their skill levels and found that higher inequality in earnings in both the receiving and home countries is associated with a favourable selection bias.

Chiswick (2000) also concluded that there is positive self selection of migrants on the basis of levels of their abilities. Connelly et al. (2010) also found that selectivity of migration is more important than selectivity of the return. They showed empirically that migrants who return do not appear to be different from those who are still located in the receiving area; implying that female migrants who remain in their destination places are risk-takers and have inert abilities, which influence their migration outcomes.

Borjas (1987) used earnings data from the 1970 and 1980 U.S. censuses to compare earnings of migrants from 41 countries to those of natives. He concluded that for positive

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[5] The Roy model of self-selection on outcomes is one of the most important models in economics. It is a framework for analysing comparative advantage. The original model analysed occupational choice with heterogeneous skill levels and has subsequently been applied in many other contexts.

Box 1: Gender index to measure female migrant's empowerment

The 2010 Human Development Report introduces a new Gender Inequality Index (GII). It is a composite measure which reflects inequality in achievements between women and men in three dimensions—reproductive health, empowerment, and the labour market. It varies between 0 – when women and men fare equally – and 1, when women fare as poorly as possible in all measured dimensions.

The health dimension is measured by two indicators – the maternal mortality ratio and the adolescent fertility rate; and the empowerment dimension is measured by the share of parliamentary seats held by each sex and by the attainment at secondary and higher levels of education by females and males aged 25 years or older. Instead of income the economic dimension is measured by female and male labour force participation rates.

What is interesting about the GII is that it combines elements of gender inequality and women's empowerment in one index. Another interesting aspect is the indicators measuring the health dimension—adolescent fertility rate and maternal mortality ratio, which have no male equivalents. The rationale is that safe motherhood reflects the importance society attaches to women's reproductive role. Reproduction in a number of countries is not only risky but often begins too early, compromising health and limiting future opportunities. Early child-bearing, as measured by the adolescent fertility rate, is associated with greater health risks for mothers and babies and tends to prevent young women from going to school, often limiting them to low-skilled jobs at best. Hence in the GII, the reproductive health of girls and women is compared to the benchmarks that each society should target – no maternal death and no adolescent pregnancy, a norm which all males attain because they are not exposed to the risk of maternal deaths or directly to early childbirth.

However, the GII is not a perfect composite measure and does not account for distribution between migrants and non migrants. The two proxy indicators for empowerment—attainment of secondary or higher level of education (achievement) and parliamentary representation measure important aspects of women's empowerment, but they neither capture women's agency nor their access to productive resources. Like the GDI, the GII is not a true measure of gender inequality. However, depending on data availability, the methodology could potentially be adapted to reflect the status of migrant and non-migrant women in those three dimensions.

The UNDP Human Development Index, which is a summary measure of human development in three basic aspects of human development—knowledge, long and healthy life and a decent standard of living, can be disaggregated by native women, foreign-born women and women in the migrant's home country, depending on availability of representative data for this level of disaggregation to assess whether migration has any impacts on achievements in these three dimensions. The difference in the HDIs would give an indication of how migrant women fare relative to their native-born counterparts and women in their home country.

selection of migrants to take place, there has to be a strong correlation between the earnings a worker may expect in the home country and those expected in the United States and whether income distribution of the United States is more unequal than in the home country. If, on the other hand, income distribution in the sending country is more unequal than in the U.S., and there is a strong positive correlation in earnings, migrants would be selected from the lower tail of the income distribution in the country of origin.

The limited literature in this field shows that there are theoretical and data issues that prevent a richer analysis of the relationship between migration and women's empowerment. The fluidity of the notion of empowerment makes it difficult to compare findings across the relatively large body of studies in this area. From the literature, the impact of migration on women's empowerment is mixed and positive impact depends to a larger extent on the migrants' characteristics. Migrants are a self-selected sample and selectivity bias tends to make it difficult to attribute socio-economic conditions of migrant women to migration alone. Both qualitative and quantitative research is needed to better understand the relationship between migration and women's empowerment. In order to explore the impact of both female and male migration on women's empowerment, an effort to improve the accuracy of data on the volume of female migration including pre-migration characteristics should be high on the research agenda.

In section 4, we illustrate some of the measurement challenges in studying the relationship between migration and women's empowerment through an analysis of survey data from LIS.

2.3 Human development gender indices and migrant women's empowerment

There are a number of existing gender indices (such as UNDP Human Development Report's Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM); the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index (GGI)). However, none is currently suited to measuring migrant women's empowerment. For example, GDI and GEM have contributed to the policy debate on gender inequality and women's empowerment, but they have also been criticized for both their conceptual and empirical limitations, which are well documented (see for example, Cueva-Beteta 2006, Dijkstra 2006, Folbre 2006, Klasen, 2006, and Schuler, 2006 and).[6] The conceptual and methodological flaws of these indices made them inappropriate for

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[6] Journal of Human Development Vol. 7 Number.

capturing the impact of migration on women's empowerment.

Box 1 briefly reviews the new human development gender index and how it could potentially be adapted to capture women migrants' level of empowerment.

3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Hypotheses

The focus of this paper is to highlight challenges in quantitatively measuring the impact of migration on women's empowerment. One can measure the impact of migration on women's empowerment at different units of analysis – cross-country, regional or individual country level – and at each level there are different challenges to measuring the effects quantitatively. In this paper, we limit the analysis to examining the challenges in cross-national measurement of migration's impact on women's empowerment.

International migration has both direct and indirect effect on empowerment of women. Direct effects are a consequence of an increase in women's incomes as a result of migration. Indirect effect of migration on women's empowerment has to do with the social, political and family effect on women. This includes the impact on children's schooling, women's role as care-givers in their family, impact on women's reproductive choices, and women's role in political bodies, and so on. Previous studies (discussed in the literature review section) have shown that women's empowerment through migration depends to a large extent on the kind of job they undertake in their destination countries. Studies have shown that women migrant tend to undertake unskilled jobs in manufacturing or service sectors where wages are typically low and they suffer physical and sexual because of their vulnerable status.

Based on the literature review, a priori, we expect migrant women to be employed in greater numbers in unskilled jobs. We would expect migrant women to be less self-employed; rather they would be in paid and unpaid professions, with significantly lower wages than their non-migrant counterparts.

In an ideal scenario, to measure the impact of migration on the empowerment of women

we would compare empowerment indicators for women, before and after they migrated. Further, we would compare women migrant to men migrants, before and after they migrated. However, longitudinal data on migrants that compare their socio-economic status before and after they migrated is currently unavailable, especially at the cross-national level. What we can measure at present with the available data is the current empowerment status of migrant women. To measure the empowerment status of migrant women, we compare them to three sets of cohorts – non-migrant females, non-migrant females with tertiary education and migrant men.

Using these three groups as comparisons, we examine three specific questions pertaining to women's empowerment:

1. Are female migrants more empowered than their non-migrants counterparts?
2. Comparing female migrants and non-migrants with similar educational levels, are female migrants more economically empowered than their non-migrant counterparts?
3. Finally, are female migrants more (or less) empowered than their male counterparts?

Following our literature, we expect that female migrants to be less empowered than their non-migrant counterparts (based on established indicators of empowerment). We also expect that female migrants with tertiary education would be less likely to be employed in skilled jobs and less self-employed than female non-migrants with similar education levels. We also expect female migrants to have lower wages and own less property compared to their female non-migrant counterparts. Finally, a priori we expect female migrants to be less empowered than male migrants. Female migrants are often more vulnerable than male migrants and we expect that more females migrants take up unpaid and unskilled jobs, with lower wages than male migrants.

Borrowing from existing frameworks, we propose to measure women's empowerment using indicators of educational attainment and economic participation.

a. Social empowerment – social empowerment is measured by educational attainment. Education is a very important component of opportunities and agency. For example, empirical evidence points to a positive association between female education and other life outcomes such as employment, child survival and girls' enrolment (Schultz 2002, World Bank, 2001). The interpretation being that the higher the educational attainment, the greater the social empowerment.

b. Economic empowerment is measured by economic participation and property ownership. Economic participation is measured by average wage and status in job, while we use wealth tax and self-employed/employer as a proxy to measure property ownership.

Due to lack of longitudinal data, we limit our analysis to descriptive statistics. Since the focus of this paper is to highlight challenges in measuring women's empowerment through migration, this analysis will reveal existing data gaps and future steps to enhance data quality and related analysis to enable cross-national comparisons and study international trends.

3.2 Data and summary statistics

For the analysis in this paper, we use data from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) to examine key socio-economic characteristics of migrant women. Since the focus of this paper is examine measurement issues in international comparisons, we needed data from more than one country. LIS is one of the few international datasets that include socio-economic indicators that allow cross-country comparison of migrants' and non-migrants socio-economic status and they include questions on migration status of respondents and these responses are often disaggregated by gender. Additionally, the Human Development Report Office has access to the LIS dataset that allowed us to use this data in our paper.

LIS is a non-profit project, which produces a cross-national database of microeconomic income data for social research. Located in Luxemburg, the LIS project started in 1983 and the datasets are grouped in five year intervals.

For our analysis we use the most recent available data from 36 countries. For three countries in our sample – Czech Republic, Romania, and Slovak Republic – the data come from wave 4 (1996-97). For the rest of the countries, data come from either wave 5 or wave 6 of the LIS database. (Table 1 shows the year and data wave for every country in our analysis.)

LIS publishes both household and individual level data on migrants. At the individual level most of the indicators are economic in nature. As a result, we are limited in the analysis we can present on the impact of migration on women's empowerment.

As discussed in the previous section, using data from LIS, we construct four broad dimensions of measurement. The first set of indicators measure educational attainment. LIS publishes data on educational attainment for each individual in the survey. The responses to this indicator are very detailed, ranging from three categories to over ten categories of educational attainment. Since the focus of our analysis is on highlighting measurement challenges, we tried to simplify the analysis. Therefore, we collapse the 'education attainment' category to two broad dimensions – primary/secondary education and tertiary education. Assigning all responses on education attainment to these categories was quite tedious since several countries reported several educational attainment levels. To the extent possible, we have classified education attainment into the two broad categories mentioned above.

The second set of indicators measure the type of occupation of an individual. Once again, in the original dataset there are several occupational categories, varying from managerial jobs to agricultural, to labourers. To keep this analysis within manageable limits, we broadly classified jobs into 'skilled' or 'unskilled' categories. All categories of jobs, other than ones that purely involve physical labour such as construction workers or farm labourers, are classified as 'skilled' while the rest are classified as 'unskilled'.

The third set of indicators relate to job status. These indicators are derived from the variable that measures 'status in employment'

and consists of several different categories such as 'self-employed family business', 'self-employed outside business', 'unpaid-homework' and so on. For ease of analysis, we reclassified these categories into three broad groups: self-employed, paid, and unpaid job.

The last set of indicators measure income and property ownership. We use average net wage as a measure of income level and wealth tax paid as a proxy for property ownership.

Table 1 presents summary statistics for the number (and percentage) of female migrants in the set of 36 countries that are used for this analysis based on the LIS data. We find that the percentage of female migrants typically varies widely across countries – ranging from 0 percent in Luxemburg and 4 percent in Italy to nearly 64 percent in Canada.

Out of the 36 countries included in table 1, 13 countries do not report any data on migrants in their last wave of data collection and therefore drop out of our sample. Further, we were unable to access the migrant database for four countries, Denmark, Peru, Russia and United States, and therefore they had to be excluded from our sample. The analysis in the following section is based on a set of 19 countries for which we had data on migrants. Some countries reported over 100 categories of personal occupation. These include: Brazil, Estonia, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and Italy. We did not report the 'occupation' variable for these countries since it involves a high degree of subjectivity in assigning them to the skilled-unskilled dichotomous groups. Education attainment data was missing for Israel and therefore, we did not report on its educational attainment.

4. IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

4.1 Comparing female migrants and non-migrants

Table 2 presents a comparison of female migrants and non-migrants using four sets of socio-economic indicators described in the previous section. Columns (1) and (2) contain percentage of female migrants and non-migrants who are currently enrolled in or have completed primary

or secondary education, respectively. Columns (3) and (4) show the percentage of female migrants and non-migrants who are either currently enrolled in or have completed some form of tertiary education, respectively.

Interestingly, only in nine out of nineteen countries in our sample do higher percentages of non-migrant women report completing or being enrolled in primary or secondary level education. These include Australia, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Luxemburg, Mexico, Norway, Spain and Sweden. In Canada and Colombia, there is no significant difference between migrants and non-migrants while in rest of the countries, a greater percentage of migrant women report being in or having completed secondary or primary education.

Similar patterns are also observed in women who report being enrolled in or having completed tertiary education. With the exception of Australia, Austria, France and Greece, a greater percentage of migrant women report having completed or being enrolled in some form of tertiary education. The differences in percentages range from 2% (in Canada) to approximately 10% (in Belgium). While it is difficult to attribute this source of empowerment to migration, these results indicate that, on average, female migrants tend to be more or almost equally empowered as their non-migrant counterparts based on the educational attainment indicators.

Columns (5) and (6) present the percentage of migrant and non-migrant women employed in skilled professions, while columns (7) and (8) show the percentage of migrant and non-migrant women employed in unskilled professions. A priori, we expect greater percentages of migrant women to be employed in unskilled professions. With the exception of Israel, Luxemburg, France, Guatemala, Mexico and Spain, the data show that this is indeed correct. Greater percentages of female migrants are employed in unskilled jobs compared to female non-migrants.

Columns (9) and (10) show the percentage of female migrants and non-migrants who are self-employed, columns (11) and (12) show the percentage of female migrants and non-migrants who are in paid employment; and columns (13) and (14) show the percentage of female migrants

and non-migrants who are unpaid. As expected, in almost all countries for which we have data, we find that a greater percentage of non-migrant women are self-employed compared to migrant women. On the other hand, greater percentages of migrant women tend to be in paid jobs. The exceptions are Italy and Mexico, where a greater percentage of migrant women are self-employed. With the exception of Greece, Guatemala, Luxemburg and Spain where greater percentage of non-migrant women are unpaid, in the rest of countries migrants tend to be in unpaid jobs.

The final sets of indicators pertain to wages and property ownership. Only five out of nineteen countries report data on wages for both migrants and non-migrants, while only three countries report data on property taxes for both migrants and non-migrants. Columns (15) and (16) present average net wages for migrants and non-migrants, respectively; and columns (17) and (18) present data on wealth taxes for migrants and non-migrants. Wages and wealth taxes are reported in domestic currency in the year that the survey was conducted; therefore, the actual value of the wages are ignored when making comparisons. Rather, we focus on the differences between female migrants and non-migrants in their wages and wealth taxes.

In four out of five countries, namely Austria, Belgium, France and Greece, non-migrants report higher wages than migrants. In Ireland, migrants have a slightly higher wage compared to non-migrants. This is not surprising given that nearly 92 percent of migrant women in Ireland are in paid jobs and none are self-employed. Since we are using wealth taxes as proxy for property ownership, we find that non-migrant women pay a significantly higher wealth tax in all countries (Italy, Norway and Sweden) compared to migrant women indicating greater property ownership among the non-migrant women in these countries. It is difficult to attribute this to discrimination against migrants as they may prefer to own properties in their countries of origin. Further research is needed to better understand this.

Overall, results presented in table 2 show that migrant women have, on average, higher

educational attainment than non-migrant women. Yet, with a few exceptions, migrant females tend to be employed in lower-earning occupations.

4.2 Comparing female migrants and non-migrants with tertiary education

For the analysis in table 2 we select a small sample from the entire pool of migrant and non-migrant women. We focus on women who reported being enrolled in or having completed tertiary education. Table 2 presents a comparison of this sub-set of female migrants and non-migrants based on the economic indicators on occupation, job-status and income levels. Columns (1) and (2) contain the percentage of migrant and non-migrant women employed in skilled professions, while columns (3) and (4) show the percentage of migrant and non-migrant women employed in unskilled professions. After controlling for education, we find that four countries – Australia, Austria, France and Luxemburg – report greater percentages of non-migrants in unskilled jobs. Of these countries, France and Luxemburg had also reported greater percentages of female non-migrants in unskilled jobs prior to controlling for education level. From this, we can infer that educational attainment does not influence the proportions of women in skilled versus unskilled jobs in these countries.

Columns (5) and (6) show the percentage of female migrants and non-migrants who are self-employed, columns (7) and (8) show the percentage of female migrants and non-migrants who are in paid employment; and columns (9) and (10) show the percentage of female migrants and non-migrants who are unpaid. Here we find that the results are somewhat different than for the whole population of female migrants and non-migrants. Only in Spain are there greater percentages of female migrants who report being self-employed. In all other countries, (tertiary) educated non-migrants are always more self-employed than migrants. On the other hand, migrants tend to take up more 'paid' employment instead of being self-employed. Very few, either migrants or non-migrants, are in unpaid employment. In Italy and Mexico, a

greater percentage of non-migrant women are unpaid.

Columns (11) and (12) present average net wages for migrants and non-migrants, respectively; and columns (13) and (14) present data on wealth taxes for migrants and non-migrants. Data on net wages is available for eight out of 25 countries. We find that in all countries, except Norway, average net wages for highly educated non-migrant women is much higher than their migrant counterparts. Even in Norway, where the migrant wages are slightly higher, the difference is not significant. Wealth tax data is available for only two countries and in both of them, Italy and Sweden, non-migrant women pay much higher wealth taxes compared to migrant women with similar education level, indicating that they own more property.

Controlling for education and focusing on highly educated women does not seem to significantly alter the results from the first table. Non-migrant women continue to outperform migrant women on all three dimensions of empowerment. A large percentage of highly educated migrant women are in unskilled jobs and display lack of empowerment by remaining largely in paid jobs (instead of being self-employed). This fact, combined with lower average wages for female migrants implies that, generally, female migrants are in low paying jobs compared to non-migrants with similar education levels. Whether their conditions are better or worse as a result of migration is difficult to determine based on the current data.

4.3 Comparing female and male migrants

Table 4 presents results based on a comparison of male and female migrants on the four dimensions of empowerment. Columns (1) and (2) contain percentages of female migrants and male migrants who are currently enrolled in or have completed primary or secondary education, respectively. Columns (3) and (4) show the percentage of female and male migrants who are either currently enrolled in or have completed some form of tertiary education, respectively. We find that in nine out of nineteen countries, a greater percentage of female migrants report

being primary/secondary educated while in three countries the difference between male and female is not significant. In terms of tertiary education, we find that in eight of the nineteen countries female migrants have received or are enrolled in tertiary education compared to male migrants. These are: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Estonia, Ireland, Luxemburg, Mexico and Norway. In two countries, Colombia and Italy, the difference in higher education between male and female migrants is not significant.

Columns (5) and (6) contain the percentage of female and male migrants employed in skilled professions, while columns (7) and (8) show the percentage of female and male migrants employed in unskilled professions. We find a greater percentage of males in unskilled professions in eight countries – Austria, Belgium, France, Israel, Greece, Guatemala, Mexico and Spain – suggesting that women migrants in these countries had skilled professions prior to migration or invested in skill development as migrants.

Columns (9) and (10) show the percentage of female and male migrants who are self-employed, columns (11) and (12) show the percentage of female and male migrants who are in paid employment; and columns (13) and (14) show the percentage of female and male migrants who are unpaid. In Australia, Austria, Guatemala and Mexico, a greater percentage of women are self-employed; while in the rest of the countries a greater proportion of migrant men tend to be self-employed. In all countries, except Belgium, Guatemala and Mexico, migrant females tend to take up paid employment in larger numbers than migrant men. Generally, a very small percentage of migrants are unpaid – though the percentages are strikingly high for female migrants in Brazil (~11%), Colombia (6%), and Guatemala (16%).

Finally, columns (15) and (16) present average net wage for female and male migrants, respectively; and columns (17) and (18) present data on wealth taxes for female and male migrants. Wage data is available for seven countries – Austria, Belgium, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, and Spain. In all countries, with no exceptions, male wages are significantly higher than female net

wages. Wealth tax data is available for three countries, Italy, Norway and Sweden. In Italy and Norway, male migrants pay higher wealth taxes indicating greater property ownership; in Sweden women migrants pay marginally higher wealth taxes than male migrants.

Analysis of socio-economic empowerment indicators between male and female migrants shows that female migrants tend to be more highly educated than male migrants in a number of countries. However, economic measures show that female migrants in general are less empowered than male migrants in terms of being in unskilled jobs, being in paid employment (instead of self employment) and receiving lower wages.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this paper was to highlight some of the challenges in measuring women's empowerment through migration. Using individual level data on migrants from the Luxemburg Income Survey for nineteen countries, this paper examined a set of hypotheses on women's empowerment through migration. A problem in quantitatively measuring migration's impact on women's socio-economic status is the lack of time series and the absence of comparison group. We constructed three sets of comparison groups with which we compared the groups of migrant women in our sample: non-migrant females, male migrants and highly-educated non-migrant women. For each of these groups, we compared them to their female migrant counterparts along five socio-economic dimensions. These are: education attainment, occupational category, job status, income levels and property ownership.

A key caveat of this study, like with any cross-national study, is that it is difficult to examine what determines the outcomes at the country level. However while the measurement of empowerment is context-dependent, the benefits of a cross-national measurement approach is that it allows international comparisons and enables us to study macro patterns that may not be easily identified through a single-country case study.

The analysis in this paper shows some interesting findings and corroborates existing literature on women migrants. We find that migrant women have higher educational attainment than non-migrant women in the destination country, on average. However, with a few exceptions, migrant females are generally found in lower wage jobs compared with non-migrant females. Controlling for education and focusing on highly educated women does not significantly alter the results - non-migrant women outperform migrant women on all measures. A large percentage of highly educated migrant women are in unskilled jobs and remain largely in paid jobs (instead of being self-employed). This fact, combined with lower average wages for female migrants implies that, generally, female migrants are in low paying jobs compared to non-migrants with similar education levels. Finally, a comparison of female and male migrants shows that while female migrants tend to be more highly educated than male migrants in a number of countries, on economic dimensions female migrants, in general, fare less well than male migrants. Due to the lack of studies that have quantitatively analysed the impact of migration on women's empowerment at the cross-country level, it is difficult to contextualize our findings. However, our findings match the findings from the few national level studies (such as Pfeiffer and Taylor, 2008, based on data from Mexico).

The analysis in this paper has shown that even limited data and simple descriptive analysis can reveal interesting findings that can potentially be used to drive policy recommendations on women and migration. Since LIS data is not longitudinal, we cannot compare migrants before and after migration to show how migration affects their socio-economic and political status. Additionally, LIS is predominantly economic in nature and hence important dimensions such as health and participation are missing from this study. Therefore, due to the limited nature of the data, our conclusions only pertain to migrant women's current socio-economic status. Indicators that emerge significant from our analysis—educational attainment, occupation, job status, and wages and taxes—can be used for further analysis of migration's effects on women's empowerment.

Our review and analysis suggest more detailed data collection both at sending and receiving countries. Second, data collection needs to be coordinated across origin and destination countries to enable before and after comparisons. Finally, concerted effort is needed on the part international agencies to focus on women's migration issues. Not taking full advantage of the education levels by migrant women represents inefficiencies both for destination and origin countries. Better identification of skills and removal of barriers to practicing professions at both higher and intermediate levels can contribute both to the empowerment of migrant women and to societies.

Table 1: Summary Statistics

	COUNTRY	Year	Wave	Migrant	Non-migrant	Total	Female	Migrant females	
								N	(%)
1	Australia	2003	6	5180	14.198	19.378	9.967	2.652	27
2	Austria	2004	6	1.213	11.830	13.043	6.725	651	10
3	Belgium	2000	5	810	6.125	6.935	3.509	355	10
4	Brazil	2006	6		244.959	410.241	210.562	87.563	42
5	Canada	2004	6	43.549	24.993	68.542	35.476	22.772	64
6	Colombia	2004	6	165	50.671	50.836	26.783	86	<1
7	Czech Republic	1996	4		71.836	71.836	31.557	..	..
8	Denmark	2004	6	21.115	156.154	177.269	89.806	11.051	12
9	Estonia	2000	5	4.407	12.748	17.155	9.176	2.413	26
10	France	2000	5	2.183	23.620	25.803	13.305	1.103	8
11	Finland	2004	6	..	29.112	29.112	14.373	..	..
12	Germany	2004	6	3.124	23.700	26.824	13.680	1.542	11
13	Greece	2004	6	881	14.016	14.897	7.653	468	6
14	Guatemala	2006	6	12.078	56.661	68.739	35.542	6.584	19
15	Hungary	2005	6	..	5.284	5.284	2.822	..	..
16	Ireland	2000	5	906	8.225	9.131	4.558	437	10
17	Israel	2005	6	5.849	15.197	21.046	10.844	3.184	29
18	Italy	2004	6	768	19.813	20.581	10.578	422	4
19	Korea	2006	6	..	44.852	44.852	23.239	..	..
20	Luxembourg	2004	6	3.744	5.917	9.661	4.853	1.896	39
21	Mexico	2004	6	266	91.472	91.738	47.459	114	0
22	Netherlands	1999	5	..	12.445	12.445	6.316	..	..
23	Norway	2004	6	4.449	29.540	33.989	16.785	2.184	13
24	Peru	2004	6	37.916	48.539	86.455	43.353	19.121	44
25	Poland	2004	6	..	99.038	99.038	51.743	..	..
26	Romania	1997	4	..	92.334	92.334	47.442	..	..
27	Russia	2000	5	910	8.338	9.248	5.105	440	9
28	Spain	2004	6	2.391	35.100	37.491	19.271	1.206	6
29	Slovak Republic	1996	4	..	..	0	..	..	..
30	Slovenia	2004	6	..	11.303	11.303	5.814	..	..
31	Sweden	2005	6	4.398	32.520	36.918	18.494	2.289	12
32	Switzerland	2004	6	..	7.993	7.993	4.098	..	..
33	Taiwan	2005	6	..	46.386	46.386	23.257	..	..
34	United Kingdom	2004	6	..	65.232	65.232	33.985	..	..
35	United States	2004	6	26.042	184.606	210.648	108.446	13.265	12
36	Uruguay	2004	6	..	55.587	55.587	29.605	..	..

Source: Luxemburg Income Survey, Waves 4, 5 and 6 (1996-2006)

Table 2: Socio-economic comparison of female migrants with non-migrants

COUNTRY	Educational attainment				Occupation				Job status						Wages and taxes			
	Primary/secondary		Tertiary		Skilled		Unskilled		Self-employed		Paid employment		Unpaid employment		Average net wage		Wealth taxes	
	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant
Australia	2.11	4.46	42.61	45.36	41.59	56.93	58.41	43.07	8.82	13.13	90.77	86.49	0.42	0.38	..	..	..	..
Austria	48.31	24.46	48.61	53.88	72.29	65.03	6.19	4.27	3.23	8.36	75.39	60.98	0	0	5695.942	7418	..	..
Belgium	70.65	55.73	29.36	19.68	30.18	40.86	0	1.57	2.77	5.05	27.38	37.51	..	..	209607.6	279126.4	..	..
Brazil	91.43	93.94	8.57	6.06	..	..	..	..	19.43	25.20	69.62	64.80	10.94	10	..	..	..	..
Canada	42.76	40.31	57.24	59.69	40.47	48.49	59.53	51.51	9.93	14.26	89.65	85.47	0.42	0.27	..	..	..	..
Colombia	84.40	84.65	15.60	15.35	37.69	46.87	62.31	53.13	36.83	45.96	57.04	51.25	6.13	2.79	..	..	..	..
Estonia	74.65	82.83	25.35	17.17	..	..	..	..	2.21	8.76	97.79	91.24	..	0.43	..	..	..	..
France	56.36	46.61	43.64	53.39	57.67	56.5	42.33	43.50	12.14	19.40	83.59	80.17	4.27	0.43	31966.73	56165.52	..	..
Germany	85.73	79.70	14.27	20.30	..	..	..	..	4.50	10.44	90.17	83.23	5.33	6.34	..	..	..	..
Greece	20.51	86.02	79.49	13.98	95.96	96.7	4.04	3.30	15.53	32.19	79.50	58.16	4.97	9.65	2823.253	3133.349	..	..
Guatemala	98.19	98.86	1.81	1.14	93.04	68.34	6.96	31.66	43.11	31.81	40.77	46.80	16.12	21.39	..	..	..	..
Ireland	74.14	83.38	25.86	16.62	26.32	37.06	73.68	62.94		17.25	92.06	81.74	1.59	1.01	5190.589	4782.297	..	..
Israel	..	..	..		33.51	25.61	66.49	74.39	5.57	12.51	94.21	87.33	0.23	0.16	..	..	2979.041	5552.573
Italy	91.93	91.50	8.07	8.5	..	..	..	..	18.67	13.60	82.85	78.61	3.56	2.72	..	..	..	..
Luxembourg	69.77	78.89	30.23	21.11	76.74	67.79	23.26	32.21	7.16	9.96	91.66	87.93	1.18	2.12	..	10508.96	..	..
Mexico	54.84	84.87	45.16	15.13	83.33	53.45	16.67	46.55	33.33	24.57	66.67	68.74	0	6.69	..	22572.32	..	..
Norway	68.58	76.48	31.42	23.52	..	..	..	..	4.21	6.85	95.79	93.15	..	..	..	..	538.54	1347.83
Spain	75.16	80.31	24.84	19.69	95.46	86.42	4.54	13.58	12.56	17.05	85.78	81.08	1.66	1.87	..	3930.797	..	..
Sweden	71.48	75.41	28.52	24.59	..	..	..	..	38.84	38.84	61.16	61.16	..	..	..	..	1192.602	3764.806

Source: Luxemburg Income Survey, Waves 4, 5 and 6 (1996-2006)

Table 3: Socio-economic comparison of female migrants and non-migrants with similar education levels Source:

COUNTRY[1]	Occupation				Job status						Wages and taxes			
	Skilled		Unskilled		Self-employed		Paid employment		Unpaid		Average net wage		Wealth taxes	
	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant
Australia	59.47	70.74	40.53	70.74	8.09	9.12	91.62	90.55	0.29	0.33	::	::	::	::
Austria	83.32	95.36	0	0.48	2.38	10.06	80.95	85.81	0	0	6583.599	13574.07	::	::
Belgium	32.72	79.04	0	0.15	5.04	6.42	27.67	72.79	::	::	394763.1	475180.5	::	::
Brazil	::	::	::	::	18.36	25.94	79.62	73.13	2.01	0.93	::	::	::	::
Canada	74.49	78.26	25.51	21.74	9.75	13.47	89.96	86.41	0.29	0.12	::	::	::	::
Colombia	65.87	72.72	34.13	27.28	23.53	35.05	74.32	63.16	2.15	1.79	::	::	::	::
Estonia	::	::	::	::	3.09	10.52	96.91	89.48	::	::	::	::	::	::
France	86.99	83.45	13.01	16.55	7.64	15.77	90.45	83.79	1.90	0.44	61999.36	97701.95	::	::
Germany	::	::	::	::	13.89	16.54	77.78	80.29	8.33	3.18	::	::	::	::
Greece	98.77	99.87	1.23	0.13	13.58	19.76	82.72	79.05	3.70	1.18	5544.486	10234.99	::	::
Guatemala	100.00	99.73	0	0.27	21.31	25.89	77.05	72.75	1.64	1.36	::	::	::	::
Ireland	66.67	77.7	33.33	22.30	9.30	11.15	90.70	88.61	0	0.24	8174.9	12766.36	::	::
Italy	::	::	::	::	15.98	26.38	83.30	72.30	0.72	1.31	::	::	9245.902	12536.88
Luxembourg	94.98	90.63	5.02	9.37	11.95	11.01	87.83	88.90	0.22	0.09	23216.67	36445.7	::	::
Mexico	66.67	75.56	33.33	24.44	0	17.98	100.00	78.96	0	3.06	46244.43	59149.03	::	::
Norway	::	::	::	::	4.23	4.67	95.77	95.33	::	::	2625.97	2526.369	::	::
Spain	97.78	97.66	2.22	2.31	15.56	11.27	83.33	88.25	1.11	0.48	6501.13	12832.17	::	::
Sweden	::	::	::	::	33.93	34.32	66.07	65.68	::	::	::	::	1379.799	5441.444

Source: Luxemburg Income Survey, Waves 4, 5 and 6 (1996-2006)

Table 4: Socio-economic comparison of male and female migrants

COUNTRY	Educational attainment				Occupation				Job status						Wages and taxes			
	Primary/secondary		Tertiary		Skilled		Unskilled		Self-employed		Paid employment		Unpaid		Average net wage		Wealth taxes	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Australia	59.54	50.22	40.45	49.78	41.59	55.78	58.41	44.22	16.32	8.82	83.43	90.77	0.25	0.42	..	..	..	..
Austria	37.90	48.31	60.68	48.61	72.29	77.48	6.19	15.56	8.37	3.23	84.70	75.39	0	0	5695.942	11782.86	..	..
Belgium	70.65	74.77	29.36	25.22	30.18	37.49	0	2.48	2.77	6.85	27.38	33.42	..	..	209607.6	481898.6	..	..
Brazil	92.82	93.99	7.18	6.01	..	..	..	..	19.43	31.82	69.62	63.80	10.94	4.38	..	..	..	..
Canada	40.42	42.30	59.58	57.70	59.53	66.06	40.47	33.94	9.93	16.47	89.65	83.23	0.42	0.29	..	..	..	..
Colombia	84.39	84.66	15.61	15.34	37.69	46.88	62.31	53.12	36.83	45.96	57.04	51.24	6.13	2.80	..	..	..	..
Estonia	78.36	85.45	21.64	14.55	..	..	..	..	2.21	5.58	97.79	94.42	..	..	..	..	..	..
France	56.35	46.61	43.65	53.39	57.67	56.50	42.33	43.50	12.14	19.39	83.59	80.18	4.27	0.43	31966.73	56185.38	..	..
Germany	82.94	76.91	17.06	23.09	..	..	..	..	4.50	9.73	90.17	86.74	5.33	3.53	..	..	..	..
Greece	62.76	62.48	17.33	18.44	95.96	92.40	4.04	7.60	15.53	17.93	79.50	79.94	4.97	2.13	2823.253	6767.915	..	..
Guatemala	98.91	98.67	1.09	1.33	93.04	75.83	6.96	24.17	43.11	33.91	40.77	58.63	16.12	7.45	..	..	..	..
Ireland	82.90	83.21	17.10	16.79	26.32	28.14	73.68	71.86	6.35	18.75	92.06	81.25	1.59	0	5190.589	10468.78	..	..
Israel	..	..	..	..	33.51	28.74	66.49	71.26	5.57	14.65	94.21	85.35	0.23	0	..	..	..	..
Italy	91.79	91.62	8.21	8.38	..	..	..	..	13.60	19.19	82.85	78.04	3.56	2.77	..	..	2979.041	5542.636
Luxembourg	76.74	79.82	23.26	20.18	7.16	9.02	91.66	90.71	1.18	0.27	10508.96	22419.30			10508.96	22419.3	..	..
Mexico	83.33	65.22	16.67	34.78	33.33	4.35	66.67	95.65	..	..	22572.32	145747.00	..	..	22572.32	14547	..	..
Norway	..	..	..	..	4.21	7.05	95.79	92.95	..	..	..	..	538.5422	893.5536	..	..	538.5422	893.5536
Spain	95.46	72.50	4.54	27.50	12.56	13.32	85.78	86.22	1.66	0.46	3930.797	7091.70	..	..	3930.797	7091.7	..	..
Sweden	..	..	..	..	38.84	46.25	61.16	53.75	..	..	..	..	1192.306	1047.854	..	..	1192.306	1047.854

Source: Luxemburg Income Survey, Waves 4, 5 and 6 (1996-2006)

1 Israel is excluded from this table since it does not include any data on educational attainment.

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About the Authors

Amie GAYE is a policy specialist for statistics. Before she joined this office in May 2006, she worked at the Central Statistics Department of The Gambia for 20 years. From 2000 to 2003, she was a policy advocacy manager and gender coordinator for ActionAid The Gambia, supporting cross-border initiatives in Guinea Bissau and Senegal. She also initiated the Participatory Community Video project and the formation of a Pro-Poor Advocacy Group, which aims to promote participatory budgeting and participation of community-based organizations in national planning processes. She has a diploma in statistics from the University of Ghana and obtained a master's degree in applied population research from University of Exeter, UK.

Shreyasi JHA is a policy specialist with the Statistics Unit. Prior to joining HDRO, she worked as an independent consultant with the Evaluation Office at UNDP in New York. Shreyasi has worked on research and evaluation projects with the World Bank in various sectors including environment, primary education and staff training. Jha has served on the faculty at the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Pennsylvania and New York University. She holds a Ph.D. in Public Policy from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a Masters from the University of Oxford, and a Bachelor's in Economics from St. Xavier's College, Mumbai.