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# MISSING DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY DATA

## A Proposal for Internationally Comparable Indicators of Agency and Empowerment

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This document contains the actual survey questions proposed in the paper *A Proposal for Internationally Comparable Indicators of Empowerment* (Ibrahim and Alkire 2007) prepared for the May 2007 Workshop on Missing Dimensions of Poverty Data. The proposal is that these questions – or a refinement of them – might be considered a ‘module’ that could be added to nationally representative individual or household surveys. To capture the four elements of empowerment identified in the paper’s conceptual framework – control, choice, change and community – the following indicators are recommended to measure empowerment:

- Indicator 1- ‘Power Over/Control’: *Control over personal decisions*
- Indicator 2- ‘Power To/Choice’: *Household decision-making and domain-specific autonomy*
- Indicator 3 - ‘Power From Within/Change’: *Changing aspects in one’s life [Individual Level]*
- Indicator 4- ‘Power With/ Community’: *Changing aspects in one’s life [Communal Level]*

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<sup>1</sup> Ibrahim and Alkire (2007) elaborate on the selection of these indicators and questions, and the research questions that could be addressed were these questions adopted into multi-topic individual or household surveys.

Indicator 1- *Power Over/Control*: Control over Personal Decisions

Q1.- How much control do you feel you have in making personal decisions that affect your everyday activities?

Control over all decisions [5]      Control over most decisions [4]  
 Control over some decisions [3]      Control over very few decisions [2]  
 No control at all [1]

Source: World Bank *Moving out of Poverty* survey (Narayan and Petesch, Forthcoming).

Indicator 2- *Power To/Choice*: Household Decision-making and Domain-specific autonomy

**Indicators of household decision-making**

Q1.- When decisions are made regarding the following aspects of household life, who is it that normally takes the decision?

a) Minor Household Expenditures	
b) What to do if you have a serious health problem	
c) How to protect yourself from violence	
d) Whether and how to express religious faith	
e) What kind of tasks you will do	

**Use following Codes:** Respondent [1] Spouse [2] respondent and spouse jointly [3] someone else [4] Jointly with someone else [5] other [6]

**Q2.-** *If answer in any of Q1 is different than respondent1 => (Using this same table)* To what extent do you feel you can make your own personal decisions regarding these issues if you want to?

a) Minor Household Expenditures	
b) What to do if you have a serious health problem	
c) How to protect yourself from violence	
d) Whether and how to express religious faith	
e) What kind of tasks you will do	

**Codes:** To a high extent [4] medium extent [3] small extent [2] Not at all [1]

Source: For question 1, see Ibrahim and Alkire (2007), Table 1. For question 2, see R. Alsop et al. (2006).

**Indicator of domain-specific autonomy**

Now I am going to describe three reasons why you do these activities, and ask you to tell me how true each one is.

Q1.-How true would it be to say that your actions with respect to \_\_\_\_\_ [the domain from the left hand column] are motivated by a desire to avoid punishment or to gain reward?

Q2.- How true would it be to say that your actions with respect to \_\_\_\_\_ [the domain from the left hand column] are motivated by a desire to avoid blame, or so that other people speak well of you?

Q3.- How true would it be to say that your actions with respect to \_\_\_\_\_ [the domain from the left hand column] are motivated by and reflect your own values and/or interests?

Domain	Q1	Q2	Q3
a) Minor Household Expenditures			
b) Serious health problems for yourself			
c) Avoiding violence to yourself			
d) Religious expression			
e) Your tasks			

**Codes:** Completely True [4] Somewhat true [3] not very true [2] Not at all true [1]

Source: Ryan and Deci (various), see <http://www.psych.rochester.edu/SDT/measures/index.html>.

**Indicator 3 - *Power From Within/Change*: Changing Aspects in one’s Life [Individual Level]**

Q1.- Would you like to change anything in your life? Yes [1] No [0]

Q2.- What three thing(s) would you most like to change?

A:
B:
C:

Q3.- Who do you think will contribute most to any change in your own life?  
[Enumerator: list up to 2 reasons]

Myself [1]      My family [2]      Our Group [3]      Our Community [4]  
The local government [5]      The state government [6]      Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Source: Alsop *et al.* 2006.

**Indicator 4- *Power With/Community*: Changing Aspects in Communal Life [Communal Level]**

Q1.- Do you feel that people like yourself can generally change things in your community if they want to?

Yes, very easily [5]      Yes, fairly easily [4]      Yes, but with a little difficulty [3]  
Yes, but with a great deal of difficulty [2]      No, not at all. [1]

Source: Alsop *et al.* 2006.

## References

Alsop, R., Bertelsen, M. and Holland, J. (2006) **Empowerment in Practice From Analysis to Implementation** (Washington, D.C., The World Bank).

Ibrahim, S. and S. Alkire. (2007). *A Proposal for Internationally Comparable Indicators of Employment*. OPHI Working Paper 4. Available at: [http://www.ophi.org.uk/pubs/Ibrahim\\_Empowerment.pdf](http://www.ophi.org.uk/pubs/Ibrahim_Empowerment.pdf). Forthcoming in December 2007 *Oxford Journal of Development Studies*.

Narayan, D. and P. Petesch (2008), **Moving out of Poverty: Understanding democracy, freedom and growth from the bottom up** (Washington, D.C., The World Bank).

Ryan, R. and E. Deci (various), see <http://www.psych.rochester.edu/SDT/measures/index.html>.