



Integrating a gender perspective into poverty statistics

United Nations Statistics Division



Three key points in improving the availability and quality of gender statistics in the area of poverty

- Use detailed types of female- and male-headed households to obtain more relevant household-level statistics on gender and poverty
- Use a broader concept of poverty to highlight issues of gender-based intrahousehold inequality and economic dependency of women on men
- Use disaggregated data by poverty or wealth status to highlight the gendered experience of poverty (poverty affecting women and men in different ways)



Topic 1. Gender and household-level income/consumption poverty

Traditional approach to poverty measurement

- Based on household-level measurement of income/consumption
- Intrahousehold inequality in expenditure/consumption not taken into account
- The basis for:
 - estimates of number of women and men living in poor households;
 - estimates of poverty by types of household, including female- and male-headed households



A. Estimates of number of women and men living in poor households (1): should they be used to measure the gender gap in poverty?

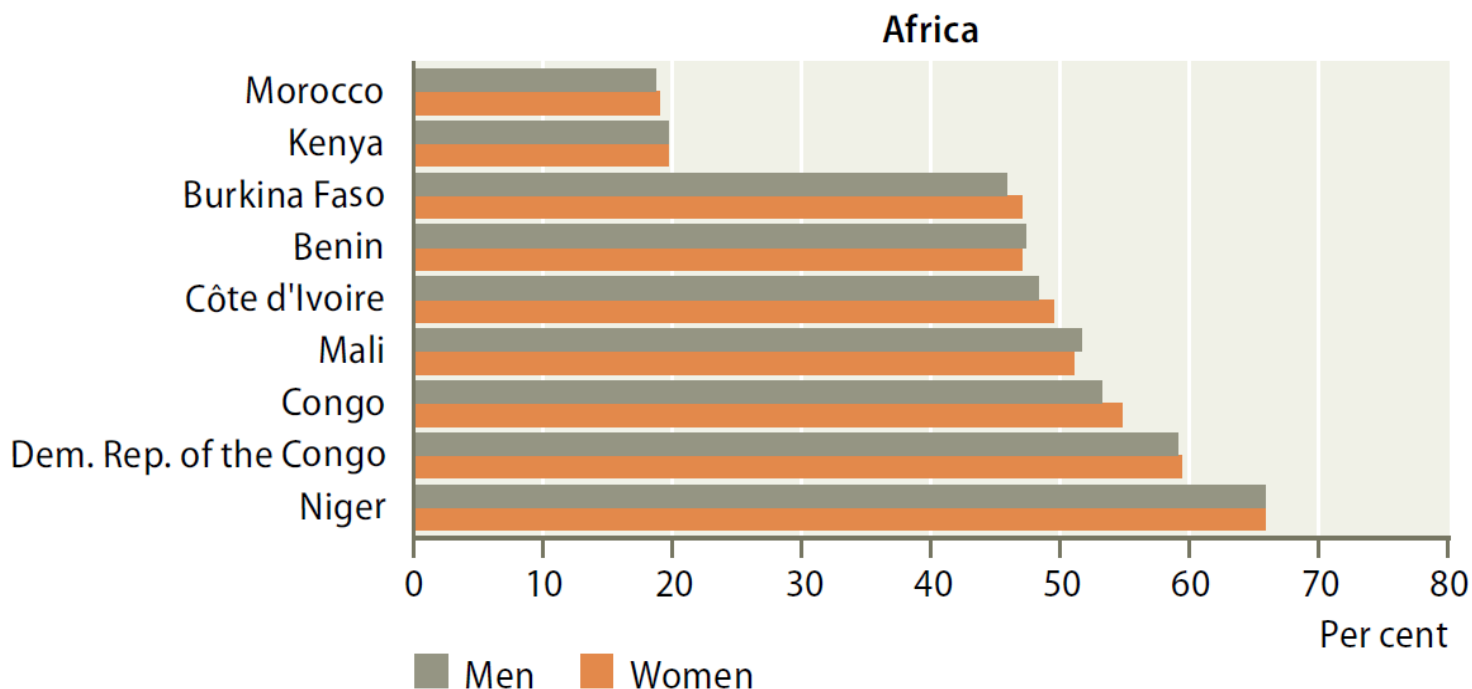
- Disaggregation of household-level poverty data by sex of the household members gives only a poor measure of gender gap in poverty, mainly because intrahousehold inequality is not taken into account, and women who are poor but live in non-poor households are not counted among the estimated poor
- Even without taking into account intrahousehold inequality, some differences in poverty counts might appear...
 - In households with higher share of women, especially older women
 - In those households, earnings per capita tend to be lower due to women's lower participation in the labour market and women's lower level of earnings during work or after retirement
- Resulted sex differences are heavily influenced by country-specific living arrangements and ageing factors.



Estimates of number of women and men living in poor households (2)

→ no significant difference between female and male poverty rates for some developing countries with gender inequality by other measures

Example: Poverty rates by sex of the household members, selected African countries, 1999-2008 (latest available)



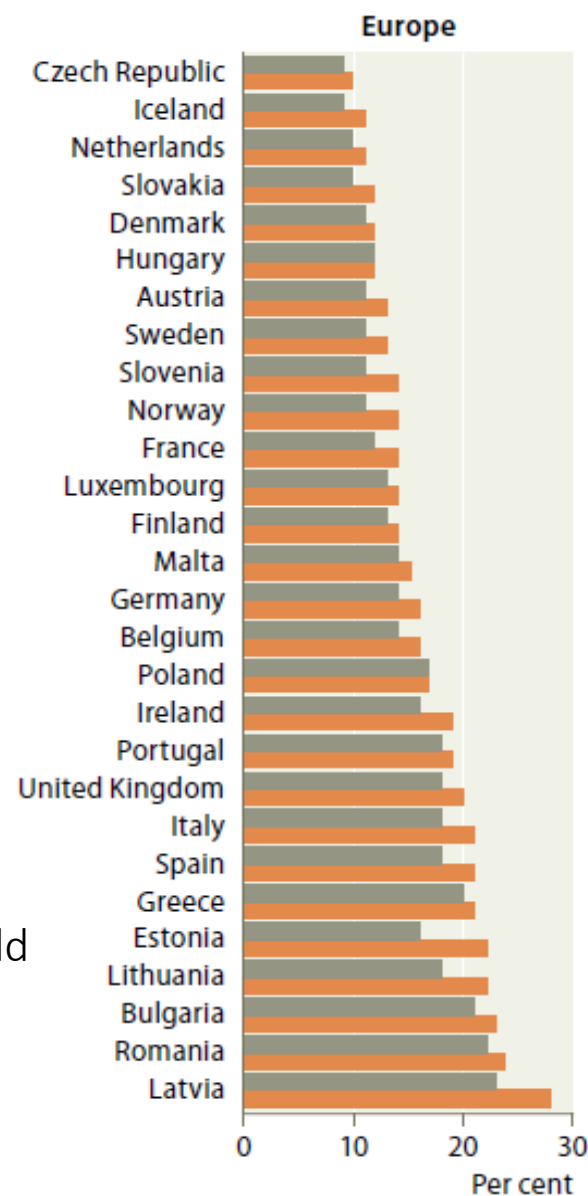
(Source: United Nations, 2010)

Estimates of number of women and men living in poor households (3)

→ significant differences between female and male poverty rates for European countries (countries with higher proportions of one-person households, especially of older persons)

Example: Poverty rates by sex of the household members, European countries, 2007-2008 (latest available)

(Source: United Nations, 2010)

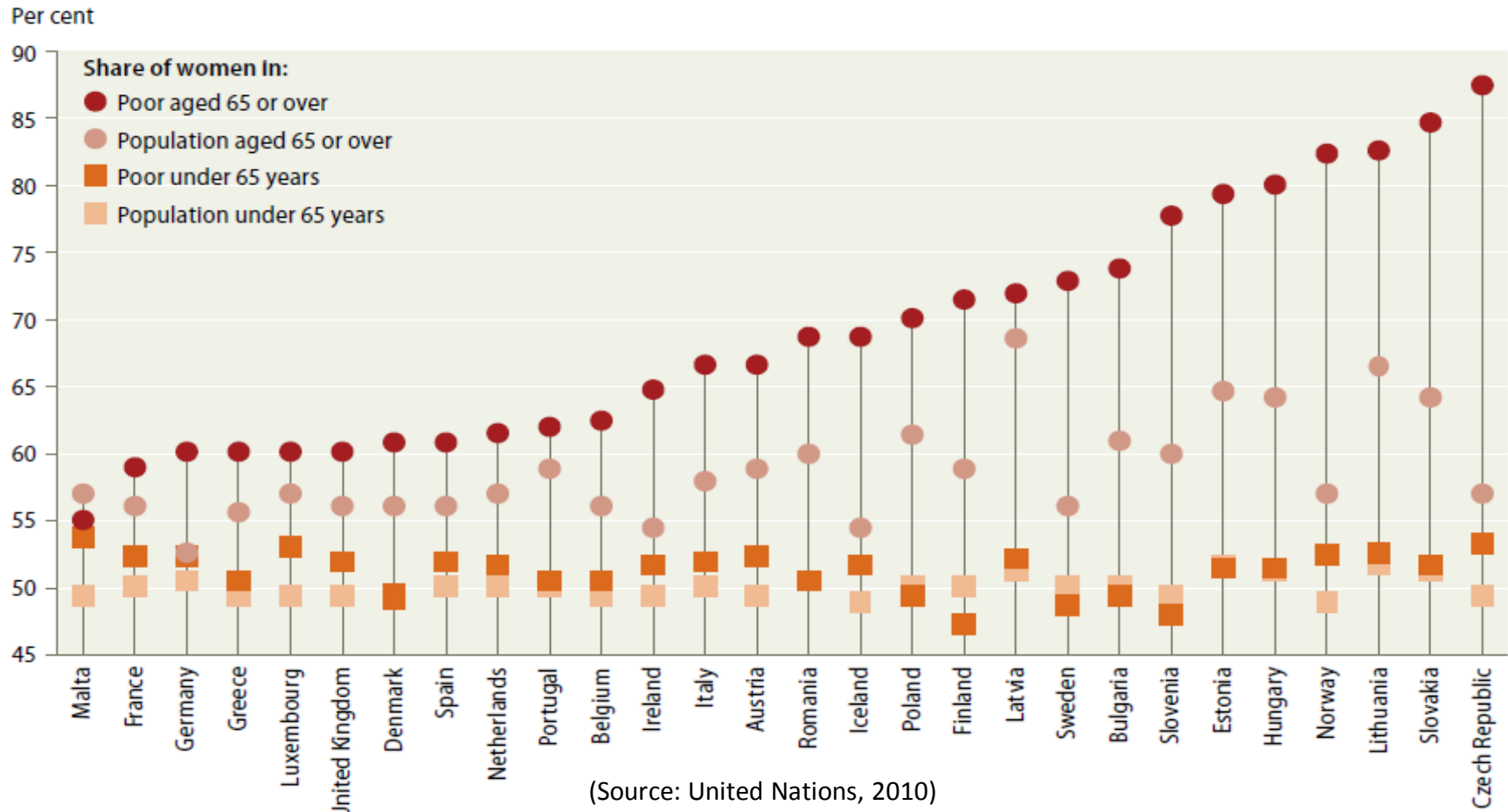


Estimates of number of women and men living in poor households (4)



→ Can be used to point out the vulnerability of older women in certain contexts (especially in countries with high proportion of older persons living alone)

Example: Share of women in population and total poor, below and above 65 years, European countries, 2007-2008





B. Estimates of poverty by type of household

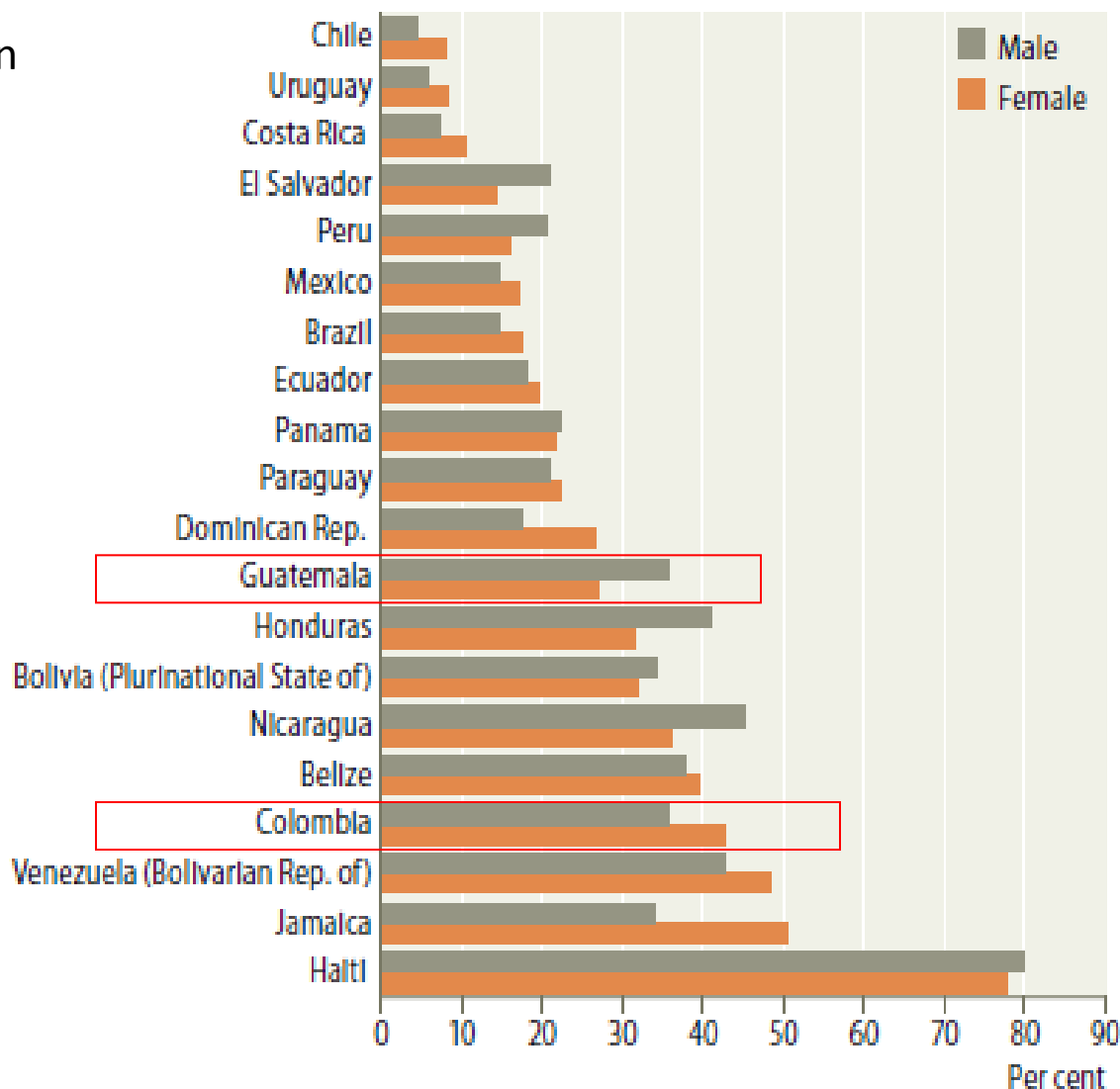
Female-headed households versus male-headed households

- Data compiled and analyzed by the World Bank (Lampietti and Stalker, 2000) and the United Nations (2010) show that the higher risk of poverty for female-headed households cannot be generalized.
- Female-headed households and male headed households are heterogeneous categories:
 - Different demographic composition
 - Different economic composition
 - The head of household may not be identified by the same criteria



Female- and male-headed households (2)

In some countries female-headed households more likely to be poor, in other countries male-headed households more likely to be poor.



Example:

Poverty rate by sex of the head of the household, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1999-2008 (latest available)

(Source: United Nations, 2010)

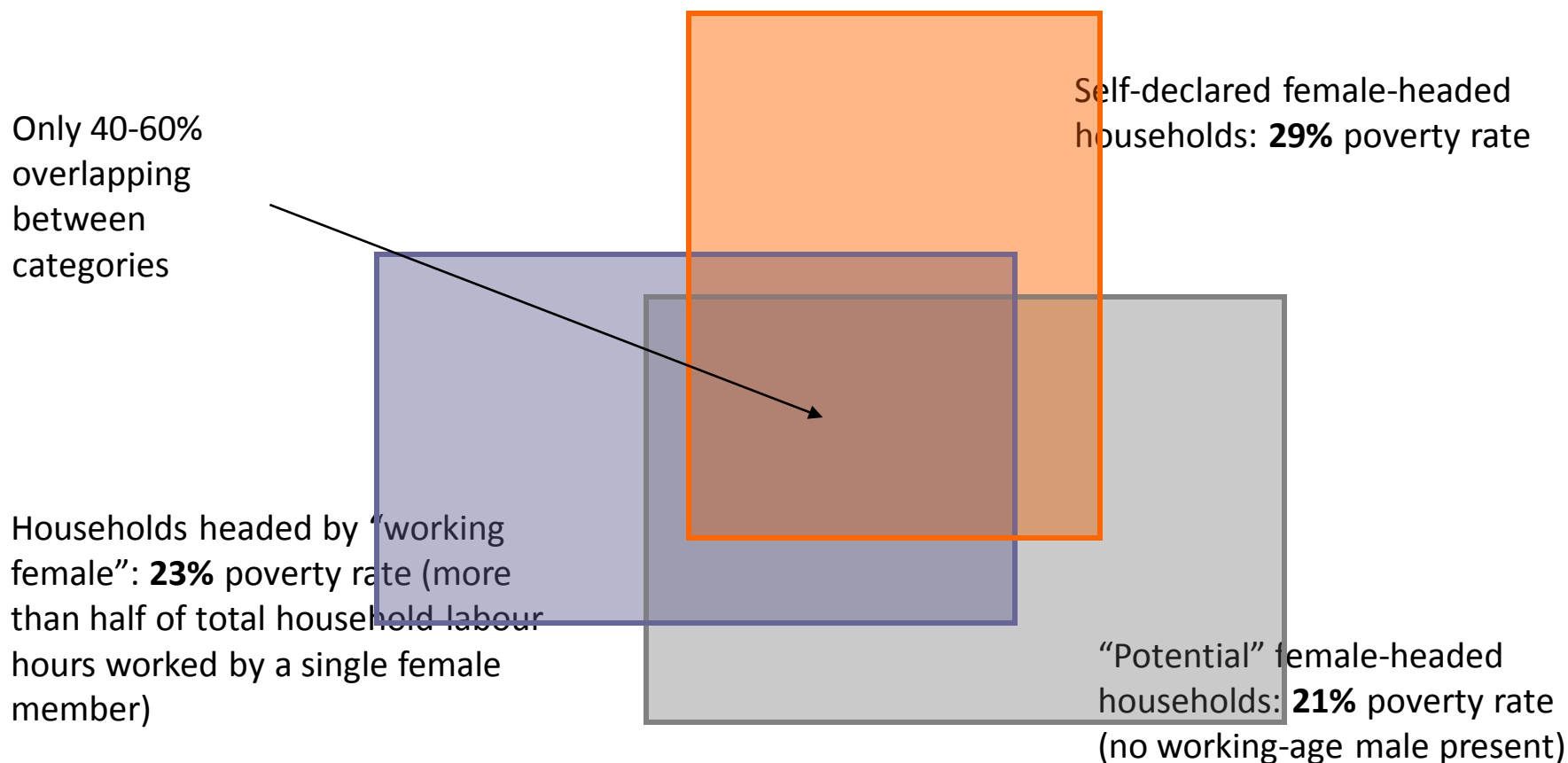


Female- and male-headed households (3)

Different criteria in identifying the household head leads to different sets of households, with different poverty rates

Example:

Poverty rate for three sets of “female-headed” households, Panama, 1997 LSMS





Female and male-headed households (4)

- A clearer pattern of higher poverty rates associated with female-headed households becomes apparent when analysis is focused on more homogeneous categories of female- and male-headed households.
- Examples: households of lone parents with children; one-person households

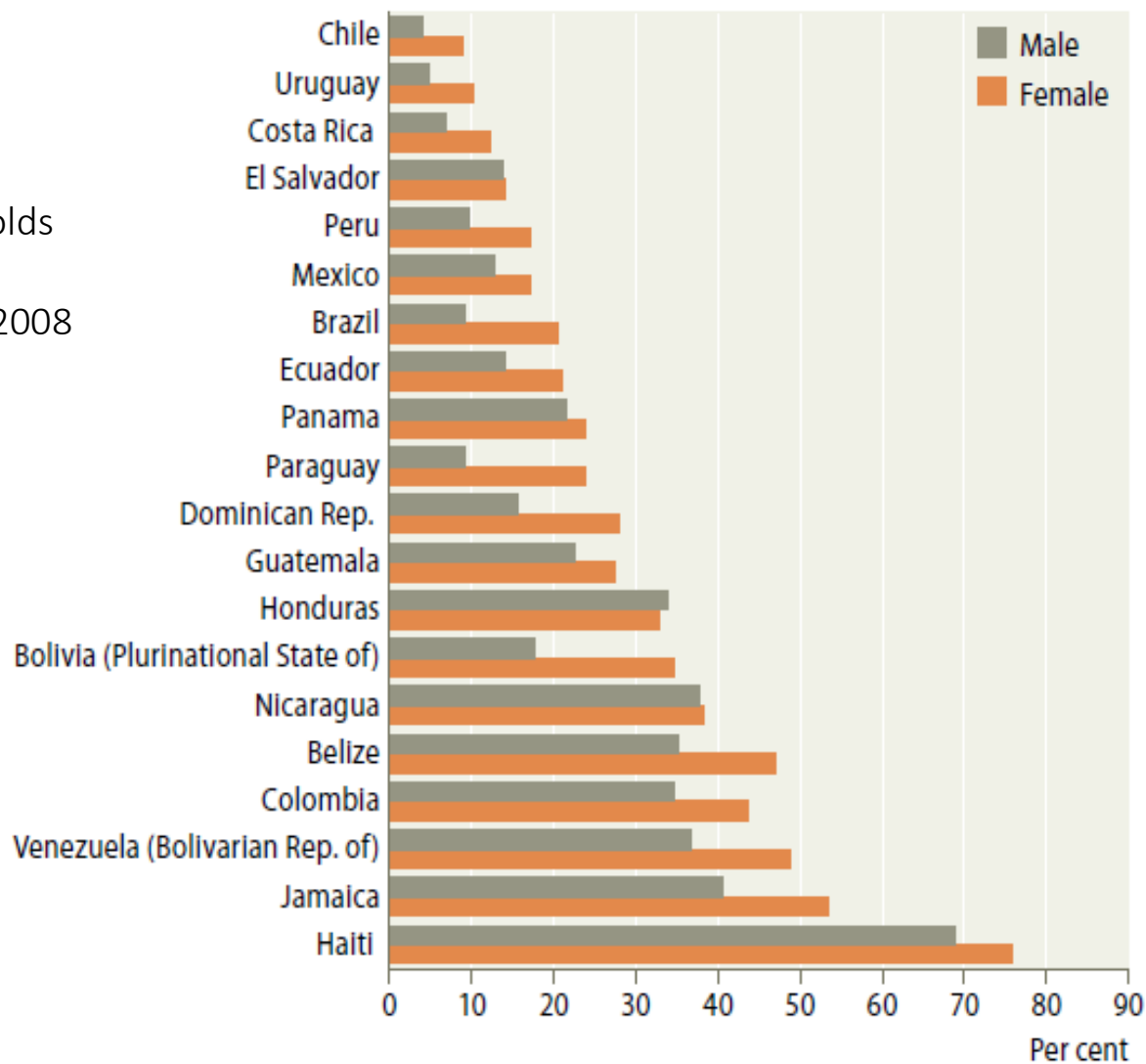


Female and male-headed households (5)

Lone parents with children

Example: Poverty rates for households of lone parents with children, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1999-2008 (latest available)

(Source: United Nations, 2010)

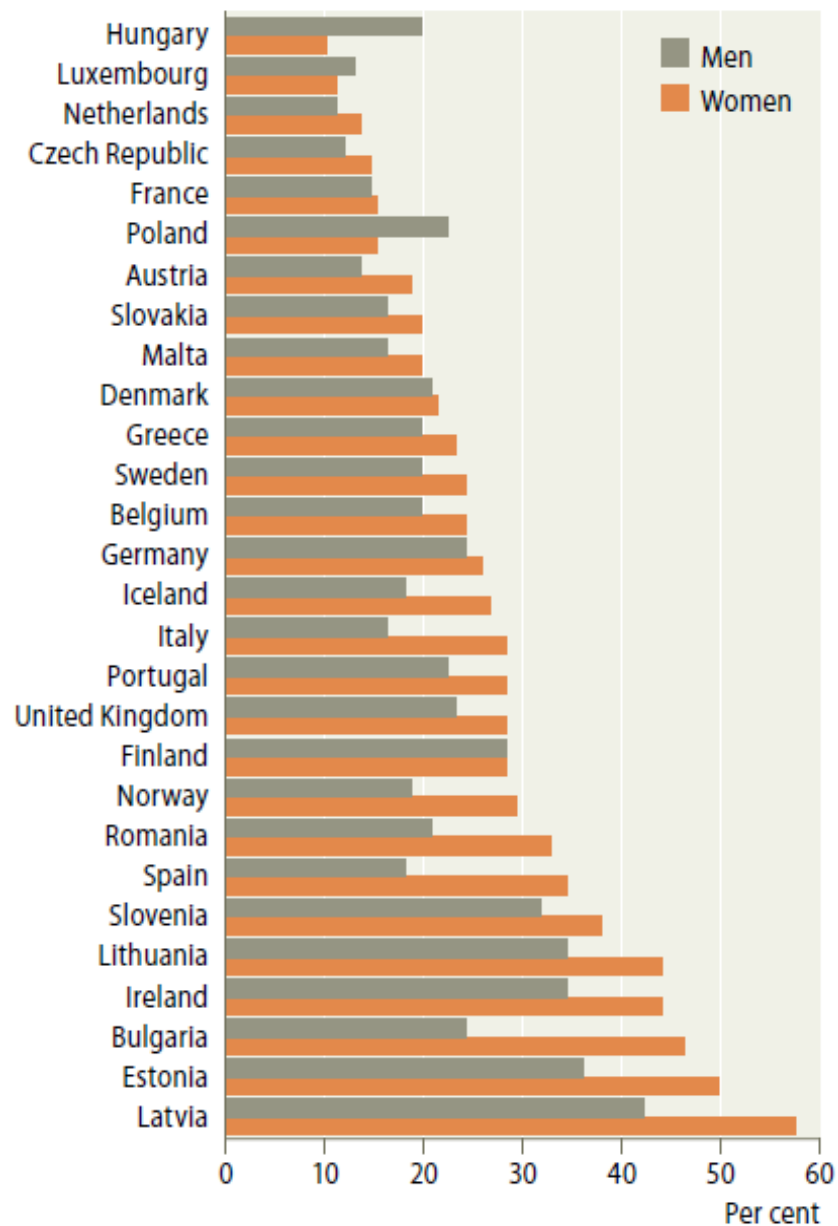


Female and male-headed households (6)

Women and men living in one-person households

Example: Poverty rates for women and men living in one-person households, Europe, 2007-2008

(Source: United Nations, 2010)



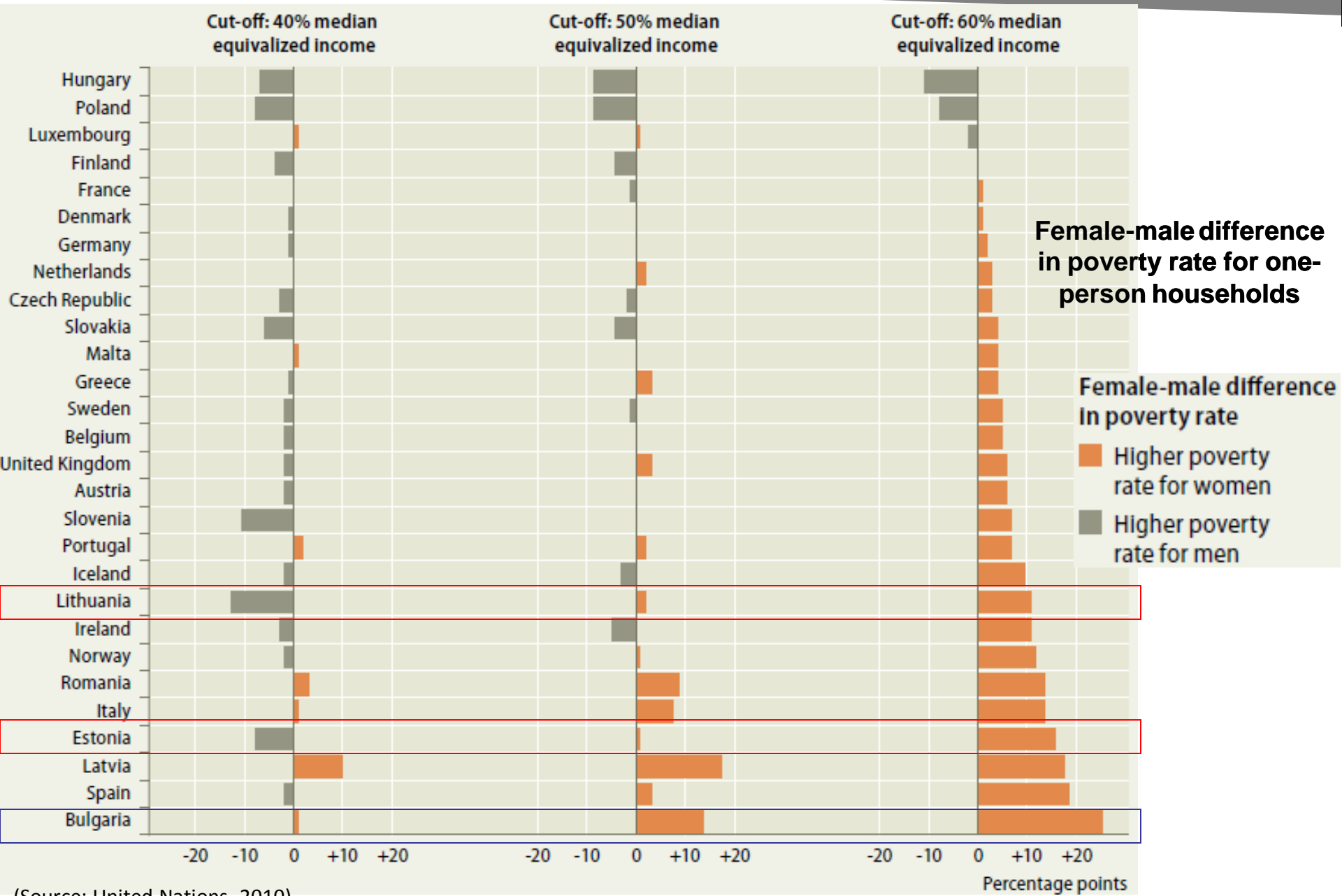


Female and male-headed households (7)

- Poverty line may also play a role in whether female- or male-headed households are estimated with higher risk of poverty

Example:

In some European countries, the poverty risk for women living in one-person households may be higher or lower than for men depending on the poverty line chosen



(Source: United Nations, 2010)



Female- and male-headed households (8)

In summary, when using household-level poverty measures:

- Disaggregate the types of female- and male-headed households, as relevant for your country, as much as possible, by taking into account demographic and/or economic characteristics of the household members
- Use clear criteria in identifying the head of household
 - Specification of criteria for identifying the head of household in the field in the interviewers manual and during training (make sure female heads of household are not underreported, especially when adult male members are part of the household)
 - Use for analysis heads of household identified, at the time of the analysis, based on demographic and/or economic characteristics
 - Avoid using self-identified heads based on no common criteria
- Try analysis based on different poverty lines



Topic 2. Measurement of poverty based on individual-level data: a requirement for gender statistics

Limitation of analysis based on household-level poverty data

- As shown, household-based measures of poverty can give an indication of the overall status of women relative to men when applied to certain types of households (for instance one-person households and households of lone parents with children).
 - However, the most common type of household is one where an adult woman lives with an adult man, with or without other persons
- The unresolved issue: gender-based inequality within the household.
 - Within the same household:
 - Women may have a subordinated status relative to men
 - Women may have less decision power on intrahousehold allocation of resources
 - Fewer resources may be allocated to women and girls
- Yet, difficult to measure intrahousehold inequality using consumption as an indicator of individual welfare:
 - only a part of consumption of goods can be assigned to specific members of the household (for example, tobacco, alcohol, or some clothing)
 - difficult to measure at individual level the consumption/use of food and household common goods (housing, water supply, sanitation)



A. Use of non-consumption indicators of poverty

- Non-consumption indicators more successful in illustrating gender inequality in the allocation of resources within the household
 - Measured at individual level
 - Correspond to a shift in thinking poverty: from poverty as economic resources to avoid deprivation to poverty as actual level of deprivation, not only in terms of food and clothing, but also in areas such as education and health
- Examples of potential dimensions for individual-level measures of poverty and intrahousehold inequality:
 - Education
 - Health and nutrition
 - Time use
 - Access to food and clothing
 - Asset ownership
 - Participation in intrahousehold decision-making
 - Social participation
- No consensus of what dimensions to include + need for international standards on individual-level measures of gender-related intrahousehold poverty and inequality



B. Access to income, property ownership and credit

Gender issues

- Access to income
 - Gender division of labour: women spend more of their time on unpaid domestic tasks; on the labour market, women are more often than men in vulnerable employment with low or no cash returns
 - As a result, compared to men, women's income tends to be smaller, less steady and more often paid in-kind
- Ownership of housing, land, livestock or other property
 - Gender inequality with regard to inheritance rights, rights to acquire and own land, and rights to own property other than land; women may not be able to obtain property that is rightfully theirs due to lack of education, information and knowledge of entitlements.
 - As a result, women tend to have less access to property than men
- Access to credit
 - Women more likely to lack income and property ownership to be used as collateral for credit; women's business may be more often in informal or low-growth sectors with less opportunities for loans
 - As a result, women's chances to obtain formal credit are smaller than men's.



Access to income, property ownership and credit

From gender issues to gender statistics

Policy-relevant questions on gender	Data needed	Sources of data
<p>Do women earn cash income as often and as much as men?</p>	<p>Employment by type of income and sex.</p> <p>Value of individual income by sex</p>	<p>Household surveys such as living standard surveys, LFS, DHS, or MICS</p> <p>Living standard surveys such as LSMS or EU-SILC (European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions)</p>
<p>Do women own land as often and as much as men? Do women appear as often as men on housing property titles?</p>	<p>Individual ownership of land by sex</p> <p>Distribution of land size by sex of the owner</p> <p>Distribution of housing property titles by sex of the owner</p>	<p>Household surveys such as living standard surveys; agricultural censuses or surveys</p> <p>Multi-purpose household surveys; administrative sources</p>
<p>Do women apply for and obtain credit as often as men? Are some types of credit and some sources of credit more often associated with women than men?</p>	<p>Applicants for credit by sex, purpose of credit, source of credit and approval response.</p>	<p>Multi-purpose household surveys, including LSMS surveys</p>



Access to income, property ownership and credit

Gender-related measurement issues

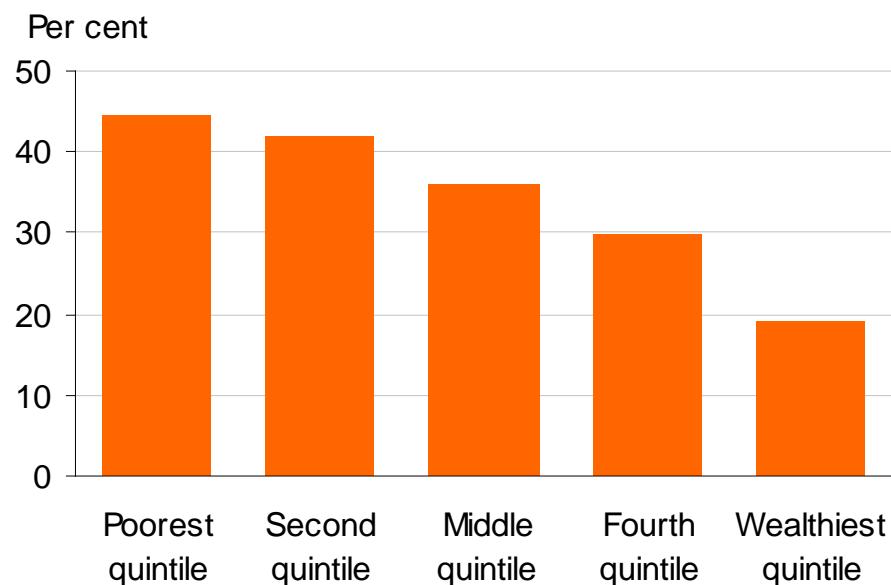
- Data on individual income and its share in total household income difficult to measure in some countries and may be more severely underestimated for women
- Data on ownership and access to credit most often collected only at household level or agricultural holding level, without the possibility of identifying joint ownership.
- When data on ownership of agricultural resources and decision-makers are not collected at more disaggregated level (individual level and subholding level - such as plots of land and type of livestock), the status of women and men may be misrepresented.



Topic 3. Depicting the gendered experience of poverty

- Use individual-level indicators disaggregated by sex and poverty status or wealth index categories.

Example: Women age 15-49 who have experienced physical violence since age 15 by wealth quintile, India, 2005-06

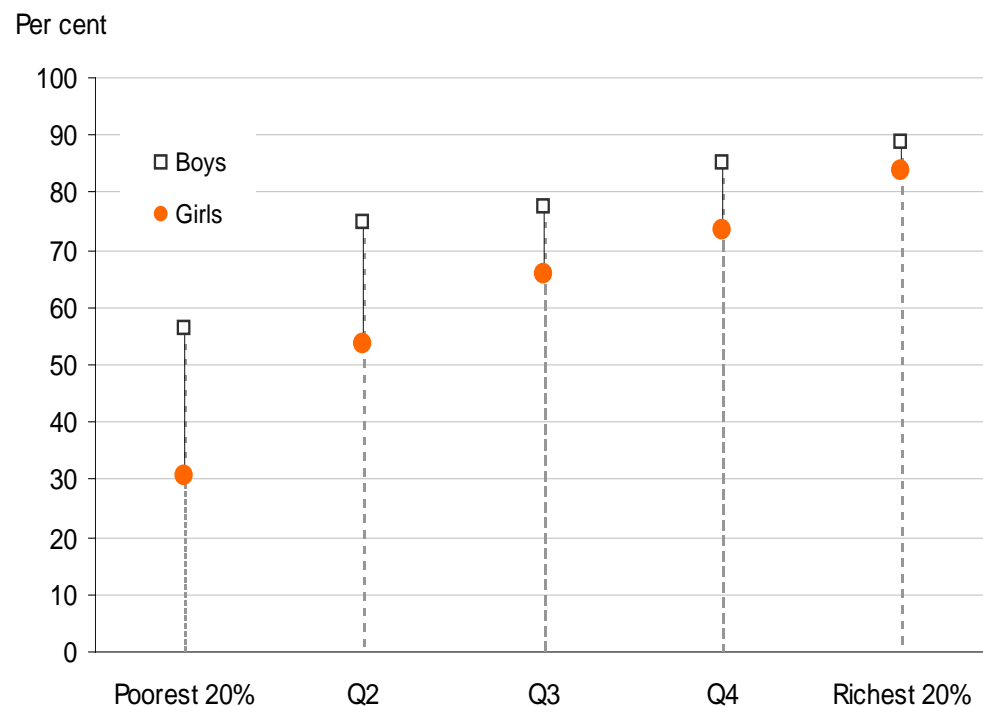


Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Government of India, 2007.
National Health Family Survey 2005-06



The gendered experience of poverty (2)

Example: Primary school net attendance rate for girls and boys by wealth quintiles, Yemen, 2006

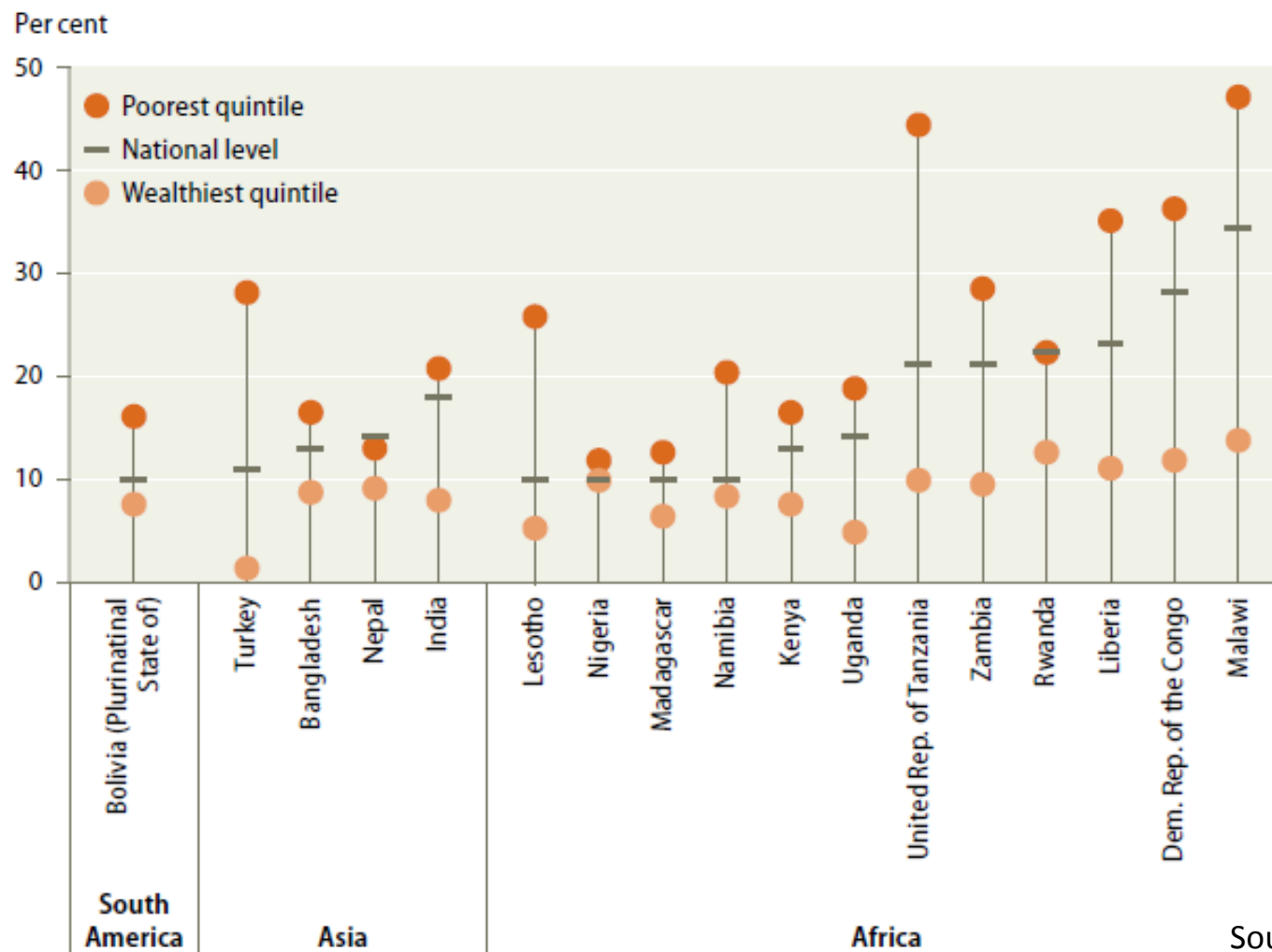


Source: Ministry of Health and Population and UNICEF, 2008. *Yemen Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006, Final Report*



The gendered experience of poverty (3)

Example: Married women aged 15-49 not participating in the decision of how own earned money is spent, for poorest and wealthiest quintiles, 2003-08 (latest available)





Background characteristic	Percentage who slept under any net last night
Age	
<5	70.3
5-14	48.7
15-34	57.4
35-39	71.1
50+	57.1
Sex	
Male	57.2
Female	59.8
Residence	
Urban	64.0
Rural	57.7
Province	
City of █████	65.0
South	58.7
West	57.1
North	45.1
East	66.6
Wealth quintile	
Lowest	49.6
Second	54.3
Middle	58.9
Fourth	63.1
Highest	66.8
Total	58.6

The gendered experience of poverty (4)

Frequent problem in tabulation of data: “sex” just one of many variables listed in a two-way table (see example)



Make sure data are tabulated disaggregated by sex, poverty status/wealth category AND the characteristic of interest at the same time.