



Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative  
Department of International Development  
Queen Elizabeth House  
University of Oxford

# MISSING DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY DATA

## *The Ability to Go About Without Shame*

### A Proposal for Internationally Comparable Indicators of Shame, Humiliation and Isolation

Diego Zavaleta (diego.zavaleta@qeh.ox.ac.uk)

Version updated by: October 2011

This document contains a modified version of the survey questions proposed in the paper '*The Ability to Go About without Shame: A Proposal for Internationally Comparable Indicators of Shame and Humiliation*'<sup>1</sup> prepared for the May 2007 Workshop on Missing Dimensions of Poverty Data. The paper recommended that these questions – or a refinement of them – might be considered a module that could be added to nationally representative individual or household surveys. Based on existing indicators from related fields, the following module suggests eight indicators to measure specific aspects of shame and humiliation that could start an in-depth debate around this topic. The indicators are the following:

#### *Shame*

1. Stigma of poverty: whether respondents would feel shame if they were poor
2. Shame proneness

#### *External experience of humiliation*

3. Perceptions of respectful treatment
4. Perceptions of unfair treatment
5. Perceptions of prejudiced treatment
6. Perceptions of whether ethnic, racial or cultural discrimination, ethnicity, socio-economic status impedes respondent's chances of obtaining employment, services and education.

#### *Internal experience of humiliation*

7. Levels of accumulated humiliation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Zavaleta, Diego (2007), *The ability to go about without shame: A proposal for internationally comparable indicators of shame and humiliation*. OPHI Working Paper no. 3. Available at: [http://www.ophi.org.uk/pubs/Zavaleta\\_Shame\\_Humiliation\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.ophi.org.uk/pubs/Zavaleta_Shame_Humiliation_FINAL.pdf) and in December 2007 *Oxford Development Studies*: 35:4, p. 405-430.

## SHAME AND HUMILIATION (ONLY THE RESPONDENT ANSWERS)

| SH1. Do you agree with the following statements?              | Yes | No | Don't Know / No Answer | SH2. Do you think the people in your community/neighbourhood/city would agree with the following statements? | Yes | No | Don't Know / No Answer |
|---|-----|----|------------------------|--|-----|----|------------------------|
| a. I would be ashamed if I were poor.                         | 1   | 2  | 99                     | a. I would be ashamed if I were poor.  | 1   | 2  | 99                     |
| b. I would be ashamed if someone in my family were poor.      | 1   | 2  | 99                     | b. I would be ashamed if someone in my family were poor.   | 1   | 2  | 99                     |
| c. People living in poverty should be ashamed of themselves.  | 1   | 2  | 99                     | c. People living in poverty should be ashamed of themselves.   | 1   | 2  | 99                     |
| d. People who are not poor make people who are poor feel bad. | 1   | 2  | 99                     | d. People who are not poor make people who are poor feel bad.  | 1   | 2  | 99                     |

| SH3. For each of the following listed feelings please place a number from 1 to 4, reflecting how common the feeling is for you. <b>Show card</b> | Almost always | Often | Occasionally | Rarely or never | Don't know / No answer | SH6A. Have you been treated in a way that you felt was prejudiced during the last three months?  | SH6B. Who treated you in a way that you felt was prejudiced?  |            |
|--|---------------|-------|--------------|-----------------|------------------------|--|---|------------|
| a. Embarrassment   | 1             | 2     | 3            | 4               | 99                     | 1. Yes, almost always<br>2. Yes, often<br>3. Yes, occasionally<br>4. No, rarely or never → Go to SH7<br><br>99. Don't know/no answer → Go to SH7   | 1. Health care services<br>2. School<br>3. Work<br>4. Police/judicial system<br>5. Social services<br>6. Shops/restaurants<br>7. Bank/insurance company<br>8. Government housing office<br>9. Close relative<br>10. Unknown person in a public place<br>11. Other (specify) <b>SH6B_other</b> |            |
| b. Feeling ridiculous  | 1             | 2     | 3            | 4               | 99                     |  |   |            |
| c. Self-consciousness  | 1             | 2     | 3            | 4               | 99                     |  |   |            |
| d. Feeling humiliated  | 1             | 2     | 3            | 4               | 99                     |  |   |            |
| e. Feeling stupid  | 1             | 2     | 3            | 4               | 99                     |  |   |            |
| f. Feeling childish  | 1             | 2     | 3            | 4               | 99                     |  |   |            |
| g. Feeling helpless, paralyzed   | 1             | 2     | 3            | 4               | 99                     |  |   |            |
| h. Feelings of blushing  | 1             | 2     | 3            | 4               | 99                     |  |   |            |
| i. Feeling laughable   | 1             | 2     | 3            | 4               | 99                     |  |   |            |
| j. Feeling disgusting to others  | 1             | 2     | 3            | 4               | 99                     |  |   |            |
|  |               |       |              |                 |                        | SH6A   | SH6B  | SH6B_other |
|  |               |       |              |                 |                        | <b>SH6C. Why were you treated in a way that you felt was prejudiced? (Please give main reason)</b><br>1. Ethnic, racial or cultural background<br>2. Gender<br>3. Sexual orientation<br>4. Age<br>5. Disability<br>6. Religion<br>7. Socio-economic group<br>8. Education<br>9. Other<br>99 Don't know/No answer |   |            |
| SH4. To what extent do you feel that people treat you with respect? <b>Show card</b>   | 1             | 2     | 3            | 4               | 99                     |  |   |            |
| SH5. To what extent do you feel that people treat you unfairly? <b>Show card</b>   | 1             | 2     | 3            | 4               | 99                     | SH6C   |   |            |

|  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <b>SH7.</b> Do you think that someone's ethnic, racial or cultural background impedes their chances of getting:<br><br>1. Yes<br>2. No<br>99. Don't know/No answer |  | <b>SH8.</b> Do you think being a woman impedes someone's chances of getting:<br><br>1. Yes<br>2. No<br>99. Don't know/No answer |  |
| a. Access to public services / infrastructure (for example: health, basic sewage, bridges, pavement)   |  | a. Access to public services / infrastructure (for example: health, basic sewage, bridges, pavement)                            |  |
| b. Public sector jobs  |  | b. Public sector jobs   |  |
| c. Government contracts  |  | c. Government contracts   |  |
| d. Private sector jobs   |  | d. Private sector jobs  |  |
| e. Educational opportunities at school   |  | e. Educational opportunities at school  |  |
| f. Educational opportunities at the technical, teacher training, military or police level.   |  | f. Educational opportunities at the technical, teacher training, military or police level.                                      |  |
| g. Educational opportunities at the university level   |  | g. Educational opportunities at the university level  |  |

|   |              |               |                     |                          |                               |
|---|--------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>SH9.</b> Please read each of the following items carefully and indicate the rating that best describes your feelings: <b>Show Card</b><br><br>Throughout your life, how seriously have you felt harmed by being ... ( <i>Rotate adjectives</i> ) |              |               |                     |                          |                               |
|   | <b>A lot</b> | <b>Fairly</b> | <b>Occasionally</b> | <b>Very occasionally</b> | <b>Don't know / No answer</b> |
| A. Excluded   | 1            | 2             | 3                   | 4                        | 99                            |
| B. Put down   | 1            | 2             | 3                   | 4                        | 99                            |
| C. Ridiculed  | 1            | 2             | 3                   | 4                        | 99                            |
| D. Discounted   | 1            | 2             | 3                   | 4                        | 99                            |
| E. Cruelly criticized   | 1            | 2             | 3                   | 4                        | 99                            |
| F. Called names or referred to in derogatory terms  | 1            | 2             | 3                   | 4                        | 99                            |