8 A Summary Measure of Women's Status

In this study, several different indicators are used to compare women's relative status and situation across 25 developing countries. Each chapter has focused on a different dimension of women's access to resources or on factors which are likely to affect this access. Overall, little consistency is found across measures either within countries or across countries making it difficult to assess or compare women's status. For example, in Rwanda, almost all women in the reproductive ages are employed; however, a large proportion work without cash earnings, and few working women have any education or work in the modern sector. Thus, while Rwanda will score high if women's status is measured by women's labor force participation rates alone, it will score low if the nature of work is taken into consideration. Similarly, in Ghana, a large share of households are headed by females and female household headship is positively related to education. This suggests not only that a significant proportion of women have the autonomy associated with being a household head, but also that female household heads have a higher status due to relatively higher education. Simultaneously, however, households headed by females in Ghana are vulnerable since female-headed households are not only more economically disadvantaged compared to male-headed households, but also the large majority of households headed by females are composed of only one adult (the female head) with dependent children. Women's economic vulnerability, with everything else constant, is likely to be negatively associated with women's status.

Given these and other seemingly contradictory conclusions about women's status in the countries included in this report, there is a need to summarize the findings within and across countries in some meaningful way. This can be done by defining a summary measure of women's status based on the dimensions of women's status examined in this report. The defining of such a summary measure involves making judgements, some of which are controversial, about which indicators to select for inclusion in the summary measure, and how best to summarize the large variance in values that the selected indicators will undoubtedly have across countries.

The summary measure defined here is based on threshold criteria for each indicator; countries must meet these threshold criteria to score on the measure. There is little precedence in the literature to guide the selection of indicators or to help fashion threshold points for the indicators selected. A "minimalistic" approach has been chosen in both the selection of indicators and the specification of threshold levels for indicators where relevant. By "minimalistic approach," it is meant that the threshold measure is defined in terms of a minimum "acceptable" level of women's status rather than a desirable level of women's status. This approach implies that threshold levels defined for indicators can be interpreted only as minimum cutoff points: a value for an indicator below this threshold level indicates a "low" absolute level of women's status as measured by that indicator, and a value above the threshold level indicates *only* that the minimum criterion for that indicator has been met. *A value above the threshold level does not imply that the country has met any ideal standards for that indicator.*

However, the need to maintain a comparative perspective requires that the range of values existing in the data be used to guide the selection of the minimum necessary threshold points. For example, ideally, we may want to specify "*all* women in the country must have at least some education" as the criterion for even the minimum acceptable level of women's status to pertain; practically, however, such a cutoff point for the education indicator would be unrealistic, since no country would satisfy this condition. Selection of threshold points for indicators based on the range of values available in the data will allow comparability between countries so that their relative position can be assessed. Thus, the minimum levels for indicators defined here are the minimum "acceptable" given the actual range of values found in the countries, not the ideal desirable levels.

Accordingly, the minimum level is defined for each selected indicator. In the case of indicators reflecting change over time or differences across categories, the minimum acceptable criteria is that the change or difference should unequivocally indicate improvements favoring women.

8.1 INDICATORS OF WOMEN'S STATUS

In identifying the indicators to be included in the threshold measure of women's status, the discussion in each chapter of this report is represented. However, only those indicators are selected from each chapter that, *ceteris*

paribus, have a positive association with women's status. Cutoff points, or threshold levels, are chosen to lie about midway in the range of available values, unless otherwise specified. If countries satisfy the specified condition, they are assigned a "yes," and if they do not they are assigned a "no." For variables which reflect changes over time or across categories, a third assignment, represented by "UC" for unclear, is possible. "UC" is assigned to countries if they show improvement in women's status over time or across categories but the improvement is not taking place linearly.

The first set of indicators examined in this report deals with women's socioeconomic position relative to that of men. Women's relative socioeconomic position was measured by the sex ratio of the households in each of the four categories of the API. The four categories of the API are HIGH, MEDIUM-HIGH, MEDIUM and LOW. The findings of this chapter are summarized using a single indicator:

- *Sex ratios are lower in "richer" than in "poorer" households.* To qualify for a "yes" on this indicator, the sex ratio of households in both the HIGH and MEDIUM-HIGH categories of the API in the given country have to be lower (favor women) than the sex ratios of the MEDIUM and LOW categories. If the sex ratio of only one of the "rich" categories is lower than the sex ratio of both the "poor" API categories, then the country is assigned "UC".

Chapter 3 examined the prevalence of female-headed households, the characteristics of female-headed households compared to those of male-headed households, and the characteristics of women who are household heads compared to those of women who are not. It was argued that although household headship implies greater autonomy and decision making control for women, and also implies that women are *not dependent on adult males to form households,* a large share of female-headed households among all households is not unequivocally reflective of a higher status for women. This is because in most societies women relative to men are disadvantaged in their ability to access and control economic and societal resources. Thus, households headed by females may be disadvantaged relative to male-headed households precisely because they are headed by a female. Further, if the sex ratio of the dependents of female-headed households is predominantly female, then such households are in double jeopardy: not only are they disadvantaged because they are headed by a female, but also they are disadvantaged because their membership is also primarily female. The relationship of household headship and women's status

is also likely to be mediated by household composition and characteristics of household heads. All of these factors are separately taken into consideration in defining the following five indicators:

- *More than 20 percent of households are headed by females.* This indicator suggests that women are free to form households on their own. Further, women who are household heads are likely to have high autonomy.

- *The sex ratio in female-headed households is 100 or more excluding the household head.* This variable captures the "double jeopardy" argument mentioned earlier. To qualify for a "yes," female-headed households in the given country must have, on average, at least an equal representation of males and females among the members of female-headed households.

- *At most, 25 percent of female-headed households consist of one adult and children.* This indicator summarizes the vulnerability of female-headed households due to their composition.

- *Women with no education are less likely than those with education to be household heads.* Female household headship is more likely to be associated with high women's status if household headship is positively related to education.

- *Female-headed households are equally or more likely as male-headed households to be "rich."* This is a more direct measure of the socioeconomic status of female-headed households. The minimum criterion is that female-headed households should not be *more* socioeconomically disadvantaged than male-headed households. The assessment of "rich" is based on the percent distribution of households across the API. To qualify for a "yes" on this variable, a higher (or about equal) proportion of female- than male-headed households have to be accounted for by the two API categories of HIGH and MEDIUM-HIGH.

In Chapter 4, a discussion of how education and women's exposure to the world outside the domestic sphere can be reflective of women's status was presented. The findings of this chapter are summarized using indicators that measure the absolute level of education in the different countries, whether the percent of women receiving education is increasing over time or not, and the relative female disadvantage at different levels of education and whether this disadvantage is increasing or decreasing over time. Two alterna-

tive measures of women's exposure and awareness are also included. The eight indicators used are:

- *At least 50 percent of women have four or more years of education.* This indicator sets a "floor" for the minimum acceptable level of education. It specifies that women must have a higher probability of having some education than not having any. Less than four years of education is unlikely to have lasting benefits.

- *At least 20 percent of women have secondary or higher education.* In addition to a "floor" in defining educational opportunities for women, there is also a need to examine whether women have access to higher levels of education. In 20 of the 25 countries considered, less than 40 percent of women have at least some secondary education. Thus, 20 percent of women with secondary or higher education, a proportion which lies halfway in the range for most countries, is used as the minimum threshold level.

- *The percent of women with secondary or higher education increases as age decreases.* If the percent of women that have secondary education increases steadily moving from the oldest age group (35-49 years) to the youngest age group (15-24 years), then a country is assigned "yes" on this measure. If, however, the percent of women with secondary or higher education is lowest among the 35-49 age group but is higher among the 25-34 age group compared to the 15-24 age group, then a "UC" is assigned. In these countries, there appears to be an improvement in women's access to higher education, but the improvement is not steady.

- *The sex ratio of the population with primary education is 101 or less.* This measure represents the ability of women to at least have about equal access as men to the lowest levels of education.

- *The sex ratio of the population with secondary or higher education is 110 or less.* While ideally, no gender differences are desired in access to higher education, few countries are able to meet the cutoff sex ratio of 110.

- *The sex ratio of the population with no education increases from older to younger cohorts.* In most countries, the sex ratio of the population with no education is extremely feminine and that of the population with either primary or secondary education is very mascu-

line. Thus, if the sex ratio of the population with no education increases (tends towards equality), the sex ratio of the population with some education, primary or secondary or both, can be expected to fall towards equality. To score a "yes" on this indicator, the sex ratio of the population with no education has to rise steadily moving from the age group of 50 or more years to the age group of 15-24 years. A country is assigned "UC" if the sex ratio of the population with no education is lowest among the population age 50 years and above, but is lower among those age 25-49 years than it is among those age 15-24 years.

- *One-third or less of rural women have no exposure to media.* While access to some form of media is fairly common in urban areas (21 of the 23 countries with data show that three or more out of every four urban women have access to some form of media), media exposure appears to be very limited in rural areas. However, not only do the majority of women live in rural areas in most developing countries, but it is precisely in rural areas where media exposure is likely to have the maximum beneficial effects for women's status. Thus, the media exposure criterion is defined only for rural women.

- *One-third or more women have discussed their desired number of children with their husbands.* Even if women are not educated or exposed to the media, women may still have higher status if they have some control over reproductive decisions. This variable represents one aspect of such control.

In Chapter 5, several different aspects of an important measure of women's status—women's employment—were examined. It was argued that employment of women is likely to be positively related to women's status especially if employment is for cash, employment is in the modern sector occupations, and employment is associated positively with socioeconomic status and education. Given that women are almost universally the primary caregivers within the family, any examination of women's employment should be done in conjunction with an examination of women's domestic workload. The following eight indicators reflecting each of these factors are included in the threshold measure of women's status:

- *At least 50 percent of women are employed.* A 50 percent cutoff point ensures that in countries which score a "yes" on this indicator women have a higher or equal

probability of being employed than of not being employed.

- *At most, 15 percent of employed women work without cash earnings.* Working without cash earnings is likely to be negatively associated with women's status. Few countries are able to meet even the 15 percent cutoff point.

- *Labor force participation rises with education.* For a country to qualify for a "yes," the labor force participation rates of women with secondary and with higher education must both be higher than the labor force participation rates of women with no or primary education; "UC" for unclear implies that either women with secondary or with higher education (not both) have higher labor force participation rates than those with primary education or no education at all. Note that countries with a U-shaped relationship between education and women's labor force participation rates are assigned a "no" on this measure.

- *Labor force participation rises with socioeconomic status.* This measure indirectly tells whether employment is a "need-based" phenomenon or not. If employment rises with socioeconomic status, it is more likely to reflect true empowerment and choice than if women work only because of poverty. Further, this measure also reflects greater occupational choice. Socioeconomic status is measured by the API. For a country to qualify for a "yes," labor force participation rates of women in the API categories of HIGH and MEDIUM-HIGH must both be higher than the labor force participation rates of women from households in the LOW and MEDIUM API categories; countries are assigned "UC" if women in only one of the two API categories of HIGH or MEDIUM-HIGH have higher labor force participation rates than women in both of the lower API categories.

- *At least 10 percent of working women work in modern occupations.* Modern occupations include all the professional, managerial, technical and clerical occupations. Women's representation in these occupations is almost nil in several countries as can be seen from the small number of countries that meet even this very low cutoff point.

- *At least 10 percent of women have primary education and work in modern or mixed occupations.* Mixed occupations include sales and manual labor. This measure requires that countries meet two conditions simultaneously. Since countries have more than 20 percent of women that meet this criteria, it is acceptable to use what appears to be an exceptionally low cutoff point of 10 percent for this indicator.

- *Less than 50 percent of working women provide child care while they work.* This measure is based only on employed women who have a child less than five years. Employment is likely to be an additional burden for women who must provide childcare even while they work.

- *The dependency ratio is 0.9 or less.* The dependency ratio is defined as the number of children less than five years and persons 60 years or older per woman age 15-49. A dependency ratio of 0.9 implies that, on average, each woman in the reproductive ages is looking after less than one person.

Chapter 6 compared the situation of women in different marital statuses. Little of that discussion can be used for the threshold measure of the status of all women. Nonetheless, there are three measures from this chapter which do reflect the status and welfare of all women:

- *Less than 25 percent of women age 15-19 are ever-married.* A low proportion of women married between ages 15-19 suggests that young women have options other than marriage during their teenage years.

- *Less than 25 percent of women age 15-19 have had a birth.* Early childbirth, besides limiting women's life opportunities, increases health risks for mother and child.

- *The percent of first births before age 20 declines from older to younger cohorts.* This indicator is included in the summary measure to ensure that health risks and curtailment of life opportunities for women due to very early childbirth are declining over time. "UC" is assigned to countries where the percent of women with a birth before the age of 20 years declines while moving from the older to the younger cohorts but does not do so linearly.

In Chapter 7, the link between women's own characteristics and those of their husbands was examined. The following four indicators are derived from this analysis:

- *At least 50 percent of wives have equal or greater education than their husbands.* Intrahousehold bargaining models suggest that large educational differences between spouses will translate into differences in relative power. Consequently, this measure is defined to have a "floor" level such that a woman has as much or more education than her husband.

- *At least 25 percent of wives work for cash and have at least the same level of education as their husbands.* This indicator, like the previous one, tells whether women's individual characteristics put them at a disadvantage relative to their husbands.

- *Wives of husbands in modern occupations are most likely to be employed.* This measure compares the labor force participation rates of women with husbands in modern occupations with the labor force participation of women with husbands in any other occupation, excluding husbands who have "never worked." This variable also indirectly measures whether employment of women is positively associated with socioeconomic status or not.

- *At least 20 percent of wives whose husbands do agricultural work are themselves working in nonagricultural occupations.* Work in nonagricultural occupations even when the husband is in agriculture is likely to be reflective of wider occupational choices for women.

8.2 EVALUATING WOMEN'S STATUS

In Table 8.1, countries are marked according to whether they meet the minimum criteria just described. In interpreting this table it is important to remember that a "yes" listed in the table does not imply that women in a given country have high or even satisfactory status—*it merely indicates that conditions for women are above a minimum threshold level relative to other countries on that one indicator.* There are no countries that have a "no" listed for all the indicators defined. This implies that there is no country among the 25 considered where women are below the minimum threshold level on every indicator to be included in the threshold measure. However, there is also no country that scores a "yes" on every indicator implying that, among these 25 countries, no country meets the minimum threshold level of women's status on all the indicators. However, how countries perform on each set of separate indicators varies

greatly between countries, between regions, and across dimensions. Based on Table 8.1, the following section presents conclusions on women's status by region.

Sub-Saharan Africa

- Women in the sub-Saharan African region as a whole are less likely than men to be living in households with a relatively high socioeconomic status. This is not surprising because it is in this part of the developing world where the prevailing culture and kinship arrangements are most likely to make women's own characteristics important in determining the wealth of their households.

- Female household headship is relatively high in this region. However, female-headed households seem to be socially and economically disadvantaged. Female-headed households tend to be of the "one adult plus children" type and predominantly female in composition. Furthermore, they are, in general, economically worse off than male-headed households. Also, female household headship is most common among women with no or low education.

- This region does very poorly with regard to existing levels of education. Most countries do not meet even the minimal absolute and relative threshold levels of education for women. However, in the majority of countries, there is improvement over time in the absolute proportions of women accessing even higher education, although there is little evidence of diminishing gender inequalities in such access. Exposure to media is minimal in most countries. However, in more than half of the countries, women appear to be involved in reproductive decisions regarding the number of children to bear.

- Female rates of labor force employment are exceptionally high. In general, more than the minimum threshold proportion of women have at least primary education and work in mixed or modern occupations. However, women's employment is not positively associated with either education or socioeconomic status in several of these countries. Women typically work even if they have children. Modern sector employment is minimal and in about half of the countries a significant proportion of women are employed without cash earnings. High labor force employment is accompanied by exceptionally high domestic workloads for women.

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- Marriage is fairly common by the age of 19 years, although first births to women currently 15-19 years of age are less common. There is no evidence that the proportion of women having first births before the age of 20 years is declining among the younger cohorts.

- There appears to be considerable equality in education levels of spouses. However, this is partially due to the fact that a high proportion of both spouses are uneducated in this region. In addition, in most countries, at least a quarter of currently married women are likely to be empowered within the household by having an education at least equal to that of their husbands and also simultaneously earning cash. Contradicting the earlier finding that women's employment is not positively associated with socioeconomic status in this region, in more than half of the countries employment is highest among wives of husbands in modern occupations. Finally, in only one-third of these countries do women whose husbands are in agriculture work in nonagricultural occupations.

North Africa

Morocco and Egypt, where the results are based on an ever-married sample of women only, are the only two North African countries included in this report. Overall, the two are found to be fairly similar in terms of women's status indicators:

- Female household headship is not common in this region. To the extent that it does occur, it is more common among women with no or low education. On the positive side, however, the composition of these households does not tend to be the "one adult plus children" type.

- Morocco and Egypt are two of only three countries among those considered where less than 50 percent of women have four years of education, and yet 20 percent of women have at least some secondary education. Clearly, in these countries, if a woman receives any education at all, she also tends to stay in school. Although women's absolute access to education is improving over time, there is no evidence of a decline in gender inequality in such access. Even rural women appear to have access to media, and women in general appear to participate in discussions about their own fertility.

- These countries also reveal contradictory results with regard to the employment of women. On the one hand, female labor force participation is very low and a high proportion of women appear to be working without earning cash. On the other hand, labor force participation tends to be positively associated with education and perhaps even socioeconomic status, and modern sector employment among working women is relatively high in both countries.

- Marriage is not very common between the ages of 15-19 years in both countries; however, in Egypt alone, a high proportion of ever married women age 15-19 years have had a birth and there is no decline over time in the proportion of women having their first birth before the age of 20 years.

- Finally, in both countries, a woman is just as likely as not to have the same or more education as her husband. However, in neither country are wives likely to have equal or more education than their husbands while also earning cash. The fact that in both countries wives of husbands in modern occupations are most likely to be employed underscores the fact that women's employment in these countries is positively associated with socioeconomic status.

Asia

Note that four out of the five countries in this region use samples of only ever-married women; this should be taken into account when interpreting results.

- In four of the five countries in this region, men are no more likely than women to live in economically advantaged households.

- Household headship is not common in this region and, as in North Africa, female household headship is more common among less educated than more educated women. However, female-headed households are not necessarily the most vulnerable: on average there are more males than females in female-headed households excluding the head; less than one-fourth are the "one adult plus children" type, and in almost half of the countries, female-headed households are likely to be economically advantaged relative to male-headed households.

Table 8.1 Selected indicators of women's status

Fulfillment by countries of minimum criteria on selected indicators of women's status, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-1994

Country	Socio-economic status / Sex ratios lower in richer than poorer households[1]	More than 20 percent of households are female-headed	Sex ratio in female-headed households is 100 or more excluding household head	No more than 25 percent of female-headed households consist of one adult plus children	Women with no education less likely to be household heads	Female-headed households at least as likely to be as rich as male-headed households[2]	At least 50 percent of women have four years of education	At least 20 percent of women have secondary or higher education	Percent of women with secondary or higher education falls with age[3]	Sex ratio of population with primary education is 101 or less	Sex ratio of population with secondary or higher education is 110 or less	Sex ratio of population with no education increases from older to younger cohorts[4]	One-third or less of rural women have no exposure to media	One-third or more of women have discussed the number of children with husband
Sub-Saharan Africa														
Burkina Faso	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Cameroon	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Ghana	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Kenya	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	UC	No	No	UC	Yes	Yes
Madagascar	UC	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Malawi	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	UC	U	Yes
Namibia	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	UC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Niger	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Nigeria	U	No	No	No	No	U	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Rwanda	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	UC	U	Yes
Senegal	UC	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Zambia	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	UC	No	Yes
Region total	1Yes, 2UC, 1U	6Yes	1Yes	5Yes	2Yes	2Yes 1U	5Yes	5Yes	10Yes 2UC	4Yes	2Yes	2Yes 4UC	2Yes 2U	7Yes
North Africa														
Egypt[5]	UC	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Morocco	UC	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Region total	2UC	0Yes	1Yes	2Yes	0Yes	0Yes	0Yes	2Yes	2Yes	0Yes	0Yes	0Yes	2Yes	2Yes
Asia/Near East														
Bangladesh[5]	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
Indonesia[5]	UC	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	UC	Yes	Yes
Pakistan[5]	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	UC	No	No	No	No	Yes
Philippines	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Turkey[5]	UC	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	UC	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Region total	2Yes 2UC	0Yes	3Yes	4Yes	0Yes	2Yes	3Yes	2Yes	3Yes 2UC	2Yes	1Yes	1Yes 1UC	3Yes	5Yes
Latin America/ Caribbean														
Bolivia	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Brazil	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	UC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colombia	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dominican Republic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Paraguay	U	No	Yes	Yes	No	U	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Peru	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	UC	Yes	Yes
Region total	5Yes 1U	3Yes	3Yes	6Yes	0Yes	4Yes 1U	6Yes	5Yes	5Yes 1UC	6Yes	3Yes	4Yes 1UC	4Yes	6Yes

Table 8.1—*Continued*

	Employment and workload								Marriage and childbirth			Ascribed status			
Country	At least 50 percent of women are employed	At most 15 percent of employed women work without cash earnings	Labor force participation rises with education[6]	Labor force participation rises with socio-economic status[7]	At least 10 percent of working women work in modern occupations	At least 10 percent of women have primary education and work in modern/mixed occupations	Less than 50 percent of working women provide child care when working[8]	Dependency ratio is 0.9 or less	Less than 25 percent of women 15-19 years are ever-married	Less than 25 percent of women 15-19 have had a birth	Percent of first births before age 20 declines from older to younger cohorts[9]	At least 50 percent of wives have equal or greater education than their husbands	At least 25 percent or wives work for cash and have equal or more education than their husbands	Wives of husbands in modern occupations are most likely to be employed[10]	20 percent or more of wives of husbands in agriculture work in nonagricultural occupations
Sub-Saharan Africa															
Burkina Faso	Yes	Yes	UC	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cameroon	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Ghana	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Kenya	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	UC	No	No	Yes	No
Madagascar	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Malawi	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Namibia	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Niger	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nigeria	Yes	No	UC	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rwanda	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Senegal	No	Yes	No	UC	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Zambia	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	UC	No	No	Yes	No
Region total	6Yes	7Yes	3Yes 2UC	3Yes 1UC	3Yes	6Yes	3Yes	0Yes	4Yes	8Yes	3Yes 2UC	9Yes	8Yes	7Yes	4Yes
North Africa															
Egypt	No	No	Yes	UC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Morocco	No	No	UC	UC	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Region total	0Yes	0Yes	1Yes 1UC	2UC	2Yes	1Yes	1Yes	2Yes	2Yes	1Yes	1Yes	2Yes	0Yes	2Yes	0Yes
Asia/Near East															
Bangladesh[5]	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Indonesia[5]	No	U	No	No	No	Yes	U	Yes	Yes	No	No	9Yes	No	No	No
Pakistan[5]	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Philippines	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Turkey[5]	No	U	UC	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	UC	Yes	No	No	No
Region total	0Yes	2Yes 2U	1UC	1Yes	2Yes	2Yes	2Yes 1U	4Yes	4Yes	1Yes	2Yes 1UC	5Yes	1Yes	1Yes	1Yes
Latin America/ Caribbean															
Bolivia	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Brazil	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Colombia	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Dominican Republic	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Paraguay	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Peru	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Region total	2Yes	5Yes	4Yes	3Yes	6Yes	6Yes	4Yes	4Yes	6Yes	6Yes	3Yes	4Yes	1Yes	5Yes	1Yes

Table 8.1—*Continued*

Footnotes

UC = Unclear (fulfillment of criterion cannot be determined)

U = Unknown (not available)

[1] The countries that score "yes" are those where the sex ratios of households in the HIGH and the MEDIUM-HIGH API are both lower than the sex ratios of households in the LOW and the MEDIUM API. The countries where the sex ratios of either households in the HIGH or MEDIUM-HIGH API categories are lower than the sex ratios of households in both LOW and MEDIUM API are marked as "UC" for "Unclear."

[2] Countries that score a "yes" are those where the percent of female-headed households in the HIGH plus MEDIUM-HIGH API categories is greater than or equal to the sum of the percent of male-headed households in these API categories.

[3] A country is assigned "UC" if the percent of women that have at least some secondary education is least among women currently 35-49 years, but is higher among women 25-34 years than among those 15-24 years of age.

[4] A country is assigned "UC" for this measure if the sex ratio of the population age 15-24 years is higher than the sex ratios of those age 25-49 and 50 years or more, but the sex ratio of the population age 25-49 years is lower than that of the population age 50 years or more.

[5] Only the ever-married women sample is analyzed for variables based on individual level data.

[6] To qualify for a "yes," the labor force participation rates of women with secondary and with higher education must both be higher than the labor force participation rates of women with no or primary education; "UC" implies that either those with secondary or with higher education have higher labor force participation than those with no or primary education. Note that countries with a U-shaped relationship between education and women's labor force participation rates are assigned a "no."

[7] To qualify for a "yes," labor force participation rates of women in the API categories of HIGH and MEDIUM-HIGH must both be higher than the labor force participation rates of women in households in the LOW and MEDIUM API categories; countries are assigned a "UC" if only women in one of the two API categories HIGH or MEDIUM-HIGH have higher labor force participation rates than women in both of the lower API categories.

[8] This measure is calculated for employed women who have a child less than five years old and includes women who identify themselves as the primary care provider for the child even when they are working.

[9] "UC" is assigned to countries where the percent of women with a birth before the age of 20 years is lower among women currently age 20-29 than among women currently age 30-39 and 40-49 years, but the percent with a birth before the age of 20 years among women age 30-39 is higher than among women currently age 40-49 years.

[10] As compared to wives of husbands in all other occupations except "never worked."

- In terms of all indicators of women's education, Bangladesh and Pakistan perform very poorly. Indonesia and the Philippines do well on most indicators, and Turkey does well only because most women tend to have some education and the sex ratio is relatively equal at the primary level of education. However, women's access to secondary education in Turkey is limited and there is no decline over time in gender differences in access to higher education. Nonetheless, at least one-third of women in all countries of this region appear to have discussed matters related to the number of children with their husbands.

- In terms of women's employment, the entire region, with the exception of the Philippines, does very poorly. Women's labor force participation rates are low, and there is little indication that labor force participation rises with education or that it is associated with a higher socioeconomic status.

- Marriage is not common among those who are 15-19 years of age. Nonetheless, among ever-married women (only the Philippines has an all women sample) who are currently between 15-19 years, childbirth is common. However, overall, there is some indication that the proportion of women having their first birth before the age of 20 years is declining.

- The region meets the minimum threshold level of equality in education between husbands and wives. However, women are unlikely to have equal or more education than their husbands and simultaneously be earning cash.

Latin America and the Caribbean

This region as a whole does well on most indicators of women's status:

- Women are more likely than men to live in households that have a high socioeconomic status.

- Female household headship is fairly common in the region, although it is relatively more common among women with less education. Notably, female-headed households are not necessarily disadvantaged relative to male-headed households in terms of either their composition, the sex ratio of their members, or their relative economic status.

- The region displays relatively high levels of women's education and low gender differences in education. Media exposure and awareness also appear to be relatively high.

- Although overall labor force participation rates are not high in most countries in the region, most women who work do earn cash. Further, employment rates rise with education and socioeconomic status in most countries. Finally, in all countries, more than 10 percent of employed women work in the modern sector, and in most countries, working women who have a child less than five do not have the child with them while they work.

- Both marriage and childbirth are not very common among those currently 15-19 years of age. However, only in three of the six countries is there evidence of a decline over time in the proportion of women having a first birth before the age of 20 years.

- Equality in education between spouses is also fairly common. However, wives are not doubly-empowered since they are unlikely to have equal or more education than their husbands while also earning cash at the same time. Wives of husbands in professional occupations are most likely to be employed, supporting the earlier finding that employment is not just need-based.

8.3 COUNTRY RANKINGS ON THE THRESHOLD MEASURE OF WOMEN'S STATUS

The threshold measure of women's status (TMWS) in each country is defined in terms of the number of criteria satisfied. Scores on this measure are then used to rank countries on the extent to which they meet the minimum women's status criteria. Every "yes" counts for a score of 1 and every "no" counts for a score of 0. If a country is given a "UC" (for unclear) then the country scores half a point.[1] Since Malawi, Rwanda and Turkey are missing information on one criterion each, and Indonesia, Nigeria, and Paraguay

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[1] Alternative scoring schemes that assign higher weights to the household headship variables as the proportion of households headed by females increases, and those that assign higher weights to the employment variables as the labor force participation rate increases, were experimented with. These schemes complicated the analysis without significantly altering the ranking.

are each missing information on two criteria, an adjusted total score in the form of a proportion ranging from 0 to 1 is calculated for each country. The adjusted total score is the original total score divided by the number of criteria on which the country has been scored. The closer the adjusted total score is to 1, the closer the country is to satisfying at least the defined minimum threshold level of women's status. Countries are then ranked according to this adjusted total score on the TMWS.

Table 8.2 presents the total by dimension, the total sum of scores, adjusted and unadjusted, and the TMWS rank for each country. No country scores a perfect 1. Thus, in absolute terms, there is no country which meets even the minimum standards for women's status. However, as expected from the earlier discussion, the Latin American and Caribbean countries do *relatively* better on the TMWS than countries in other regions. With a score of 0.86, the Dominican Republic ranks the highest. Bolivia is the only Latin American country to do poorly on the TMWS. The only non-Latin American countries that score above 0.7 are the Philippines which has a rank second only to the Dominican Republic, and Namibia which ranks in fifth place just before Paraguay and Peru.

Table 8.2 Summary measure scores on women's status

Measure of women's status by dimension scores, total scores (adjusted and unadjusted), and rank on threshold measure of women's status (TMWS), Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-1994

Country	Socio-economic status	Female household headship	Education and exposure	Employment and workload	Marriage and childbirth	Ascribed status	Total score	Score adjusted for number of indicators	
								Total	Rank
Maximum score[1]	1	5	8	8	3	4	29	1.000	NA
Sub-Saharan Africa									
Burkina Faso	0	2	1	2.5	1	4	10.5	0.362	17
Cameroon	0	1	3	2	0	2	8	0.276	20
Ghana	1	2	4	2	3	2	14	0.483	11
Kenya	0	1	5	5	2.5	1	14.5	0.5	10
Madagascar	.5	3	6	3	2	2	16.5	0.569	8
Malawi	0	1	2.5 of 7	3	0	1	7.5 of 28	0.268	22
Namibia	0	2	7.5	6	2	3	20.5	0.707	5
Niger	0	0	1	1	0	4	6	0.207	25
Nigeria	U	0 of 4	1	2.5	1	4	8.5 of 27	0.315	19
Rwanda	0	1	2.5 of 7	1	3	2	9.5 of 28	0.339	18
Senegal	.5	2	1	1.5	1	2	8	0.276	20
Zambia	0	1	5.5	3	.5	1	11	0.379	16
North Africa									
Egypt[2]	.5	2	4	5.5	1	2	15	0.517	9
Morocco	.5	1	4	3	3	2	13.5	0.466	12
Asia/Near East									
Bangladesh[2]	0	1	2	2	1	1	7	0.241	24
Indonesia[2]	.5	1	6.5	2 of 6	1	1	12 of 27	0.444	14
Pakistan[2]	1	3	1.5	0	1	1	7.5	0.259	23
Philippines	1	3	7	6	3	4	24	0.828	2
Turkey[2]	.5	1	4.5	3.5 of 7	1.5	1	12 of 28	0.429	15
Latin America/ Caribbean									
Bolivia	1	2	5	3	2	0	13	0.448	13
Brazil	1	3	6.5	7	2	3	22.5	0.776	3
Colombia	1	2	8	6	3	2	22	0.759	4
Dominican Republic	1	4	7	7	3	3	25	0.862	1
Paraguay	U	2 of 4	7	6	2	2	19 of 27	0.704	6
Peru	1	3	6.5	5	3	1	19.5	0.672	7

[1] The relevant maximum score for countries that are missing information on some indicators is given in the relevant cells.
[2] Only ever-married women
U = Unknown (not available)
NA = Not applicable

Egypt and Morocco, the two North African countries, both meet about half of the criteria and rank about midway among all countries considered. The countries that are worse off in terms of their TMWS rank are Niger in sub-Saharan Africa, which ranked the lowest (25) with a score of about 0.2, and Pakistan and Bangladesh in Asia, ranking 23 and 24, respectively.

Notably, the only countries in sub-Saharan Africa, other than Namibia, that have a relatively high rank are Madagascar (8), Kenya (10), and Ghana (11). These countries score relatively high on the TMWS in part because they all fare better than any other sub-Saharan African country (other than Namibia) on the women's education indicators.

In conclusion, only 10 of the 25 countries included in this report satisfy more than half of the minimum criteria defined for measuring women's status. Further, even among these 10 countries, the highest adjusted score is well below 1. At the other end there are countries like Bangladesh, Cameroon, Niger, Pakistan, and Senegal, where at most eight of the 29 criteria specified are met. Most countries perform poorly on the TMWS even though the defined criteria are very conservative and achievable, as is evident from the fact that there is no criterion which has not been met by at least two countries.

8.4 RANKINGS OF WOMEN'S STATUS COMPARED WITH OTHER GENDER-RELATED INDICATORS

The United Nation's Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Equality Measure (GEM) (United Nations, 1995a) evaluate relative gender equality across countries. The GDI is constructed using information on the overall achievements of women as compared to men on three dimensions: life expectancy, educational attainment, and adjusted real income. The GEM measures the economic, political, and professional participation of women as compared to men, and uses information on income earning power, share in professional and managerial jobs, and share of parliamentary seats (United Nations, 1995a: Chapter 3).

In this last section, the ranks of countries on the TMWS are compared with their ranks on the GDI and GEM. The objective of this exercise is not to validate the ranks of countries on the SMWS; clearly, this is not feasible since all three indices are based on dimensions of women's

status which are only minimally overlapping. Instead, the objectives are 1) to observe if there is consistency across alternative indices of women's status or gender equality, and 2) to get a more complete picture of women's status in these countries. Examining three complementary indices, instead of just one, will allow a greater insight into the situation of women in each country.

Since GDI and GEM values are not available for all 25 countries included in this report, the countries are ranked again on the TMWS after excluding the countries for which the GDI is not available. The new rankings are given in Table 8.3. If the TMWS rank for a country is different when only the countries with GEM values are ranked, the alternative rank is given in parentheses. Note that the GDI and GEM rankings reported here are not the original rankings available in Tables 3.1 and 3.5 of the 1995 Human Development Report (United Nations, 1995a); instead, they are the rankings that these countries would have if their original ordering according to the GDI and GEM rankings was maintained but no additional countries except those in this study were ranked. The rankings of all countries on the GDI, TMWS and GEM are given in Table 8.3.

The countries that have the highest TMWS values are also the ones that score relatively high on the GDI and GEM. Of the top seven scorers on the TMWS in Table 8.2—Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Namibia, Paraguay, Peru, and the Philippines—Colombia and Namibia are not ranked on the GDI. The remaining five countries all rank under 7 on the GDI. The top scoring seven countries, however, are all ranked on the GEM, and all but Paraguay also have a rank less than 7 on the GEM. Indonesia and Turkey do very well on the GDI but not on the TMWS, and only Indonesia does well on the GEM but not on the TMWS. The only other country which scores much higher on the GDI and the GEM (ranked 10 on both) than on the TMWS is Cameroon. On the other hand, Madagascar does better in terms of the TMWS than it does on the GDI (the GEM value is not available for Madagascar).

Notably, however, there is remarkable consistency in the rankings of countries on these three different measures of women's status and gender inequality. Indeed, seven countries have rankings on each of the available indices which do not differ by more than 2 points from one another; and in another 14 countries, the ranks on at least two indicators do not differ by more than 3 points. Thus clearly, there is interdependence between different aspects of women's status suggesting that improvements in the situation of women in one area will be associated with improvements in

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Table 8.3 GDI, TMWS, and GEM rankings

Rankings on the Gender-related Development Index (GDI), the
Threshold Measure of Women's Status (TMWS), and the Gender
Empowerment Measure (GEM), Demographic and Health Surveys,
1990-1994

Country	Ranking on the GDI[1]	Ranking on the TMWS (only countries for which GDI is available are ranked)[2]	Ranking on the GEM[1]
Sub-Saharan Africa			
Burkina Faso	21	15	13
Cameroon	10	17	10
Ghana	11	9	11
Kenya	9	8 (NR)	NR
Madagascar	14	6 (NR)	NR
Malawi	20	19	17
Namibia	NR	NR (5)	5
Niger	22	22 (NR)	NR
Nigeria	16	16	20
Rwanda	NR	NR (NR)	NR
Senegal	19	17	16
Zambia	15	14	15
North Africa			
Egypt	12	7 (8)	18
Morocco	13	10	14
Asia/Near East			
Bangladesh	18	21	12
Indonesia	6	12	6
Pakistan	17	20	21
Philippines	5	2	1
Turkey	1	13	19
Latin America/ Caribbean			
Bolivia	8	11	8
Brazil	2	3	7
Colombia	NR	NR (4)	2
Dominican Republic	7	1	3
Paraguay	4	4 (6)	9
Peru	3	5 (7)	4

[1] These indices stand for Gender-related Development Index and
Gender Empowerment Measure defined in the *Human Development
Report 1995* which ranks 130 countries on the GDI index and 116
countries on the GEM index (United Nations, 1995a: Tables 3.1 and
3.5). The GDI and GEM rankings reported here are not the original
rankings; instead, they are the rankings that these countries would
have if their original ordering on the GDI and GEM was maintained
but only the countries in this study were ranked. The GDI is
constructed using information on overall achievements of women and
men on three dimensions: life expectancy, educational attainment and
adjusted real income. The GEM measures the economic political and
professional participation of women as compared to men and uses
information on income earning power, share in professional and
managerial jobs, and share of parliamentary seats.
[2] Parentheses indicate the ranks these countries would have if the
countries missing on GEM were excluded.
NR = Not ranked

at least some other areas. However, the discussion in this
section is in terms of the relative status of women across
countries and not in terms of the absolute position of coun-
tries with regard to women's status. Consequently, from this
comparison, the distance that countries need to travel to im-
prove the situation of women cannot be estimated.

This report concludes with notes of both optimism and
caution. The authors are optimistic that once countries initi-
ate improvements in women's access to societal opportuni-
ties and resources, improvements are also likely on other di-
mensions of women's status. However, improvements are
not *guaranteed* to take place simultaneously along all di-
mensions; this is clear from the differential performance of
countries on the different dimensions included in the
TMWS. Further, given the extremely low scores of the
majority of countries, even in terms of the *relative* minimum
"acceptable" levels of women's status used here, it is clear
that initiatives to improve the status of women in most
countries have either not begun or are not adequate. The
data suggest that women continue to be absolutely and rela-
tively disadvantaged in most of the 25 countries examined
in this report.