BREAKING THE POVERTY CODE
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An Integrative Approach to Measuring Multidimensional Poverty in Mexico

BY

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Yedith B. Guillén-Fernández is a Full-Time Researcher at the Economic Research Institute of the National Autonomous University of Mexico and Lecturer in Poverty Studies and Health Economics of the Postgraduate Programme in Economics at UNAM. She holds a PhD in Social Policy, specialised on multidimensional poverty at the University of Bristol, England, and she also did a Master of Philosophy programme focused on research methods in Bristol. She holds a Master’s degree in Demography from El Colegio de México. She did a degree in Economics at the Universidad Michoacana in Mexico. She did her post-doctorate work on the subject of child poverty and health deprivation and a Diploma in Human Rights indicators at UNAM. She has specialized in the topics of Multidimensional Poverty and Health Economics. Yedith has worked on international research projects from a comparative perspective on health and wellbeing, malnutrition, child poverty, health-care systems and did research stays at the University of Gothenburg, Bristol University, the National University of Seoul, at CLEAR (Regional Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results), at the University College of Ireland and the Mexican Academy of Sciences. In the field of teaching, Dr Guillén Fernández has taught courses at UNAM, Princeton University, the University of Bristol and has participated in international conferences, for instance, the European Parliament, at the United Nations Organization for the Food and Agriculture (FAO), in CROP Poverty, among others. She was Director of Poverty Measurement Standards and Methodologies at the National Council for Social Development and Policy (CONEVAL), where she conducted research on multidimensional poverty and effective access to health services. She has published articles in national and international indexed journals, both in English and Spanish. She is a member of the National System of Researchers in Mexico (CONACYT).
I would like to mention that this book is an adaptation of my PhD dissertation ‘Multidimensional poverty measurement from a relative deprivation approach: A comparative study between the United Kingdom and Mexico’. This research work resulted from my PhD studies at the University of Bristol and from The Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research. I thank my supervisor Professor David Gordon for the knowledge I have acquired.

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I dedicate this dissertation to my mother María Esther, from whom I have learnt that science is the way to achieve truth. I thank her love and support in all my life projects.

This book is dedicated to academics and students who are motivated to study poverty for contributing to its eradication. I hope this study helps define objective criteria for the measurement of multidimensional poverty.

This research represents a vote for the eradication of poverty.
This study formulates a theoretical and empirical link to integrate two frameworks for measuring multidimensional poverty in Mexico, which are the ‘Consensual approach’ and the ‘Social Rights-based approach’, with the purpose of updating the living standards established in the Mexican norms and evaluating the official Multidimensional Poverty Measurement Methodology in Mexico (MPMM). The Consensual approach, developed by Mack and Lansley (1985) in the United Kingdom, will help us to inform the socially perceived necessities for identifying new needs and updated poverty thresholds. On the other hand, the Social Rights-based approach has been officially advocated in Mexico for the measurement of multidimensional poverty since 2008. Both frameworks are based upon social needs and aim at promoting that every person must achieve a decent standard of living, as well as to acknowledge that all citizens should accomplish their entitlements for being free of poverty. Also, both approaches lead us to understand that needs are determined socially and can be defined based on ‘social consensus’. However, the Mexican legal frameworks do not inform continuously about the changing needs resulted from the socio-economic and technological progress, because of its normative nature. Therefore, the consensual approach creates an important association with the social rights, not only for the evaluation of the official method of multidimensional poverty in Mexico but also to inform institutions and scholars about objective poverty measuring criteria, as well as to show a more accurate picture of poverty. This research also contributes with a statistical application for obtaining an objective poverty measurement for Mexico, based on the application of multivariate statistical techniques as part of the ‘Consensual Method’.

Yedith Betzabé Guillén-Fernández