

# Empirical Challenges Integrating Middle-Income Countries in the LIS Database

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## Outline of the talk:

**Part 1.** Adding middle-income countries to LIS: origins and history; current and future developments.

**Part 2.** Specific challenges of harmonizing data from middle-income countries: empirical illustrations.

# With input from the LIS team in Luxembourg:

## LIS Working Paper Series

No. 756

### **Empirical challenges comparing inequality across countries**

The case of middle-income countries from the LIS database

Daniele Checchi, Andrej Cupak, Teresa Munzi, and Janet Gornick

December 2018



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Also  
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Research  
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## Part 1.

Adding middle-income countries to LIS:  
origins and history;  
current and future developments.

## Origins and (brief) history:

**1983:** LIS, a cross-national microdata archive, was founded in Luxembourg, with pioneering participants from six high-income countries.

**1983-2003:** LIS grew rapidly, retaining its core focus on high-income (EU/OECD) countries; exceptions were several Eastern European countries and Mexico.

**Early 2000s:** LIS leadership (board, directors, data team) decided to prioritize adding middle-income countries; several key partners helped, especially with dataset acquisition, e.g., the World Bank, UNDP, and UNICEF.

## Current and future developments:

**Currently:** The LIS Database now contains 12 upper-middle income countries (Brazil, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Romania, Russia, Serbia, South Africa) and 3 lower-middle income countries (Egypt, Georgia, India), for a total of 15 out of 51 countries, based on 2018 income classifications. (Note: Several countries in the LIS Database have moved from middle- to high income – mainly from Eastern Europe, also Chile, Panama, and Uruguay).

**Additional middle-income country datasets are in various pipelines (with varying degrees of certainty):** Viet Nam, Côte d'Ivoire, Laos, Thailand, Philippines, Cambodia, Bangladesh... and more.

## Current and future developments:

**Template revision, 2019:** The LIS data team released a substantially revised and improved data template on April 30, 2019. One of the driving principles (as with LIS' 2011 template revision) was to improve the fit with microdata from middle-income countries.

## **Strengthening old partnership, building new ones:**

In the last five years, LIS has been strengthening old partnerships and building new ones with, e.g., UNDP, UN-Women, UNICEF, UN Statistics Division, UN Missions; WIDER; the World Bank; the Economic Research Forum; and development agencies in Luxembourg and France.

## Part 2.

Specific challenges of harmonizing data from middle-income countries: empirical illustrations.



# Empirical highlights from:

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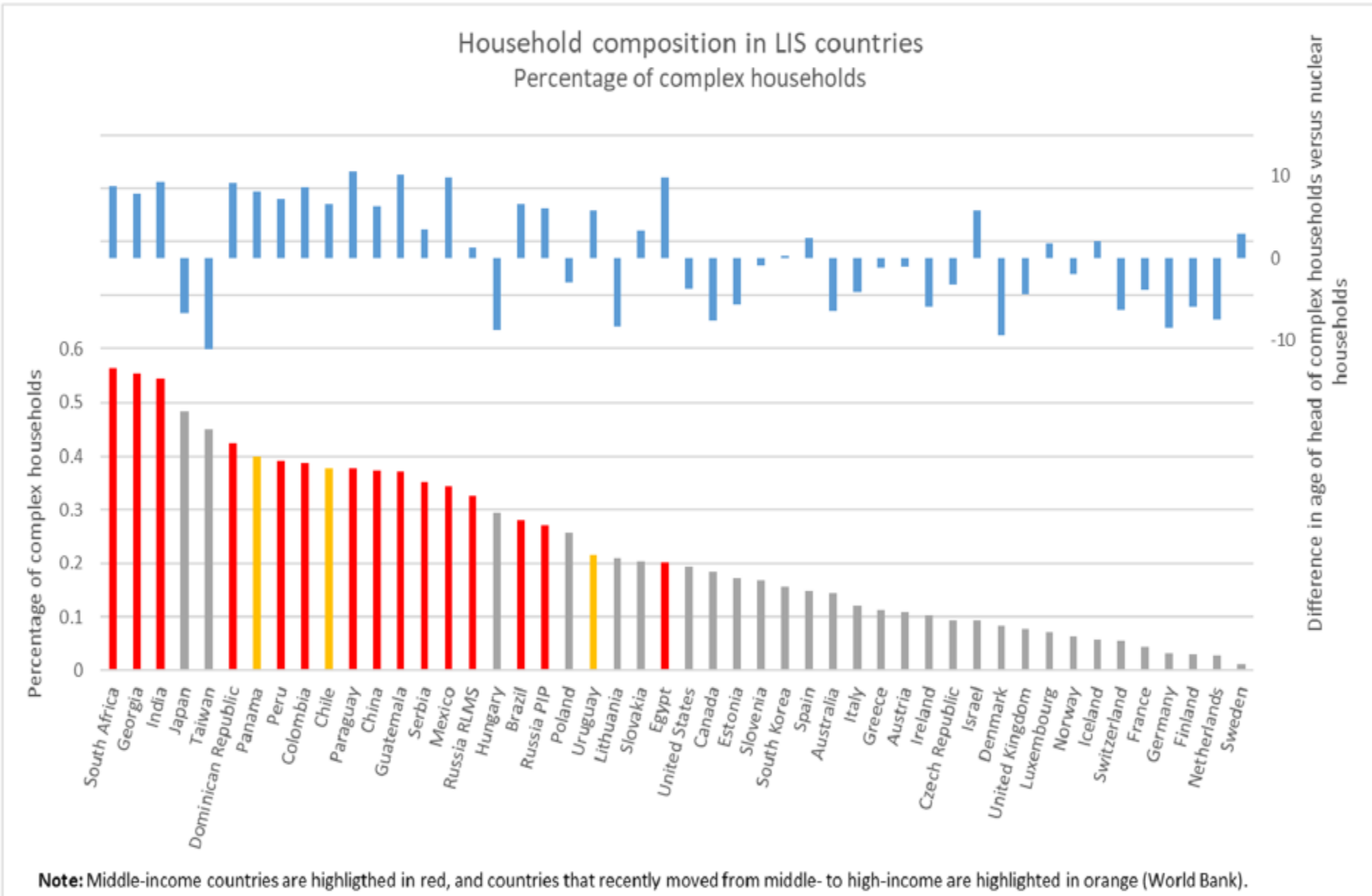


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Section 2 of LIS WP:

The challenges of  
harmonizing data  
from middle-income  
countries

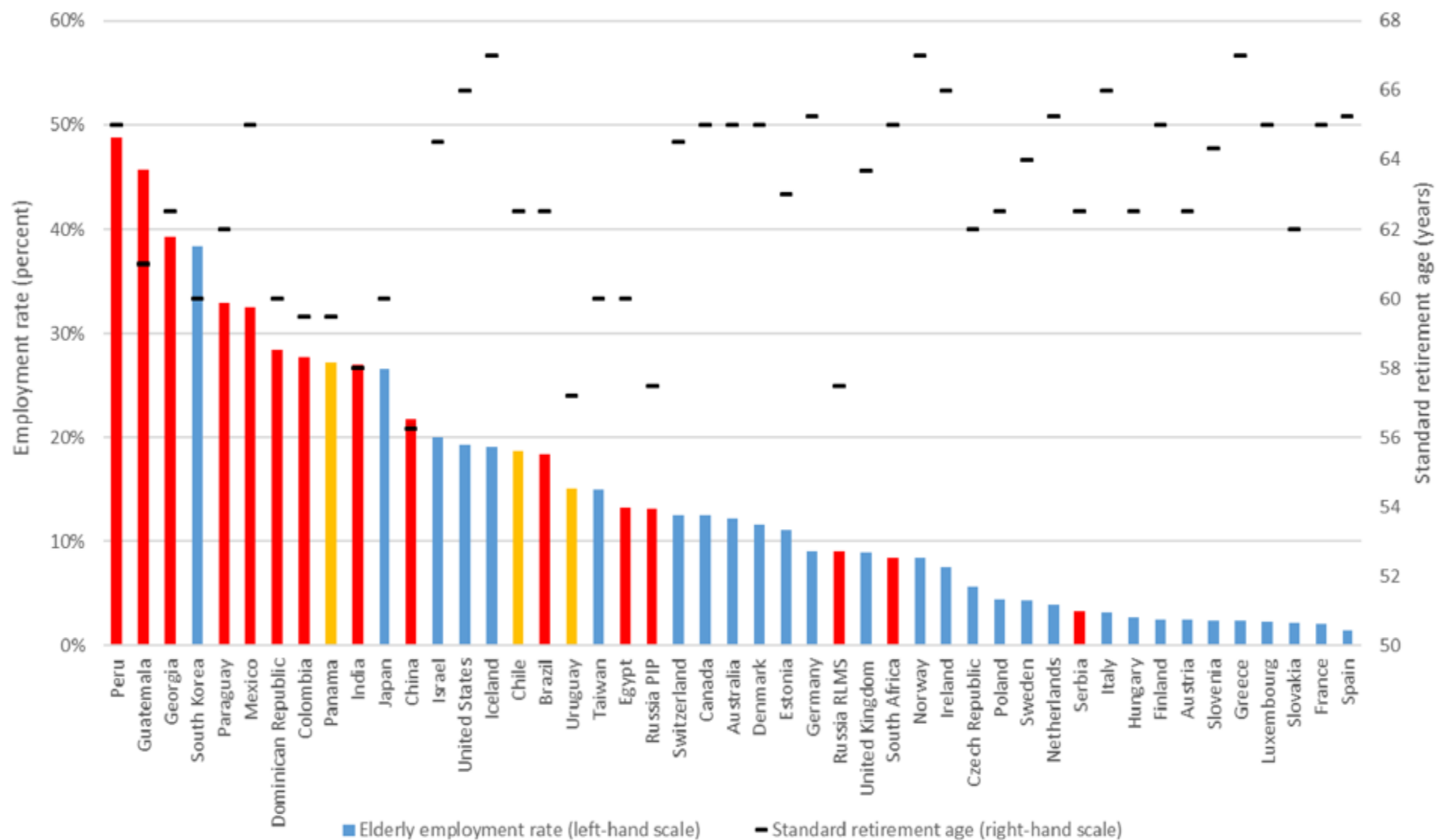
Figure 1: Household composition in LIS countries



Note: Middle-income countries are highlighted in red, and countries that recently moved from middle- to high-income are highlighted in orange (World Bank).

Source: authors, based on data from the LIS database.

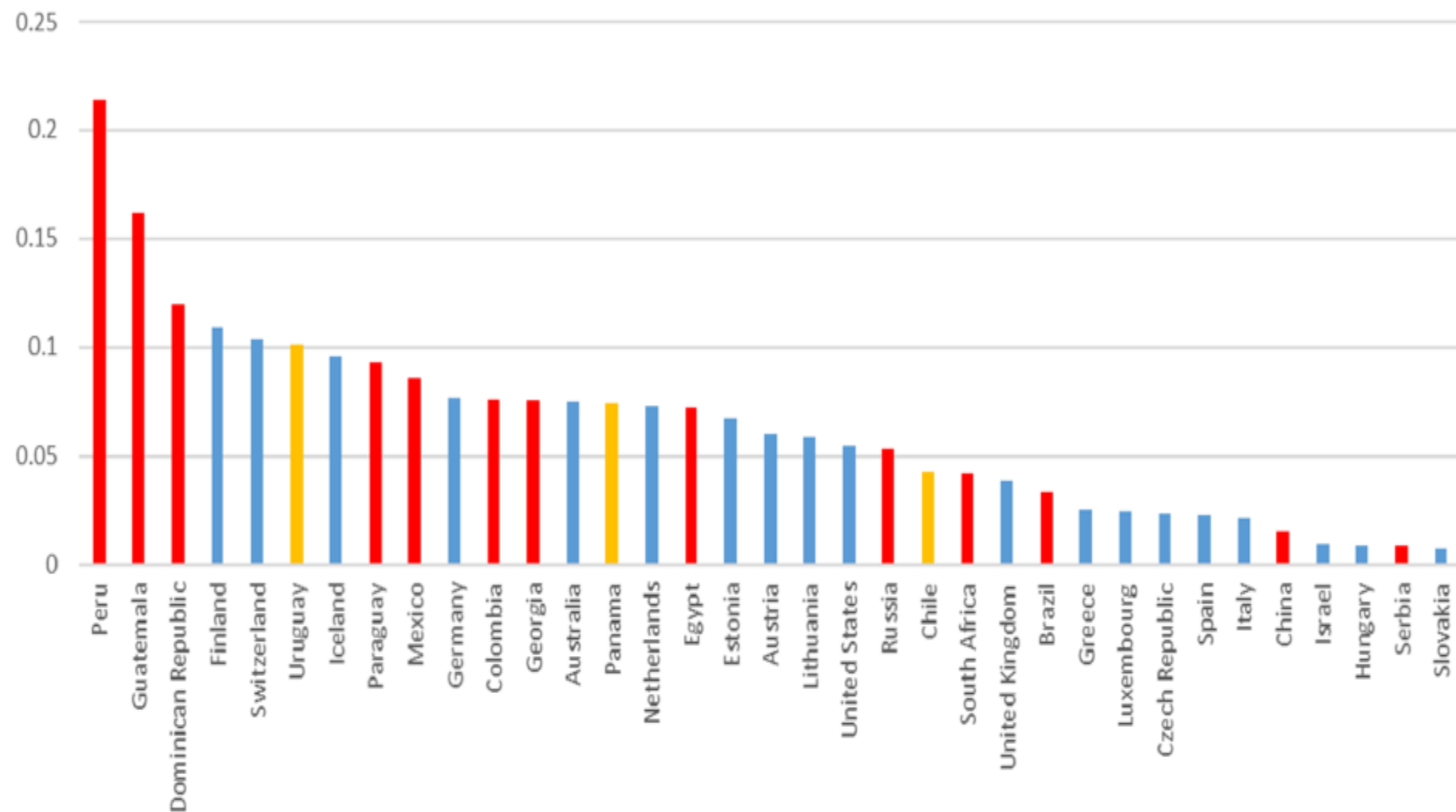
Figure 2: Employment among the elderly



Note: middle-income countries are highlighted in red, and countries that recently moved from middle- to high-income status (World Bank) are highlighted in orange.

Source: authors, based on data from the LIS database.

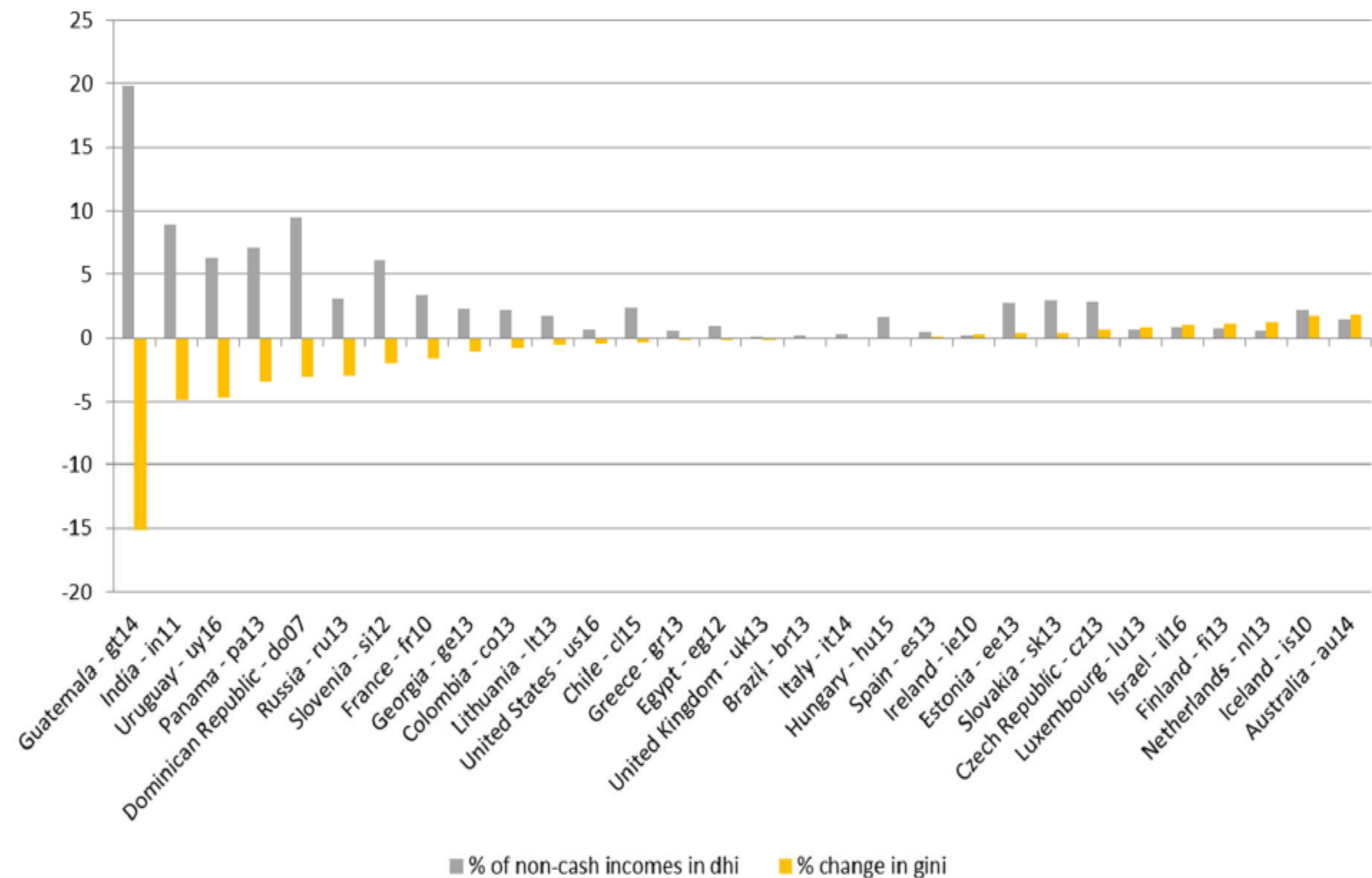
Figure 3: Extent of multiple jobs holders



Note: middle-income countries are highlighted in red, and countries that recently moved from middle- to high-income status (World Bank) are highlighted in orange.

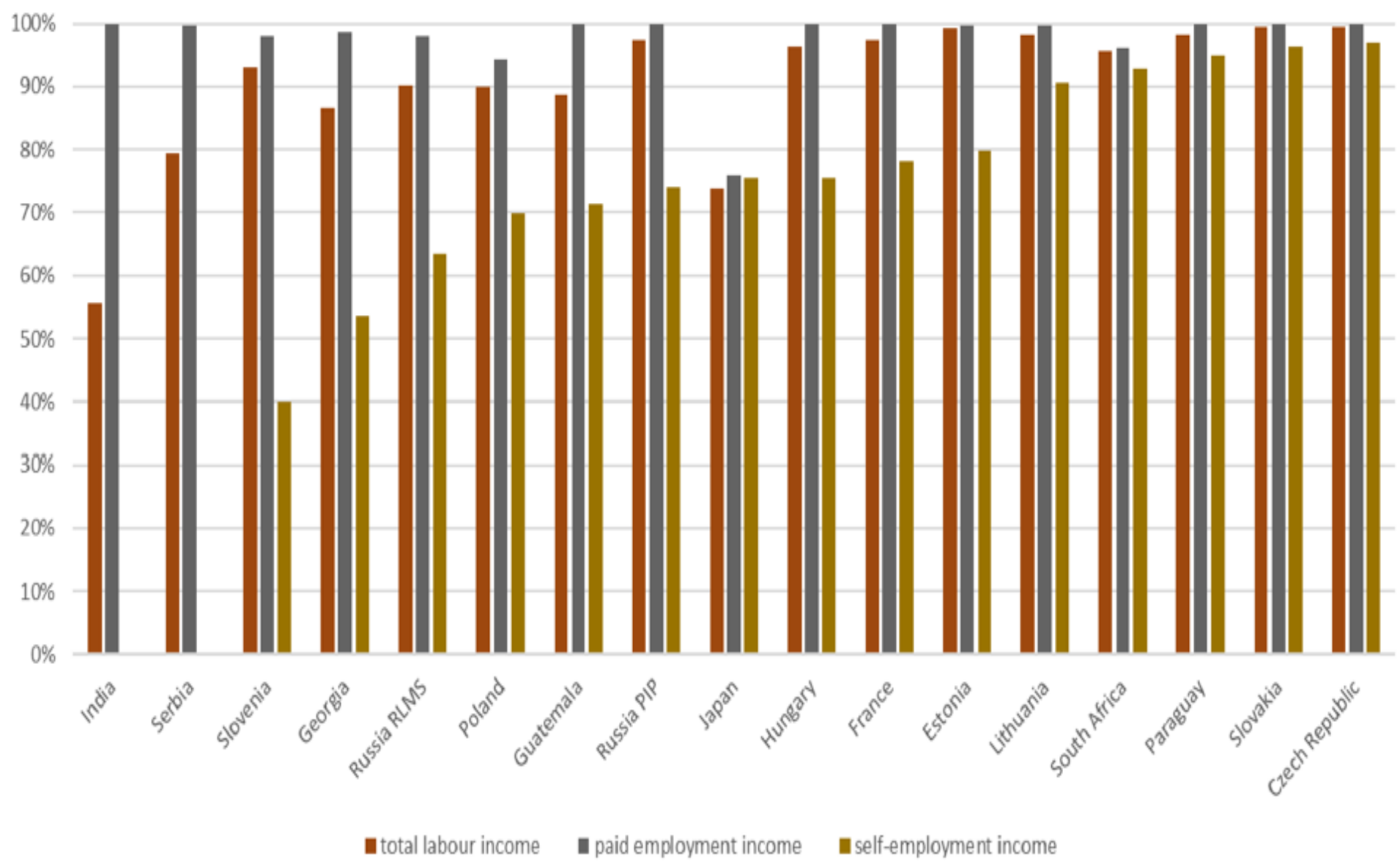
Source: authors, based on data from the LIS database.

Figure 4: Impact of non-monetary incomes



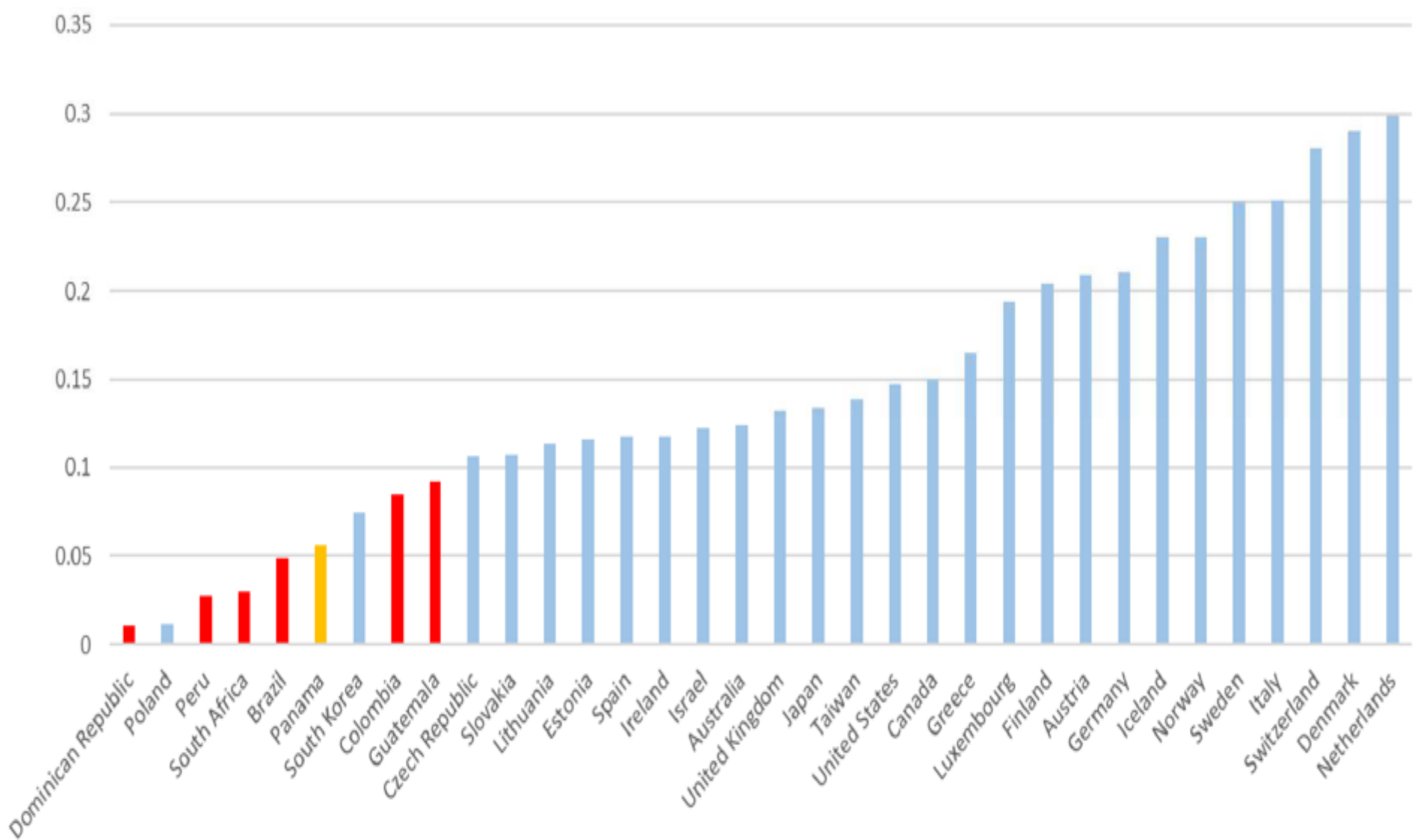
Source: authors, based on data from the LIS database.

Figure 5: Labour income availability at the individual level



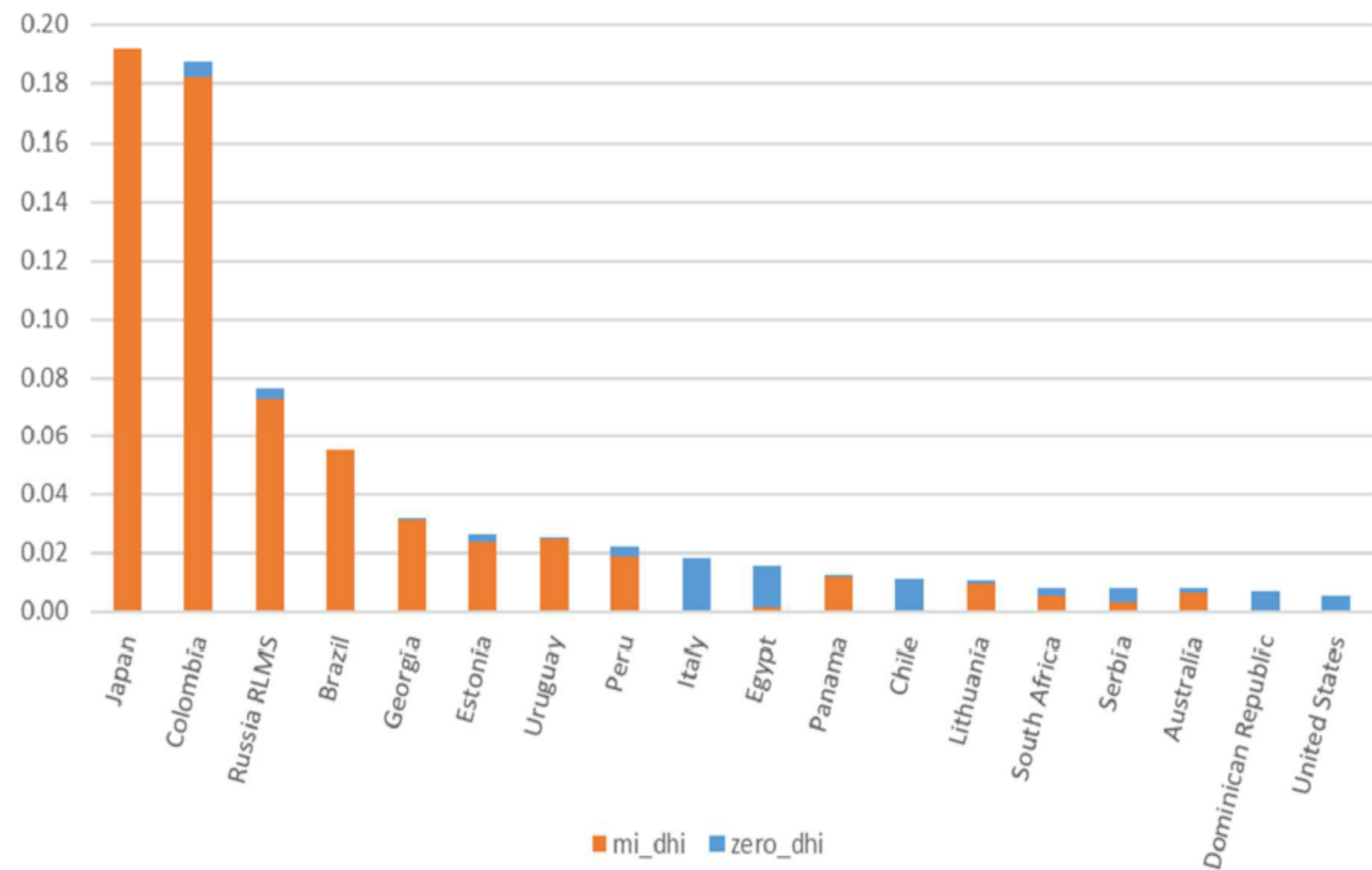
Source: authors, based on data from the LIS database.

Figure 6: Taxes and social security contributions as a percentage of total gross income



Source: authors, based on data from the LIS database.

Figure 7: Extent of missing or zero income



Source: authors, based on data from the LIS database.



# Thank you

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