

# Inequality, material well-being, and subjective well-being: Exploring associations for children across 15 diverse countries

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## Outline

- Background
- Data and methods
- Findings
- Conclusions

## Background: Material and subjective dimensions of well-being

- National wealth is associated with adult subjective well-being (Helliwell, Layard and Sachs, 2013)
- At a national level similar associations are found for children (Bradshaw et al, 2013)
- Micro-level studies of children find no, or only weak, associations between material and subjective well-being
  - Klocke et al (2014) – family affluence weakly associated, GDP not associated
  - The Children’s Society (2014) – family income poverty weakly associated
  - Knies (2011) and Rees et al (2011) – income and deprivation not associated
- Including children’s perspectives can shed some light on this
  - Qualitative enquiries indicate negative impacts of poverty on SWB (Ridge, 2002; Camfield, 2010)
  - Including children’s views in how deprivation is measured results in stronger associations (Main, 2013)

## Background: measuring child poverty

- Poverty and its effects are multidimensional
- Conceptions and measures can range in breadth
  - Income – narrow, unidimensional approach
  - Deprivation – broader, multidimensional approach
  - Capabilities – broader, multidimensional approach
- Importance of different levels of conception, measure, and analysis
  - Household-level conceptions, measured for example by household income, assume equitable distributions of household resources
  - Individual-level conceptions, measured for example by individual access to resources, allow for variations within households
  - Importance of considering whose perspectives are included in conceptualising and measuring child poverty

## Background: Material well-being in a diverse international context

- Children's Worlds covers diverse national contexts
- Availability of evidence around child poverty and child well-being stronger in Western countries
- Differences in material well-being between countries
  - Strongly divergent levels of wealth
  - Divergence in cultural and social norms and practices
- Problem: how to conceptualise and measure material well-being in a manner which accounts for national differences and allows cross-national comparisons
  - Theoretical concerns – how should material well-being be conceptualised?
  - Pragmatic concerns – what measures are suitable for child respondents?

## Questions

- Which (if any) indicators of children's financial and material living conditions are associated with their subjective well-being, across and within countries?
- How do such associations vary between different countries?

## Data

- Children's Worlds survey
- 10 and 12 year olds included in analysis
- 34,534 children across 15 diverse countries
- Samples drawn from children in mainstream education in each participating country

## Variables

- **Controls**
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Number of parents in child's household
  - Presence of siblings in child's household
  - Presence of grandparents in child's household
- **Predictors**
  - Level of material resources
    - Individual access to material resources
    - School mean of material resources
    - Country mean of material resources
    - GDP
  - Inequalities in access to material resources
    - School standard deviation in material resources
    - Country standard deviation in material resources
    - Gini coefficient
- **Outcome variable**
  - Personal Well-being Index (School Children)

## Findings: Access to resources

	Clothes	PC	Internet	Mobile	Room	Books	Car	Music
Algeria	2.62	46.83	54.97	60.26	62.8	27.95	40.99	54.79
Nepal	3.6	85.43	92.22	26.15	41.62	31.95	92.69	46.03
Estonia	0.41	2.69	2.12	4.27	28.1	4.47	12	11.52
Spain	1.84	5.78	7.38	41.35	17.18	10.17	12.05	13.35
Colombia	1.2	20.26	23.4	22.37	37.86	27.66	62.56	41.27
Turkey	4.8	18.71	23.8	61.16	34.29	10.46	42.03	43.91
Ethiopia	18.58	96.87	97.56	85.34	85.9	65.46	97.87	84.43
S Korea	1.07	4.25	3.23	9.81	12.58	4.73	7.84	9.34
Germany	1.97	15.45	9.65	8.26	10.54	20.56	7.28	4.96
England	0.32	5.67	2.98	14.72	17.03	9.45	9.62	4.93
Israel	1.5	5.89	6.94	21.31	31.77	7.69	8.79	18.98
Romania	0.79	13.44	20.01	17.57	36.3	11.63	40.06	12.91
Norway	0.22	1.9	0.81	2.15	6.6	3.5	2.7	1.4
Poland	1.06	2.38	3.75	5.28	7.89	13.81	10.89	9.4
S Africa	3.2	36.43	38.39	26.75	40.5	17.67	27.71	28.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.62</b>	<b>21.74</b>	<b>22.97</b>	<b>25.94</b>	<b>29.68</b>	<b>16.34</b>	<b>28.99</b>	<b>23.72</b>

## Findings: National material conditions

Country	Material resources	PWI-SC	GDP	Gini
Algeria	3.43	60.76	5360.7	<b>35.3*</b>
Colombia	2.38	64.56	7831.2	53.5
England	0.66	60.47	41787.5	32.3
Estonia	0.67	61.17	18783.1	32.7
Ethiopia	6.27	56.64	505	33.6
Germany	0.77	61.74	46268.6	30.6
Israel	0.9	63.25	36051.1	37.6
Nepal	3.96	56.19	694.1	32.8
Norway	0.2	63.39	100818.5	26.8
Poland	0.54	62.93	13648	32.8
Romania	1.51	65.5	9499.2	27.3
S Africa	2.24	58.09	6617.9	65
S Korea	0.49	57.49	25977	31.1
Spain	1.13	62.58	29863.2	35.8
Turkey	2.32	64.77	10971.7	40

## Findings: Correlations between material resources and SWB

	Individual	School
Algeria	-0.31	-0.09
Colombia	-0.22	-0.08
England	-0.24	0.02
Estonia	-0.31	-0.01
Ethiopia	-0.28	-0.14
Germany	-0.20	-0.01
Israel	-0.32	-0.02
Nepal	-0.13	-0.11
Norway	-0.21	-0.07
Poland	-0.27	-0.09
Romania	-0.27	-0.15
S Africa	-0.31	-0.13
S Korea	-0.15	0.07
Spain	-0.21	0.03
Turkey	-0.27	-0.06
<b>Overall</b>	<b>-0.22</b>	<b>-0.09</b>

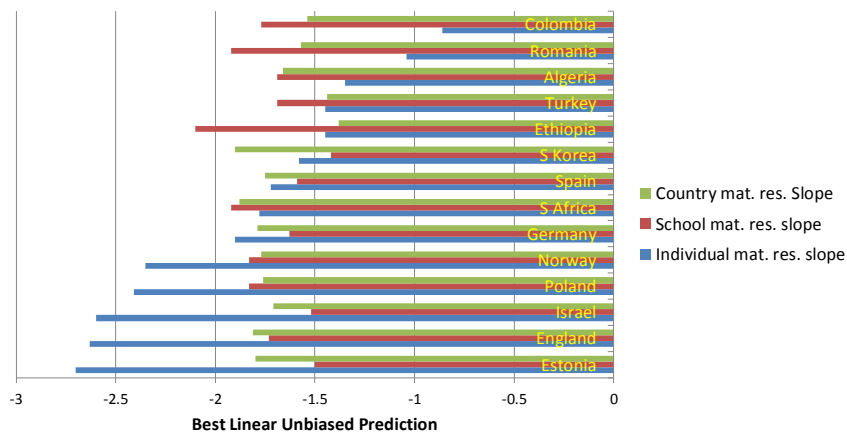
## Findings: Multilevel model

Individual level		
Age group (Ref: 10)		-2.03**
N parents (Ref: none)	1	0.90**
	2	2.28**
Material resources		-1.77**
Constant		62.9
Wald $\chi^2$		185.40**
$r^2$		0.06
School level		
School level: SD (CI)	Mat. res.	0.81 (0.57-1.15)
	School mat. res.	0.25 (0.04-1.45)
	School level	1.17 (0.74-1.87)
Country level		
Country level: SD (CI)	Mat. res.	0.66 (0.51-0.87)
	School mat. res.	0.36 (0.19-0.68)
	Country mat. res.	0.52 (0.14-1.89)
	Country level	2.48 (1.29-4.78)
Log likelihood		-104274

## Findings: Country intercepts and BLUPs

	Country intercept	Individual mat. res. slope	School mat. res. slope	Country mat. res. Slope
Algeria	63.65	-1.35	-1.69	-1.66
Colombia	65.19	-0.86	-1.77	-1.54
England	61.39	-2.63	-1.73	-1.81
Estonia	61.71	-2.70	-1.50	-1.80
Ethiopia	64.35	-1.45	-2.10	-1.38
Germany	62.37	-1.90	-1.63	-1.79
Israel	64.24	-2.60	-1.52	-1.71
Nepal	60.68	-0.72	-2.35	-2.15
Norway	63.02	-2.35	-1.83	-1.77
Poland	63.23	-2.41	-1.83	-1.76
Romania	66.02	-1.04	-1.92	-1.57
S Africa	61.77	-1.78	-1.92	-1.88
S Korea	56.92	-1.58	-1.42	-1.90
Spain	63.40	-1.72	-1.59	-1.75
Turkey	66.08	-1.45	-1.69	-1.44

## Findings: BLUPs



## Conclusions: Across countries

- No associations between national-level monetary indicators of material well-being and SWB
- No associations between indicators of inequality (school and country level) and SWB
- Stronger associations between material resources (individual, school and country level) indicators and SWB
- Confirms importance of indicators of child poverty which relate to children's direct experiences
- May suggest that children are more sensitive to 'absolute' levels of material resources available to them, than to comparisons between what they and other children have

## Conclusions: Between countries

- Magnitude of associations between material well-being and SWB varies between countries
- Importance of different levels of model vary between countries
  - Individual
  - School
  - Country



## Future considerations

- Contextual factors in comparative context
  - Which factors are important?
  - How to establish comparable and culturally appropriate measures?
- Measuring material well-being and child poverty
  - Variations in material living standards between countries
  - Variations in cultural contexts

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# Thank you!

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