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OXFORD DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Are children among the poorest?

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One recurrent question when presenting the MPI 2014 results is: and what about the children? To address this directly we could construct a child poverty measure, using indicators that capture the specific deprivations experienced by children and that are present in the DHS and MICS questionnaires. In fact, that work is already underway.[i] Yet we could also ask how many children live in a household that is multidimensionally poor according to the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) estimated by OPHI. The MPI includes indicators related directly with children (like child's nutrition and school attendance), but it is primarily a measure of poverty defined at the household level. So while the MPI does not focus on child poverty, we can observe how children are represented in multidimensionally poor households.
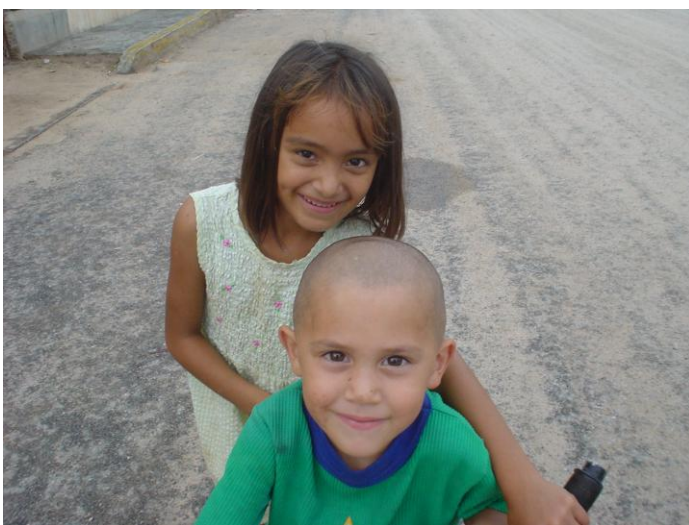
What is the Global MPI?

- The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is an **index of acute multidimensional poverty** that assesses the nature and intensity of poverty at the individual level, by **directly measuring the overlapping deprivations** poor people experience simultaneously.

- The 2014 MPI covers **108 countries** and **5.4 billion people**, disaggregated by 780 subnational regions. **Changes over time** are reported for 2.5 billion people. OPHI's databank is fully downloadable and provides a wealth of consistent statistics.

- The Global MPI covers **10 indicators** of health, education and living standards. For details, see www.ophi.org.uk/multidimensional-poverty-index.

- A person is **multidimensionally poor** if they are deprived in at least one third of the dimensions.

- The MPI is calculated by multiplying the **incidence** of poverty by the average **intensity** of poverty across the poor; as a result it reflects both the share of people in poverty and the degree to which they are deprived.

Using a sample of countries for which MPI was recently updated, this note compares the age structure of the population and the age structure of the poor.[ii] The table with the countries, year of the survey, level of poverty and age group shares in population and among MPI poor, can be found at the end of this note.

MORE ON THE OPHI WEBSITE
For more information, visit the Global MPI Interactive Databank at www.ophi.org.uk/multidimensional-poverty-index.

First, we found that there seems to be a relationship between multidimensional poverty and the age structure of a country. Figure 1 plots the population shares of different age groups in the population for our set of countries.[iii] The countries are ordered from the one with lowest poverty level, Serbia, to the one with the highest level, Niger. The figure shows that countries with highest levels of MPI tend to have a higher proportion of children under 10 years old, and a lower share of adults across the population. This probably reflects that poorer countries are in earlier stages of demographic transition.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of people who are poor and who belong to each age group. Although there is variation, the gap between the share of adults and the share of children under 10 among the poor tends to be smaller in poorer countries. In Niger and Uganda, children under 10 are the age group with the highest share among the poor, representing around 40 percent of the MPI poor.

Figure 1: Age structure of population

Figure 2: Demographic distribution of MPI poor by age categories

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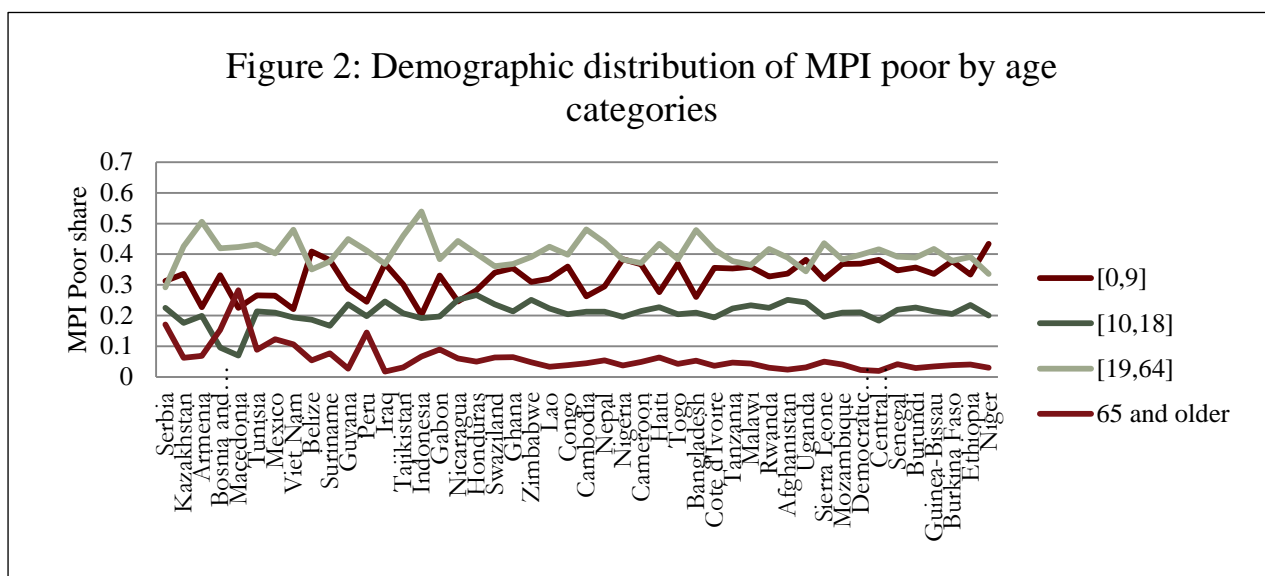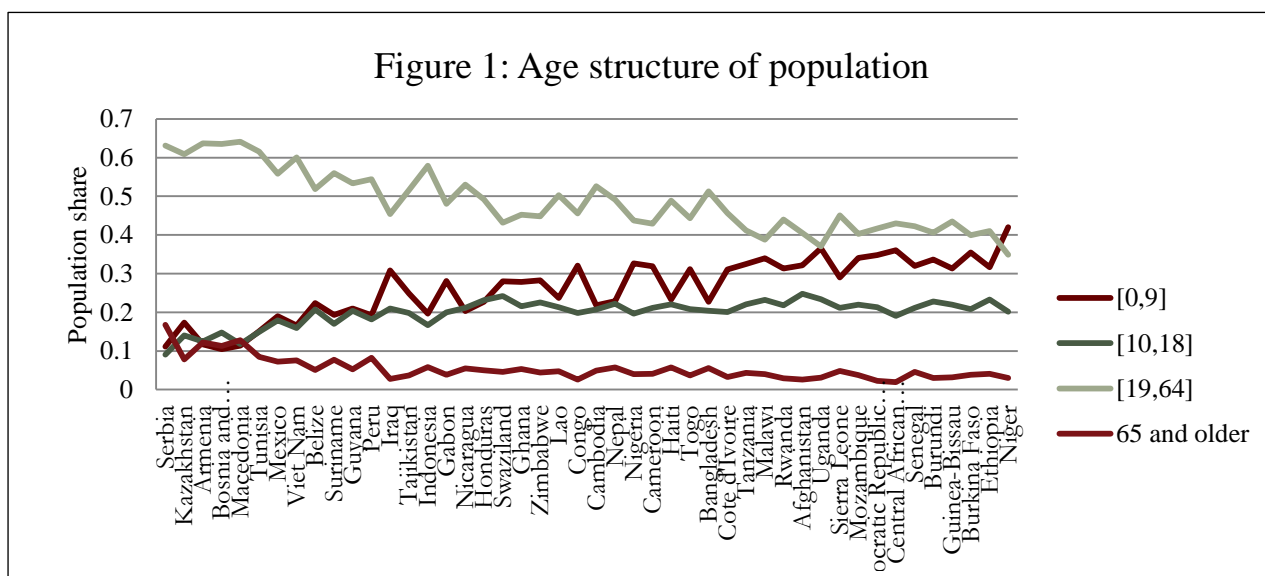
Combining the information from the two graphs above and focusing on the children under 10 (Figure 3), we find that **in all countries analyzed, children are over-represented among the poor**. This is due to the fact that in practically all countries the average number and share of children under 10 years old is higher in poor households than in non-poor households.[iv] The extent of the over-representation seems to be related to the level of poverty. In countries with lower levels of poverty the concentration of children in poor households seems to be higher.

These findings suggest that children are especially likely to be poor: first, because they mostly live in countries with higher levels of poverty; second, because they mostly live in poor households.

Figure 3: Shares of children under 10
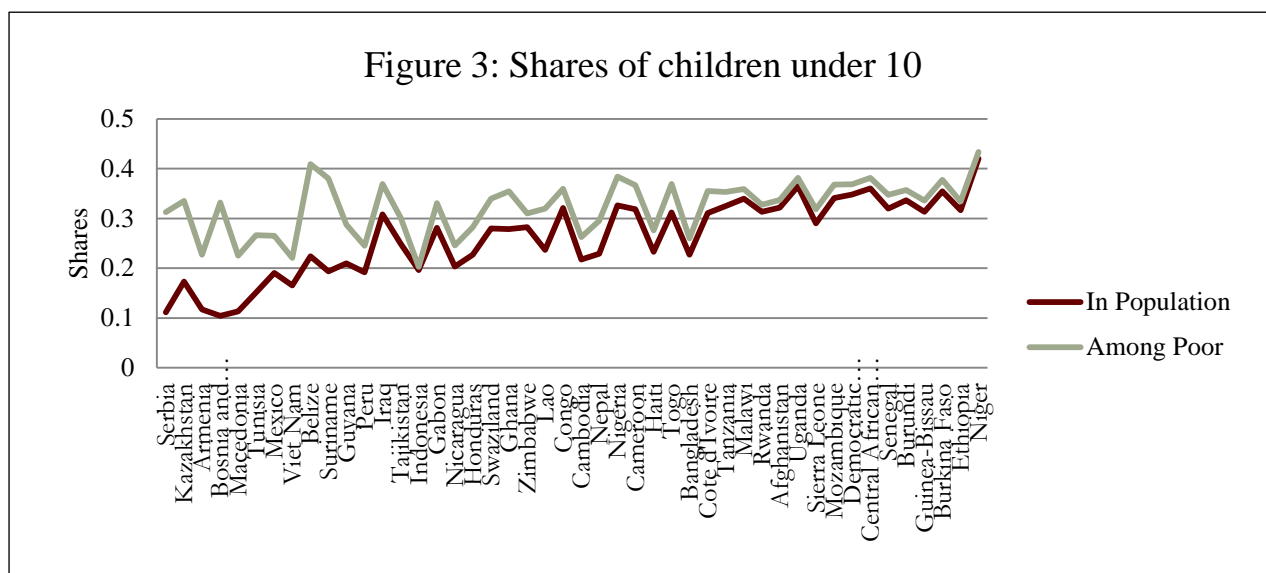
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ENDNOTES

[i] See De Neubourg et al. (2012), Alkire and Roche (2012), and Roche (2013).

[ii] See Alkire and Santos (2014) for a discussion of the relationship between the size and composition of a household, and its probability of being identified as poor.

[iii] The population shares were computed using the same survey and sample that was used to compute the Global MPI.

[iv] In all countries the average number of children under 10 is always higher in poor households than in non-poor households. This difference, however, is not statistically significant in Serbia and Macedonia. The average share of children under 10 is also higher in poor households than in non-poor households in all countries except Indonesia.

Table Distribution of MPI Poor by Age Group

The table presents the age groups' shares in populationand among the poor people for 46 countries. These countries are sorted by low to high according to the OPHI's Multidimensional Poverty Index.

Country	MPI data source		Multidimensional poverty		Share of age groups in population				Share of age groups among poor people				Average no. of household members aged under 10		Share of no. of household members aged under 10	
	Survey	Year	Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI = H*A)	Headcount Ratio (H)	[0;10[	[10;19[	[19;65[	[65;...[	[0;10[	[10;19[	[19;65[	[65;...[	Non-poor households	Poor households	Non-poor households	Poor households
			Range 0 to 1	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%				
Serbia	MICS	2010	0.000	0.1%	11.1%	9.0%	63.1%	16.7%	31.3%	22.5%	29.2%	17.0%	0.36	1.15	7.6%	14.1%
Kazakhstan	MICS	2011	0.001	0.2%	17.3%	14.0%	60.9%	7.8%	33.5%	17.6%	42.6%	6.3%	0.59	1.93	12.1%	27.5%
Armenia	DHS	2010	0.001	0.3%	11.7%	12.4%	63.7%	12.2%	22.7%	19.9%	50.6%	6.9%	0.41	1.26	7.9%	22.0%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	MICS	2012	0.002	0.5%	10.4%	14.7%	63.5%	11.3%	33.2%	9.6%	41.9%	15.3%	0.36	1.34	7.9%	24.7%
Macedonia	MICS	2011	0.002	0.7%	11.3%	11.8%	64.1%	12.8%	22.5%	6.9%	42.3%	28.2%	0.41	0.65	8.2%	13.1%
Tunisia	MICS	2012	0.004	1.2%	15.1%	14.9%	61.5%	8.5%	26.6%	21.4%	43.2%	8.8%	0.62	1.10	13.1%	20.2%
Mexico	ENSANUT	2012	0.011	2.8%	19.0%	17.9%	55.8%	7.2%	26.5%	20.9%	40.3%	12.3%	0.73	0.98	15.4%	18.6%
Viet Nam	MICS	2011	0.017	4.2%	16.6%	15.9%	60.0%	7.5%	22.1%	19.4%	48.0%	10.6%	0.62	0.81	14.1%	16.7%
Belize	MICS	2011	0.018	4.6%	22.4%	20.7%	51.8%	5.0%	40.9%	18.6%	35.1%	5.4%	0.82	2.17	16.1%	30.6%
Suriname	MICS	2010	0.024	5.9%	19.3%	17.0%	56.0%	7.7%	38.0%	16.6%	37.7%	7.7%	0.69	1.51	13.3%	29.4%
Guyana	DHS	2009	0.030	7.7%	21.0%	20.4%	53.4%	5.3%	28.8%	23.6%	44.9%	2.7%	0.76	1.39	15.4%	22.8%
Peru	DHS-Cont	2012	0.043	10.5%	19.2%	18.1%	54.4%	8.2%	24.5%	19.8%	41.2%	14.5%	0.71	0.83	15.1%	15.3%
Iraq	MICS	2011	0.045	11.6%	30.8%	21.0%	45.4%	2.8%	36.9%	24.6%	36.8%	1.7%	1.91	3.16	28.5%	37.3%
Tajikistan	DHS	2012	0.054	13.2%	24.9%	19.8%	51.6%	3.7%	30.1%	20.7%	46.0%	3.1%	1.47	2.46	21.2%	28.2%
Indonesia	DHS	2012	0.066	15.5%	19.6%	16.7%	57.9%	5.8%	20.2%	19.1%	53.9%	6.7%	0.78	0.82	16.9%	16.0%
Gabon	DHS	2012	0.070	16.5%	28.1%	20.0%	48.0%	3.9%	33.1%	19.7%	38.4%	8.9%	1.06	1.63	19.2%	22.8%
Nicaragua	DHS	2012	0.072	16.1%	20.3%	21.1%	53.1%	5.5%	24.6%	25.1%	44.3%	6.0%	0.87	1.14	17.2%	21.0%
Honduras	DHS	2012	0.072	15.8%	22.7%	23.1%	49.2%	5.0%	28.2%	26.7%	40.1%	5.0%	0.94	1.43	18.9%	24.3%
Swaziland	MICS	2010	0.086	20.4%	28.0%	24.2%	43.2%	4.6%	33.9%	23.7%	36.1%	6.3%	1.10	1.62	19.8%	26.9%
Ghana	MICS	2011	0.139	30.4%	27.9%	21.5%	45.2%	5.4%	35.4%	21.4%	36.8%	6.4%	0.88	1.66	18.2%	28.9%
Zimbabwe	DHS	2011	0.172	39.1%	28.2%	22.6%	44.8%	4.4%	31.0%	25.1%	39.1%	4.8%	1.01	1.48	21.8%	27.6%

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	Survey	Year	Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI = H*A)	Headcount Ratio (H)	[0;10[	[10;19[	[19;65[	[65;..[	[0;10[	[10;19[	[19;65[	[65;..[	Non-poor households	Poor households	Non-poor households	Poor households
			Range 0 to 1	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%				
Lao	MICS/DHS	2012	0.174	34.1%	23.7%	21.3%	50.3%	4.8%	32.0%	22.3%	42.4%	3.3%	0.94	1.88	17.6%	29.4%
Congo	DHS	2012	0.181	39.7%	32.1%	19.8%	45.5%	2.6%	36.0%	20.4%	39.9%	3.8%	1.24	1.76	24.0%	29.6%
Cambodia	DHS	2010	0.212	45.9%	21.8%	20.8%	52.6%	4.9%	26.3%	21.2%	48.1%	4.4%	0.85	1.24	16.4%	24.1%
Nepal	DHS	2011	0.217	44.2%	22.9%	22.2%	49.2%	5.7%	29.5%	21.3%	43.8%	5.3%	0.74	1.35	15.7%	25.6%
Nigeria	MICS	2011	0.240	43.3%	32.7%	19.6%	43.7%	4.0%	38.4%	19.6%	38.2%	3.7%	1.28	2.22	23.4%	32.7%
Cameroon	DHS	2011	0.248	46.0%	31.9%	21.2%	42.9%	4.1%	36.7%	21.4%	37.1%	4.8%	1.29	2.14	21.3%	30.3%
Haiti	DHS	2012	0.248	49.4%	23.3%	22.1%	48.9%	5.8%	27.6%	22.7%	43.4%	6.3%	0.82	1.22	16.0%	22.1%
Togo	MICS	2010	0.250	49.8%	31.2%	20.8%	44.3%	3.7%	36.9%	20.4%	38.4%	4.3%	1.11	1.96	20.9%	31.5%
Bangladesh	DHS	2011	0.253	51.3%	22.7%	20.4%	51.3%	5.6%	26.0%	20.9%	47.8%	5.2%	0.87	1.21	17.7%	23.8%
Cote d'Ivoire	DHS	2012	0.310	58.7%	31.0%	20.0%	45.6%	3.3%	35.5%	19.3%	41.5%	3.6%	1.14	1.97	19.2%	29.6%
Tanzania	DHS	2010	0.332	65.6%	32.5%	22.1%	41.1%	4.3%	35.3%	22.3%	37.7%	4.7%	1.19	1.89	22.4%	30.2%
Malawi	DHS	2010	0.334	66.7%	34.0%	23.2%	38.8%	4.0%	35.9%	23.4%	36.5%	4.3%	1.30	1.70	26.3%	31.5%
Rwanda	DHS	2010	0.350	69.0%	31.3%	21.8%	44.0%	3.0%	32.8%	22.5%	41.7%	3.0%	1.20	1.48	24.1%	28.9%
Afghanistan	MICS	2011	0.353	66.2%	32.2%	24.8%	40.5%	2.6%	33.7%	25.1%	38.9%	2.3%	2.18	2.67	28.0%	33.1%
Uganda	DHS	2011	0.367	69.9%	36.5%	23.4%	37.0%	3.1%	38.2%	24.3%	34.4%	3.1%	1.34	1.98	25.6%	33.2%
Sierra Leone	MICS	2010	0.388	72.5%	29.0%	21.1%	45.1%	4.8%	31.8%	19.5%	43.6%	5.0%	1.17	1.92	18.7%	30.3%
Mozambique	DHS	2011	0.389	69.6%	34.1%	21.9%	40.2%	3.7%	36.8%	21.0%	38.2%	4.0%	1.22	1.60	23.0%	30.2%
Democratic Republic of Congo	MICS	2010	0.392	74.0%	34.8%	21.3%	41.7%	2.3%	36.9%	21.1%	39.8%	2.3%	1.56	1.96	25.0%	33.1%
Central African Republic	MICS	2010	0.430	77.6%	36.1%	19.0%	43.0%	1.9%	38.1%	18.3%	41.6%	1.9%	1.36	1.82	23.9%	32.1%
Senegal	DHS	2011	0.439	74.4%	32.0%	21.2%	42.2%	4.6%	34.7%	21.9%	39.2%	4.2%	1.78	3.67	20.7%	32.7%
Burundi	DHS	2010	0.454	80.8%	33.7%	22.8%	40.6%	3.0%	35.7%	22.6%	38.9%	2.9%	1.18	1.72	21.9%	31.5%
Guinea-Bissau	MICS	2006	0.462	77.5%	31.3%	22.0%	43.5%	3.2%	33.6%	21.3%	41.7%	3.4%	1.74	2.67	23.3%	32.6%
Burkina Faso	DHS	2010	0.535	84.0%	35.5%	20.8%	39.9%	3.8%	37.7%	20.5%	37.9%	3.8%	1.07	2.22	19.7%	33.3%
Ethiopia	DHS	2011	0.564	87.3%	31.7%	23.3%	41.0%	4.0%	33.4%	23.4%	39.1%	4.0%	0.69	1.63	14.9%	29.3%
Niger	DHS	2012	0.605	89.3%	42.0%	20.2%	34.8%	3.0%	43.4%	20.0%	33.6%	3.0%	1.52	2.62	26.0%	39.1%