

Explore different methods for representing and presenting information about poverty.

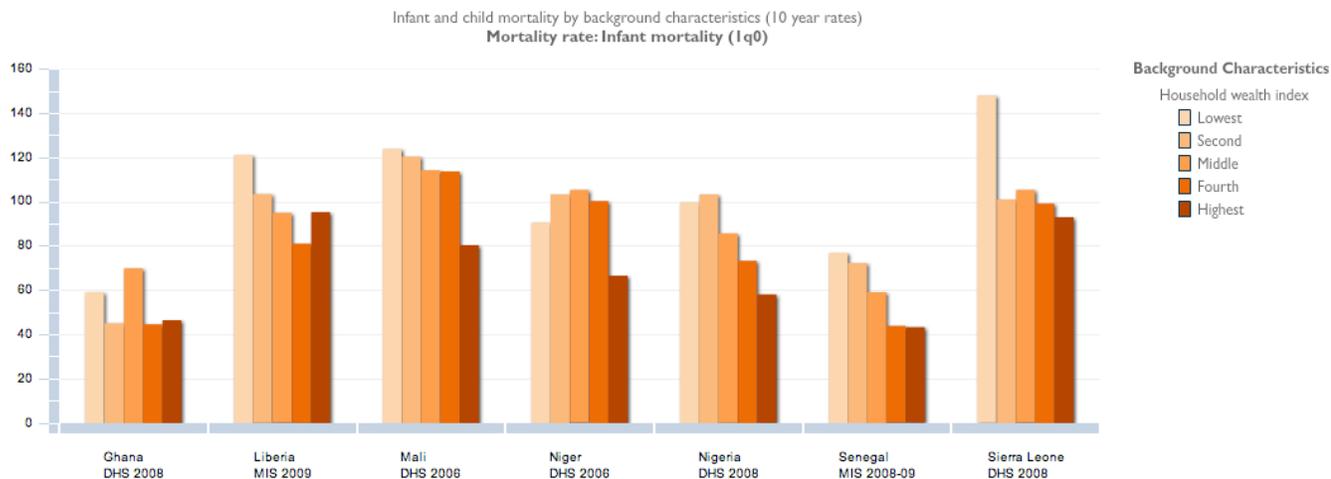


Fig. 1: Child Mortality (by Household Wealth Index)

As a measure of poverty, child mortality is generally seen to be quite effective. This is because many of the contributing factors of child mortality such as malnutrition, poor hygiene and a lack of access to safe water are highly preventable given adequate financial resources. For instance, comparing between developed countries and developing countries, it is undeniable that the former has significantly lower child mortality rates than the latter. However, when comparing across developing countries, namely western African countries, there is evidence that household wealth is not as effective an indicator of child mortality rates as assumed. From Fig. 1, a trend in which child mortality rates drop off with the increase of household wealth is only discernable in an underwhelming two (Nigeria and Senegal) of the seven countries.

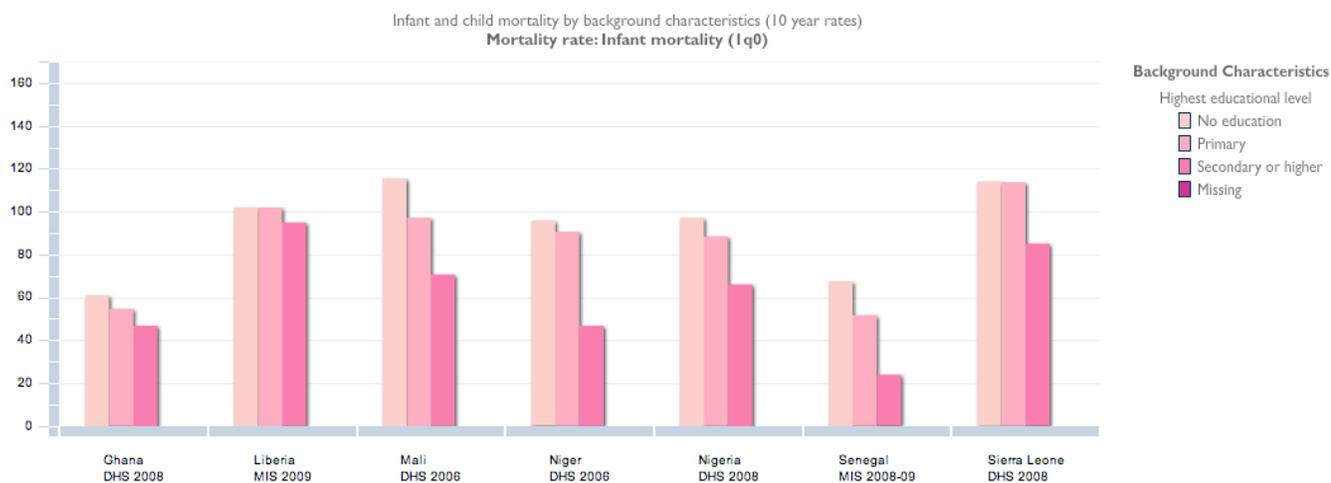


Fig. 2: Child Mortality (by Educational Level)

Conversely, filtering child mortality by educational level yields a much more consistent trend. With the exception of Liberia and Sierra Leone, the other five countries display a strong trend of mortality rates decreasing with the increase in educational level. This points to the fact that poverty and child mortality are perhaps not as closely interlinked insofar that poverty is defined and measured solely by household wealth. Rather, while the financial wealth of a household and that of a country – as demonstrated by the social services it provides its citizens – have an obvious impact on preventing child mortality, they must be coupled with other factors such as education on how to care for children. One may argue that education itself is closely correlated with household wealth and so looking at household wealth should suffice; however, as the two graphs show, this is not necessarily the case and a conscientious effort to disentangle the two should be taken.