Multidimensional Poverty Research at the University of Bristol

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Director, Bristol Poverty Institute
Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research

DFID visit to the Jean Golding Institute
Enderby Room
Physics Building
University of Bristol

31st January 2018
Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK
Every decade since the late 1960s, UK social scientists have attempted to carry out an independent poverty survey to test out new ideas and incorporate current state of the art methods into UK poverty research.

- **1968-69 Poverty in the UK survey** (Peter Townsend et al, 1979),
- **1983 Poor Britain survey** (Mack & Lansley, 1985)
- **1990 Breadline Britain survey** (Gordon & Pantazis, 1997)
- **2012 Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK** (Gordon et al, 2013)
ITV Tonight, March 28, 2013 – 3.4 million viewers

A special edition based on the PSE findings
www.poverty.ac.uk
The national academic Poverty Research web resource

- Making results accessible
- Making data interactive
- Providing detailed analysis papers
- And onwards...
Promoting key findings

18% of households have a constant struggle to keep up with their bills or have fallen behind.

Download the annotated 2012 living standards questionnaire

Hard times: 2014
The Hard Times reports provide evidence gathered by communities themselves on the impact of austerity and cuts on families and young people across Northern Ireland. Watch the accompanying films on home

3rd Peter Townsend Memorial...
Today 33% of the UK population suffer from multiple deprivation as defined by the UK public; in 1983 this figure was 14%. The 3rd Peter Townsend Memorial Conference: Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK will be held in London, 19 - 20

Poverty in Scotland 2014: The...
Making key findings accessible to general audience

Falling below minimum standards

At a glance

PSE: UK 2012 is the most comprehensive survey of poverty and social exclusion ever undertaken in the UK. The research finds that about a third of households in the UK today face significant difficulties, specifically:

- Around 4 million people are not properly fed by today’s standards.
- Around 2.5 million children live in homes that are damp.
- Around 2.3 million households cannot afford to heat the living areas of their homes.
- Over 30 million people suffer from financial insecurity.

The public sets the minimum living standard

The Poverty and Social Exclusion (PSE) research measures the numbers of people who fall below what the population as a whole think should be a minimum standard of living.

This is the only measure looking at both: what the majority think are necessities for life in the UK today, and actual living standards (rather than just income).


This first PSE Facts and Findings looks at the numbers lacking necessities in 2012. PSE Facts and Findings
Making data interactive and visual

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<td>Warm coat</td>
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<td>Three meals daily</td>
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<td>Enough bedrooms</td>
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<td>Celebrations</td>
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<td>Washing machine</td>
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<td>Two pairs shoes</td>
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<td>Annual holiday</td>
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<td>Repair electrics</td>
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<td>Fruit and veg daily</td>
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<td>Money for self</td>
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The work is considered technically as providing a "gold standard" for the list of MD variables and indicator's construction and has unanimous support.

Eurostat Task Force on Material Deprivation (2011)
Final list: 13 items that successfully passed all five sets of tests

Child Deprivations
- Some new clothes (M)
- Two pairs of shoes (M)
- Fresh fruits & vegetables daily (M)
- Three meals a day (M)
- Meat, chicken, fish daily (M)
- Suitable books (M)
- Outdoor leisure equipment (M)
- Indoor games (M)
- Place to do homework (M)
- Dentist when needed (M - optional)
- GP when needed (M - optional)
- Leisure activities (M)
- Celebrations (M)
- To invite friends (M)
- School trips (M)
- Outdoor space to play (M)
- Holiday (M - optional)

Housing Deprivations
- No hot running water (M)
- Shortage of space
- Darkness
- Leaky roof, damp, etc.
- No toilet
- No bath
- Overcrowding
- High housing costs

Local Environment Deprivations
- Litter lying around (M)
- Vandalism (M)
- Diff access to public transport (M)
- Diff access to post, banks (M)
- Noise
- Pollution
- Crime

Adult Deprivations (enforced lack)
- Some new Clothes (M)
- Two pairs of shoes (M)
- Some money for oneself (M)
- Mobile phone (M)
- Drink/meal monthly (M)
- Leisure activities (M)

Household Deprivations
- Incapacity to keep home warm
- Arrears
- Incapacity to face unexp. expenses
- Lack of meat, chicken, fish
- Lack of Holiday

Enforced lack of:
- Telephone
- Colour TV
- Washing machine
- Car
- Internet (M) & Computer
- Worn-out furniture (M)
Child Poverty in the Developing World UK Media Coverage

The Guardian

The greatest catastrophe

Blighted childhood

The facts

1 in 6 children is severely hungry; one in seven has no health care at all; one in five has no safe water and one in three has no toilet or sanitation facilities at home.

Over 640,000 children live in dwellings with mud floors or extreme overcrowding.

Over 120,000 children are shut out of primary schools, the majority of them girls.

180,000 children work in the worst forms of child labour.

1.2 million children are trafficked each year.

2 million children, mostly girls, are exploited in the sex industry.

Nearly half of the 3.6 million people killed in conflict during the 1990s (45%) were children.

The Independent

One billion children at risk from war, poverty and hunger.

Howard Jacobson: I defend my right to be rude and offensive.

1,000,000,000

One billion children are at risk today from war, poverty and hunger, failed by the world's governments.
• Americas and the Caribbean: Bolivia, Brazil, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua
• Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States: Kosovo, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan
• Eastern and Southern Africa: Burundi, Indian Ocean Islands, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe
• East Asia and the Pacific: Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Viet Nam, Vanuatu
• Middle East and North Africa: Djibouti, Egypt, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Yemen
• South Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka
• West and Central Africa: Cameroon, Congo DR, Congo, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo
Our research

“transformed the way UNICEF and many of its partners understood and measured the poverty suffered by children.... [It] has exposed policy-makers all over the world to a new understanding of child poverty and inequalities. As a consequence, children are more visible in poverty reduction policies and debates”

(UNICEF Press Release 2009)
Examples of Impact

**China**: Chinese Government’s Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development now focusing on child poverty; a child poverty target was incorporated into the 2011-2020 National Rural Poverty Reduction Strategy, this will benefit some of China’s 322 million children;

**Mozambique**: The Mozambique Government has approved a Children's Act and translated the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into national legislation. It has invested in education and health, reducing the proportion of children experiencing deprivation and, in 2010, introduced the Basic Social Protection Strategy. In 2013, UNICEF's Senior Social Policy Specialist reported that our research has led to increased Government budgets for programmes to deal with child poverty.

**Mali**, the study results were instrumental in helping to convene the first national forum on poverty which led to the formulation of an action plan on social protection and the Government of Mali establishing a mandatory health insurance policy and a healthcare assistance fund for the poorest 5% of the population;

**Tanzania**, the study directly influenced the government to develop and pass the Law of the Child Act at the end of 2009, which provides a legislative framework for reducing child poverty and fulfilling child rights.

**Haiti**: provided the first ever data on child poverty in Haiti, which used in the 2008 Haitian National Poverty Reduction Strategy. Following the 2010 earthquake, the data were used by international agencies, including UNICEF in its *Humanitarian Action Report 2010 Partnering for Children in Emergencies*. 