

Educational level as a key predictor of human wellbeing

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WITTGENSTEIN CENTRE CONFERENCE

DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS OF HUMAN WELLBEING



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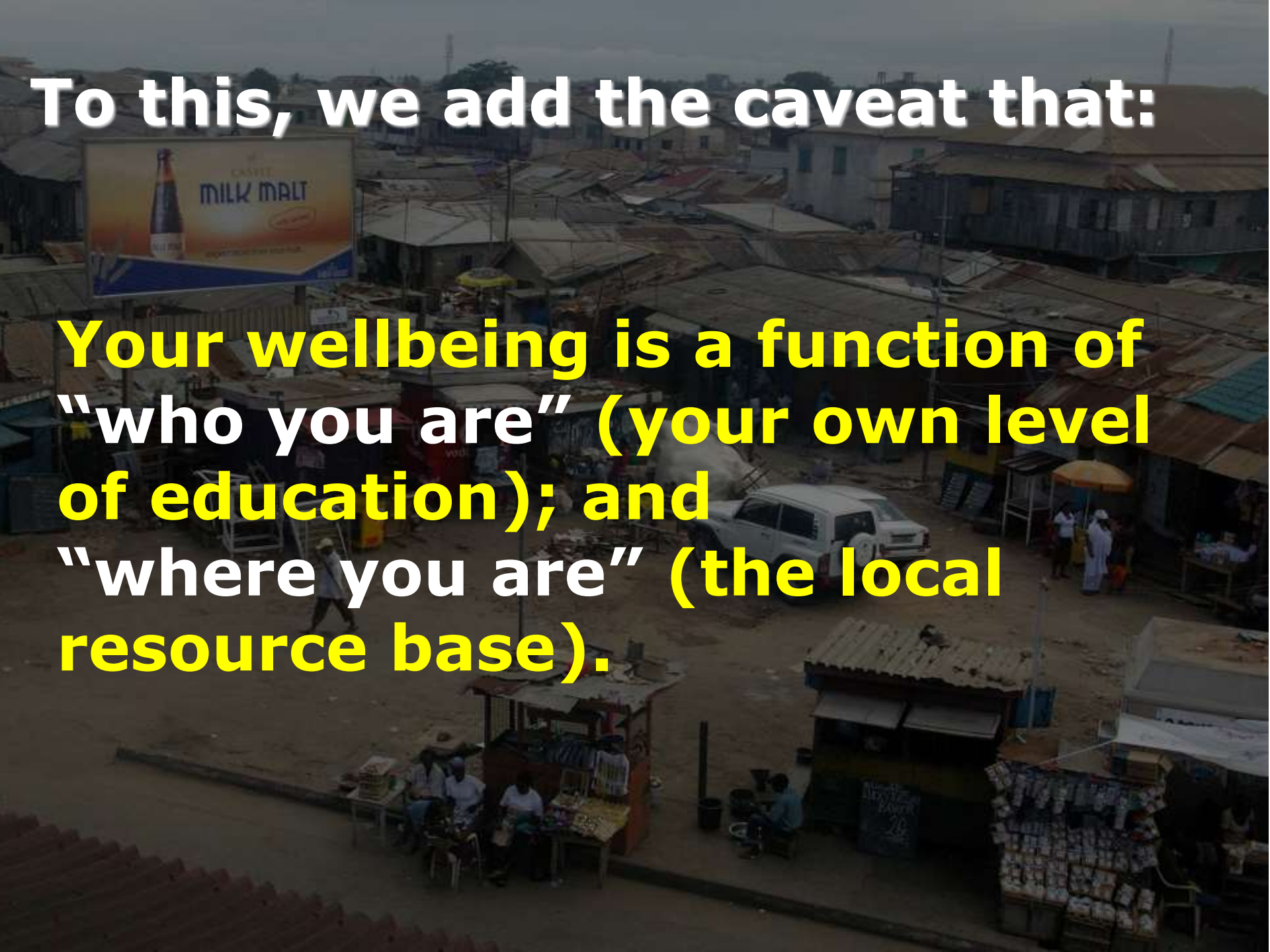
A photograph of a busy outdoor market stall. In the foreground, several woven baskets and plastic bowls are filled with ripe, red tomatoes. A woman in a light blue short-sleeved shirt and a patterned headband is seated behind the stall, smiling. To her left, another woman in a grey shirt is partially visible. To her right, a woman in a white long-sleeved shirt is standing. The background shows other market stalls and people, creating a sense of a bustling marketplace. The text is overlaid on the image in a bold, yellow font.

**“I think I may fairly make two
postulata”**

- **Good health is the single best (albeit not the only) measure of human wellbeing;**
- **Education is the reason why health is better now than ever before, and it is a key to all modern demographic phenomena.**

To this, we add the caveat that:

**Your wellbeing is a function of
“who you are” (your own level
of education); and
“where you are” (the local
resource base).**





A person's wellbeing is apt to be lower in this location...

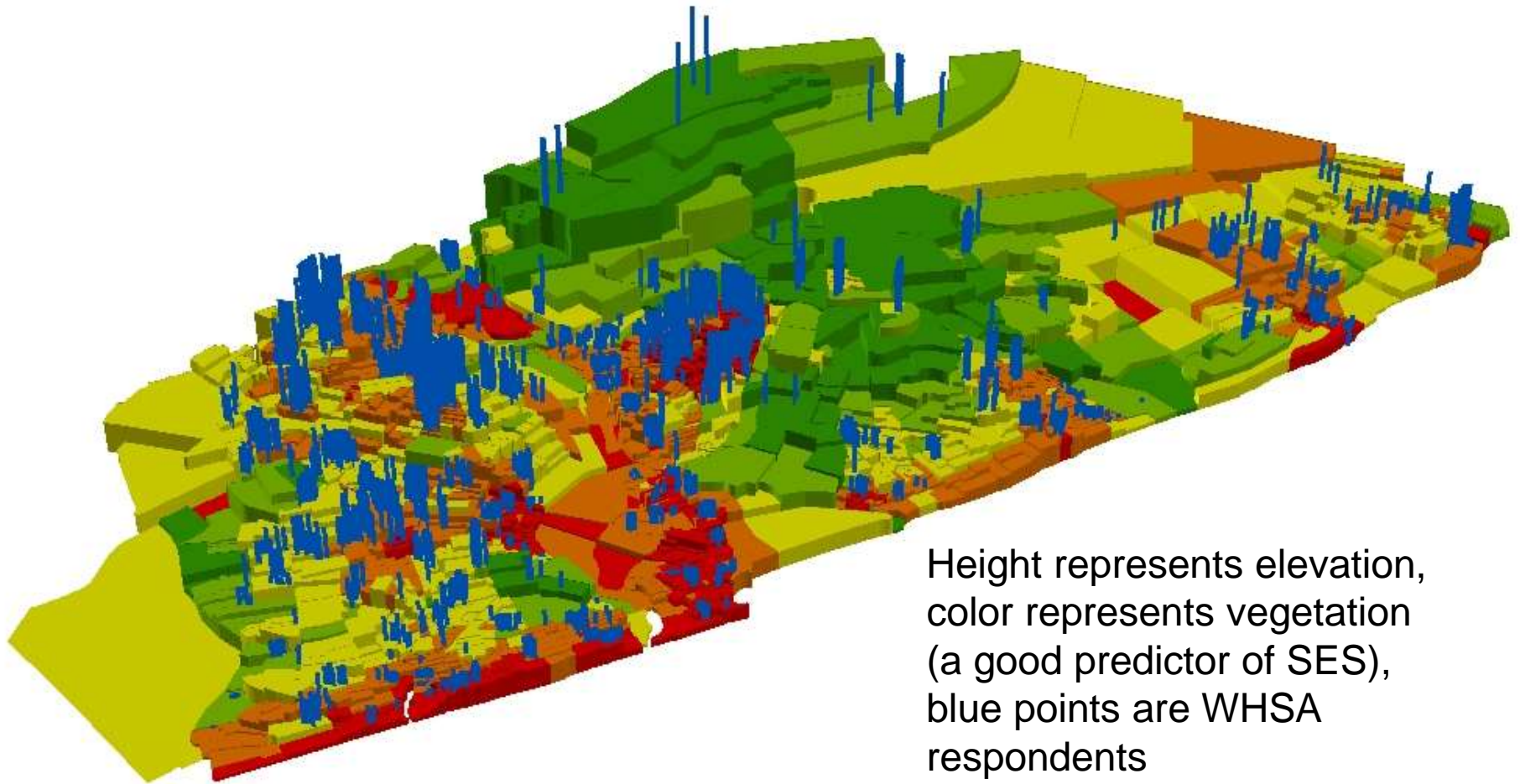
...than in this location, even if levels of education are identical

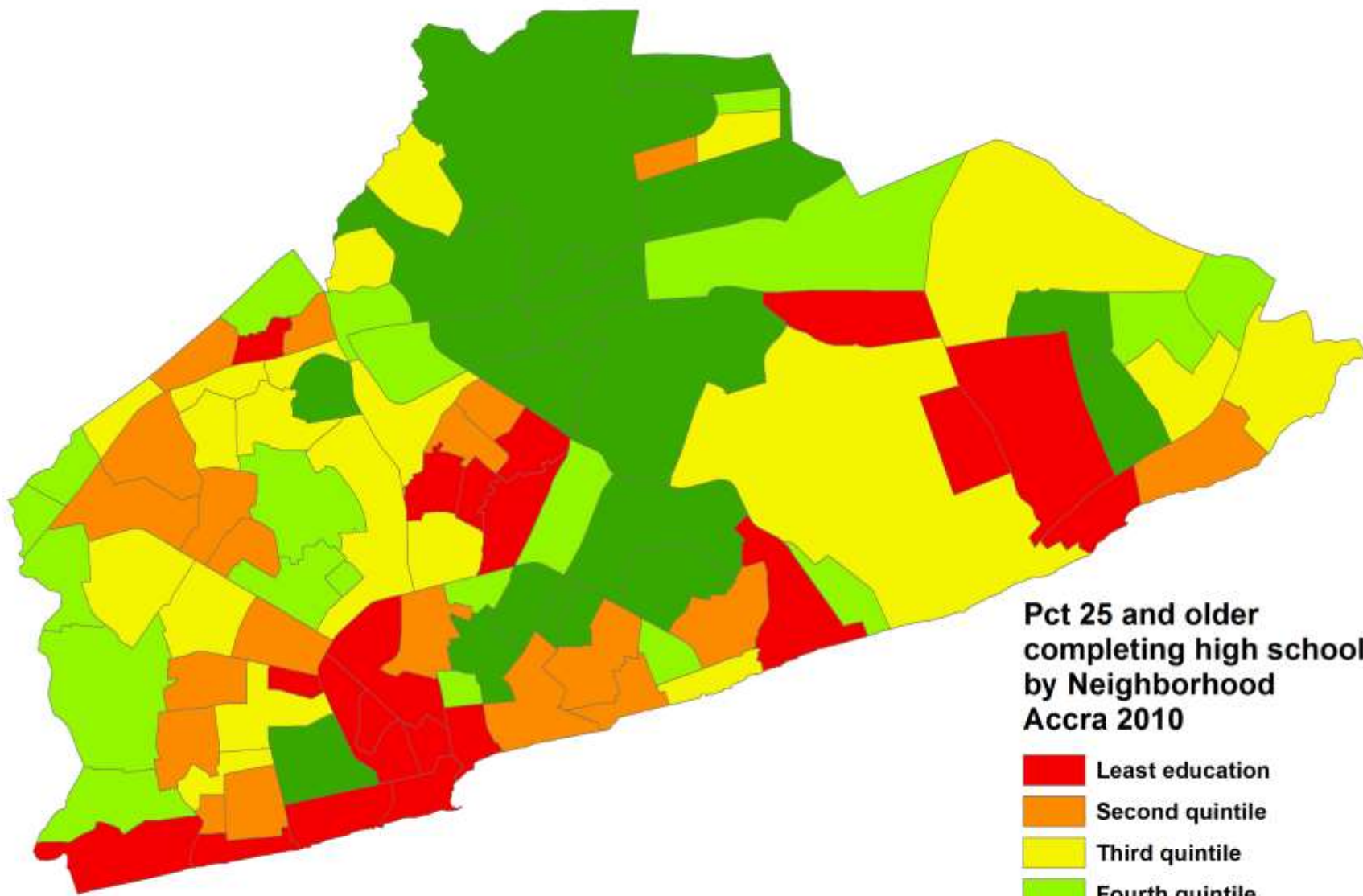


A satellite map of Accra, Ghana, showing the city's layout, roads, and surrounding areas. The map includes labels for various locations such as Medie, Berekuso, Danfa, Amrahia, Adenta Municipality, Agbogba, Santeo, ASHAIMAN, Sebrepor, Ter, Achiaman, Amasaman, Kwabenya, Afuaman, Taifa, Lapaz, Awoshie, Gbawe, Mallam, Bortianor, Kokrobite, and the Densu Delta Protected Area. Major roads are marked with blue labels like N6, N4, N1, N2, and R40. The text "EASTERN REGION" and "GREATER ACCRA REGION" is visible in the top left. The city of Accra is centrally located, with the East Legon area to its north and the OSU area to its south. The coastline and the Gulf of Guinea are visible on the right side of the map.

**We apply these ideas to Ghana,
with a special focus on its
capital city, Accra**

We interviewed 2,800 women selected in a multi-stage cluster probability sample-- Women's Health Survey of Accra (WHSA)--to obtain data about their health

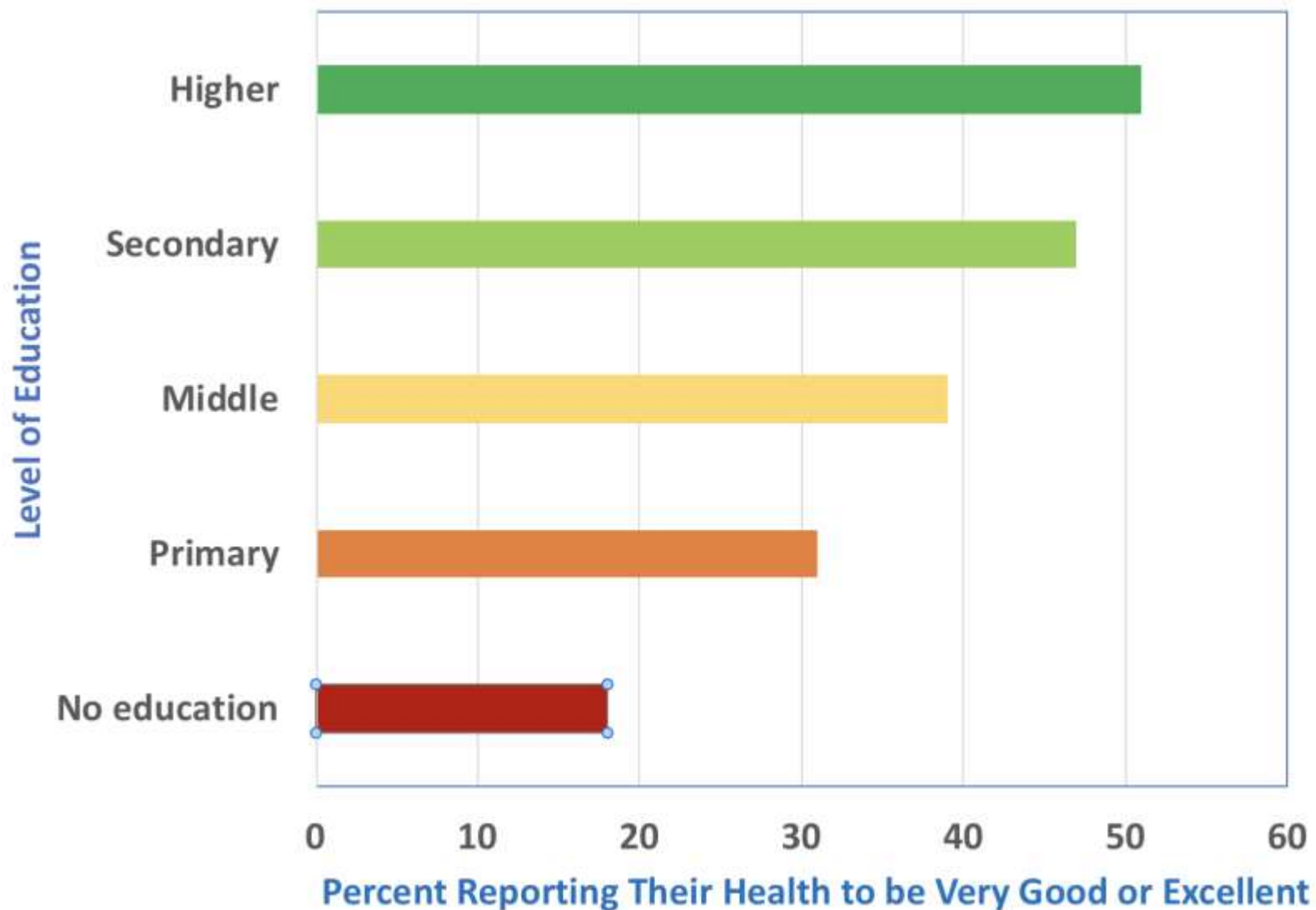


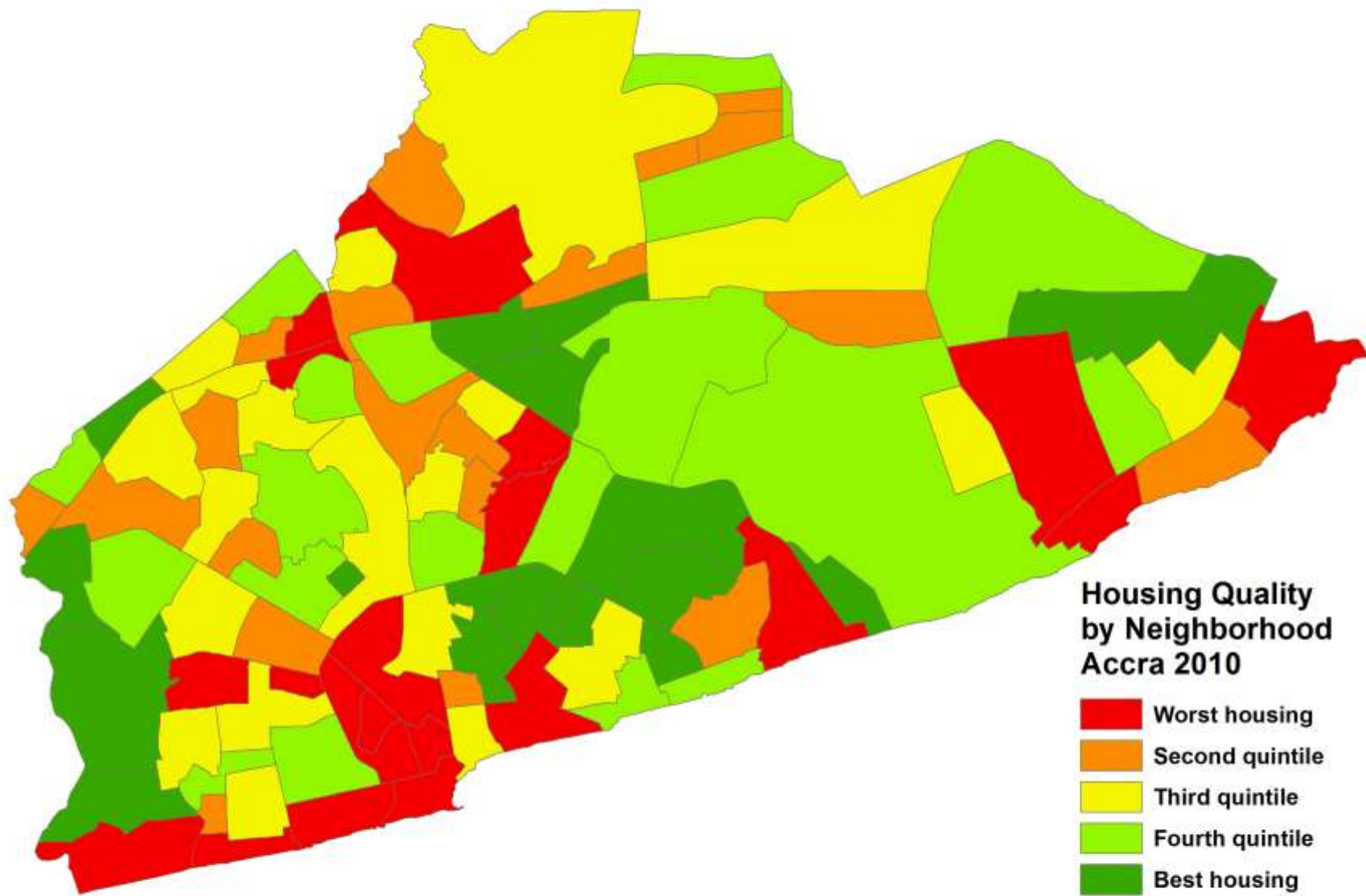


**Pct 25 and older
completing high school
by Neighborhood
Accra 2010**

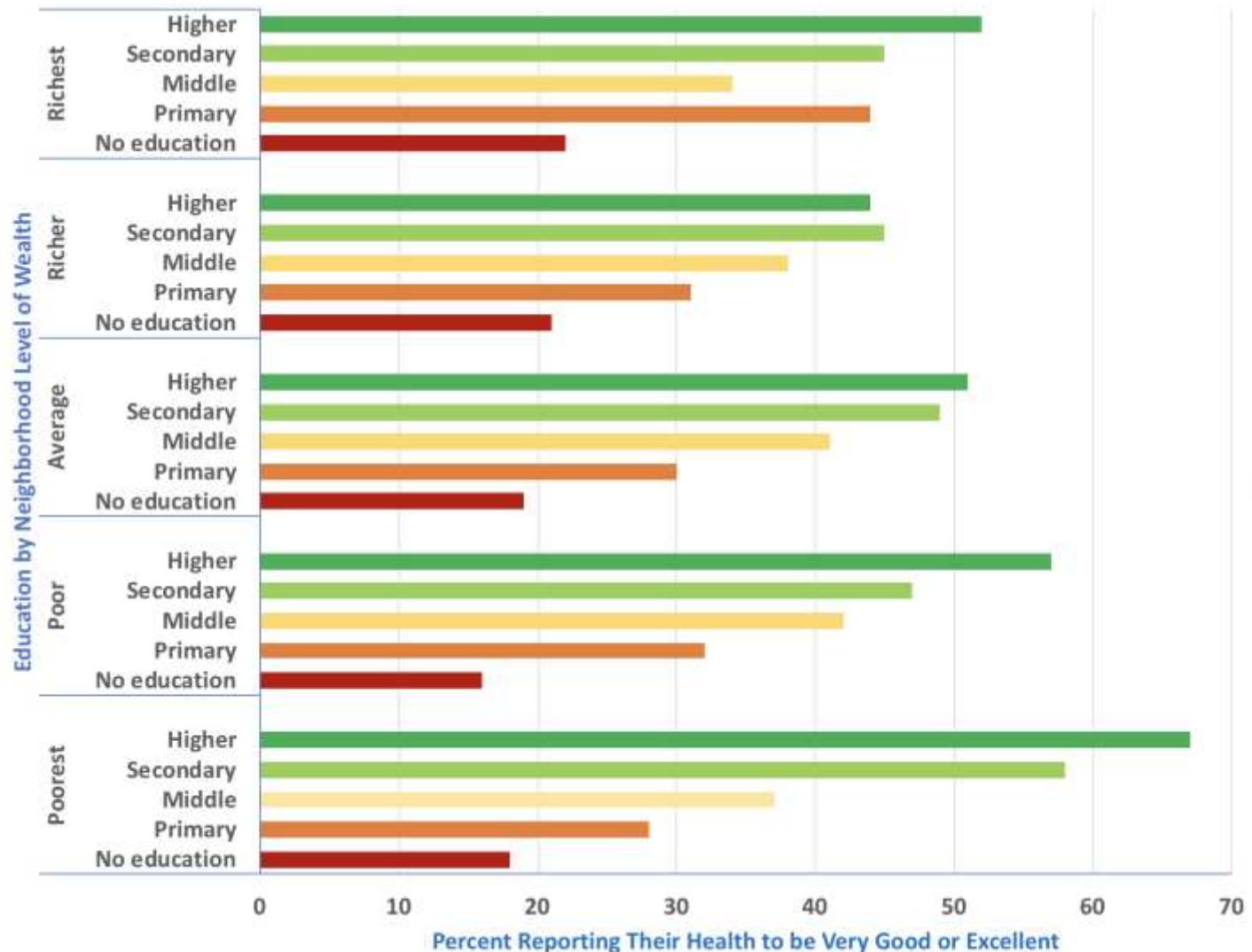


Self-Reported Health by Educational Level, WHSA II (2008-2009)

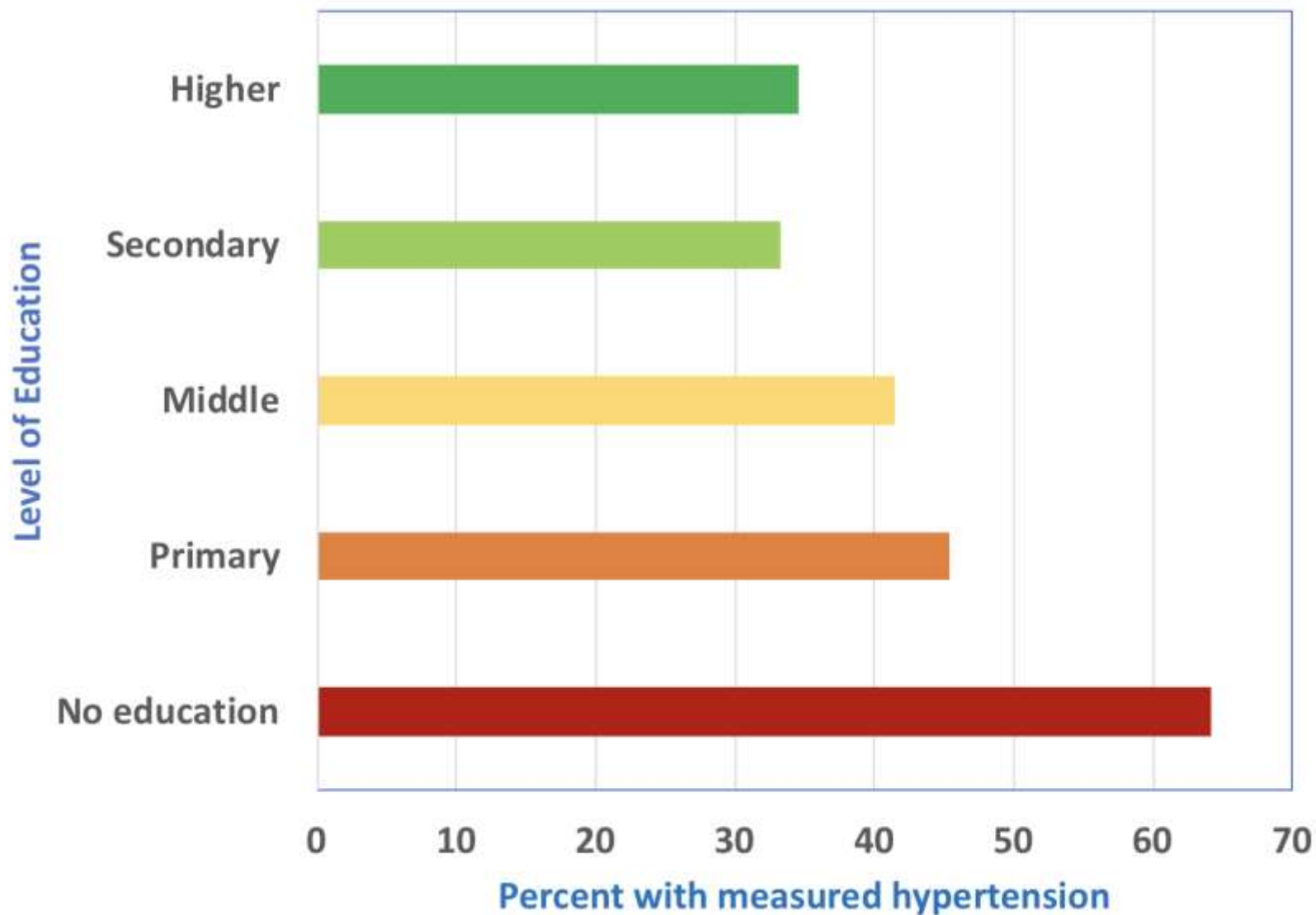




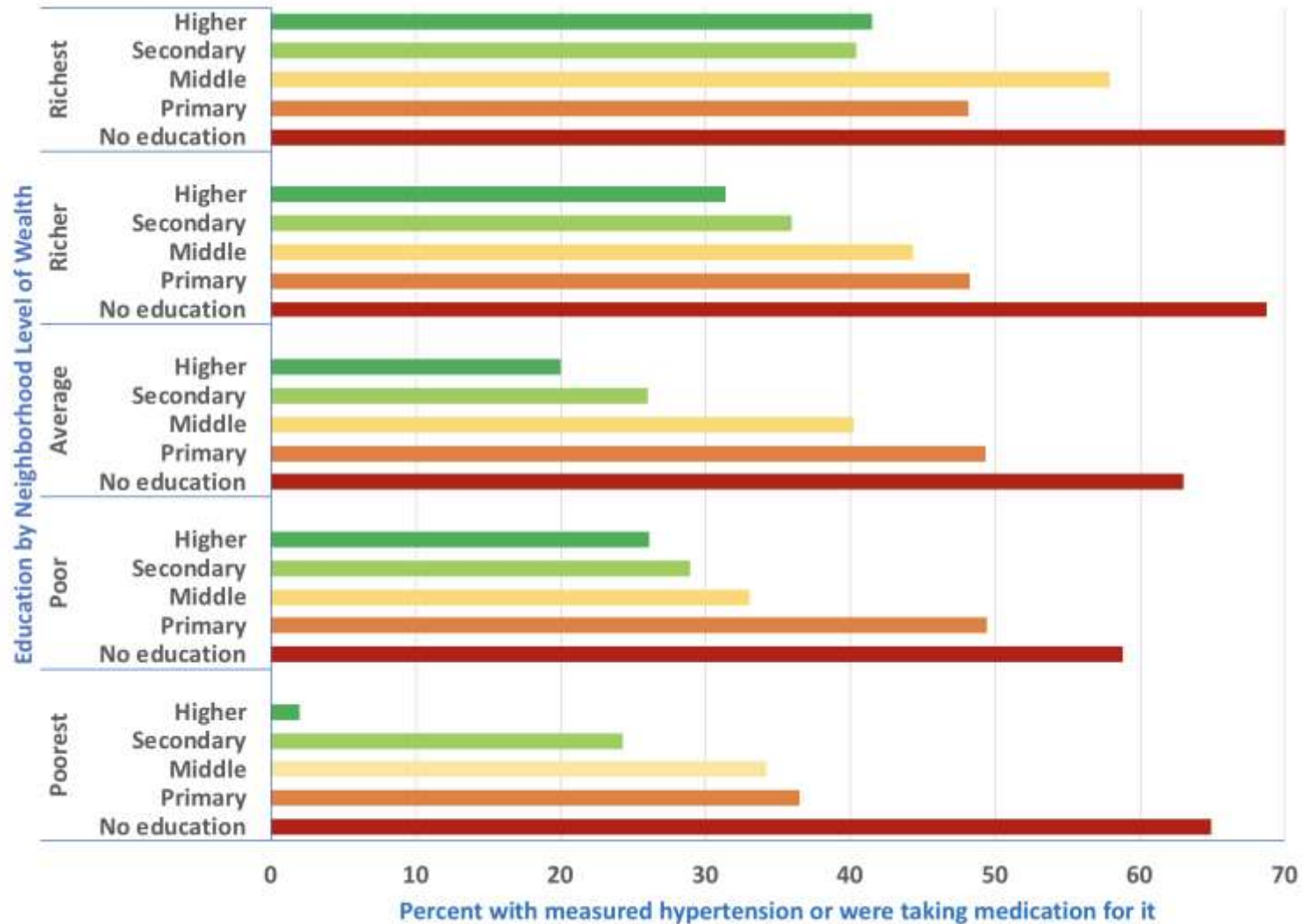
Self-Reported Health by Educational Level (WHSA II), by Level of Neighborhood Wealth (from data on possessions)

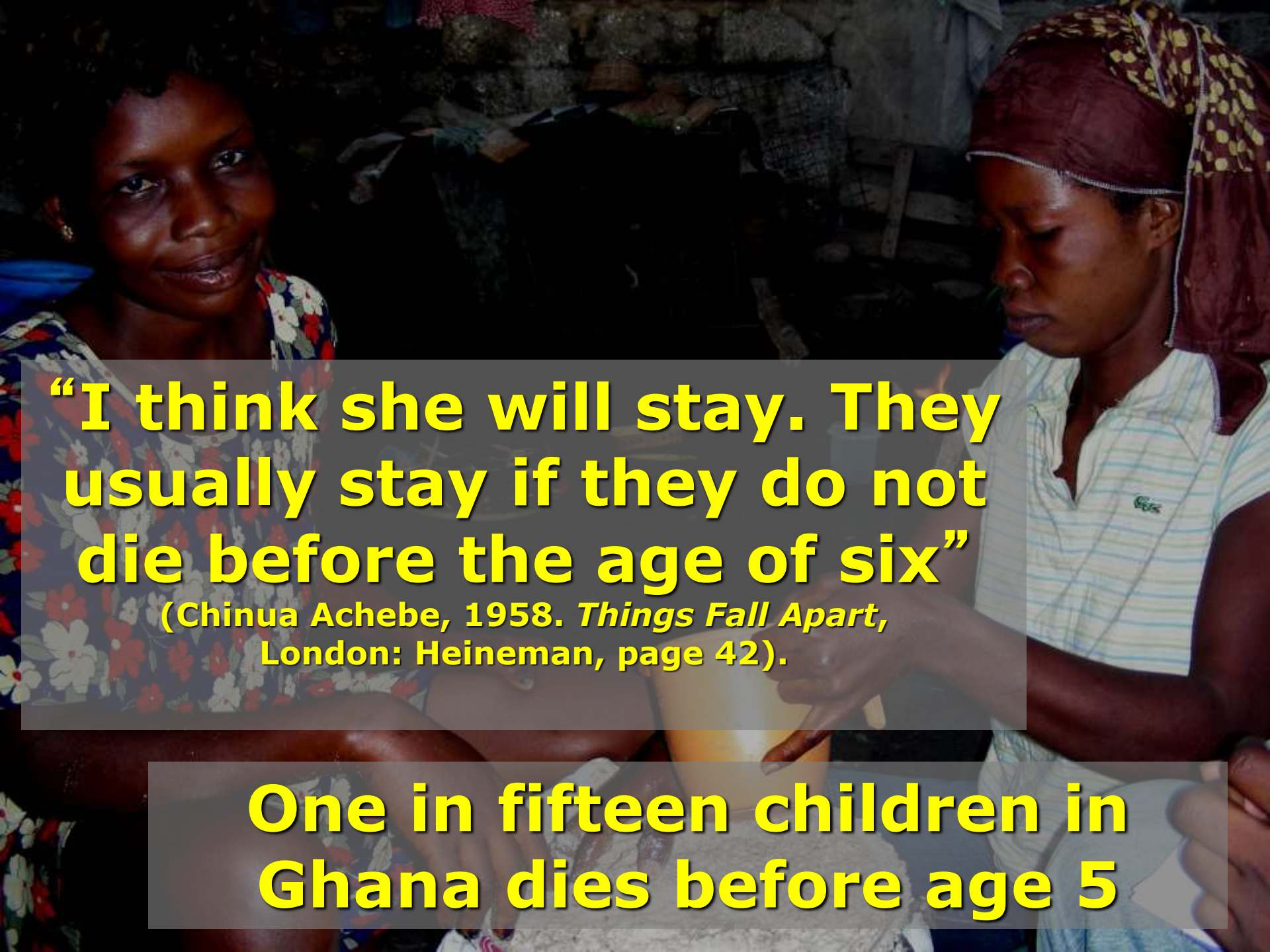


Hypertension (measured directly or evidenced by taking medication) by Educational Level, WHSA II (2008-2009)



Hypertension (measured directly or evidenced by taking medication) by Educational Level (WHSA II), by Level of Neighborhood Wealth (from data on possessions)



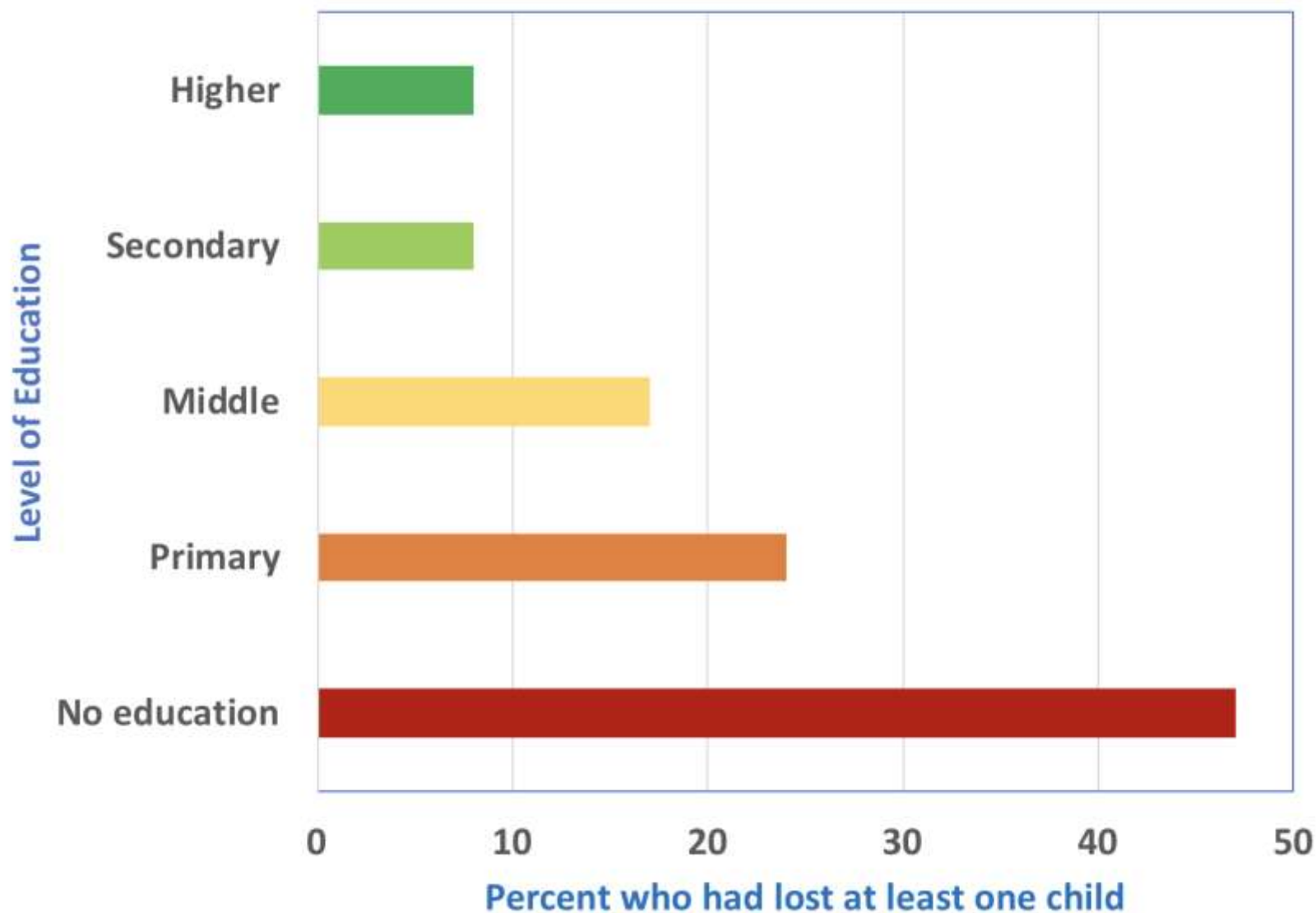
A photograph of two women in a rural setting. The woman on the left is looking towards the camera with a slight smile, wearing a floral patterned top. The woman on the right is looking down, wearing a striped shirt and a headscarf. The background is dark and appears to be an outdoor or semi-outdoor structure.

“I think she will stay. They usually stay if they do not die before the age of six”

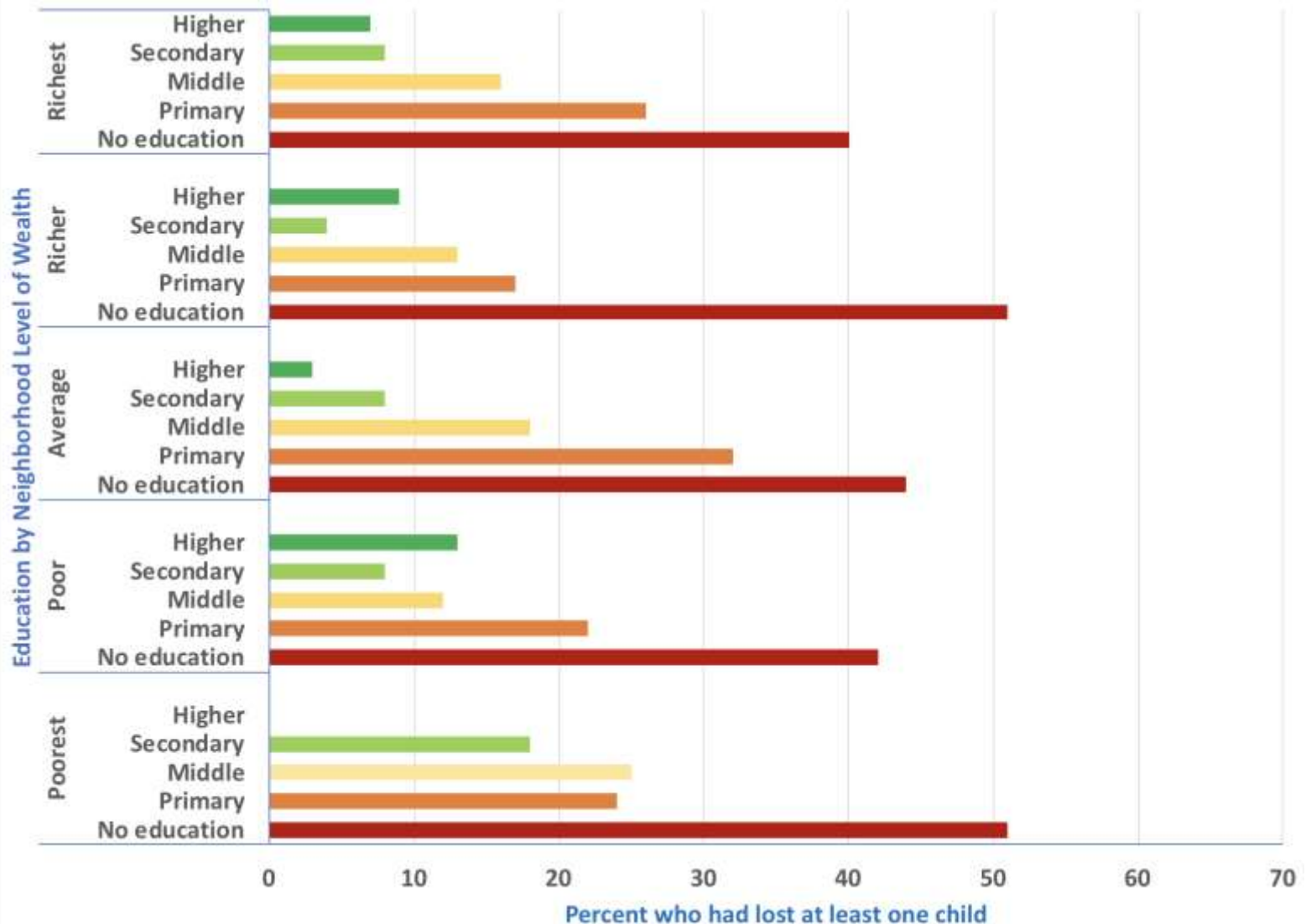
(Chinua Achebe, 1958. *Things Fall Apart*, London: Heineman, page 42).

One in fifteen children in Ghana dies before age 5

Percent of Women Who Had Lost at Least One Child, by Educational Level, WHSA II (2008-2009)



Percent of Women Who Had Lost at Least One Child, by Educational Level (WHSA II), by Level of Neighborhood Wealth (from data on possessions)



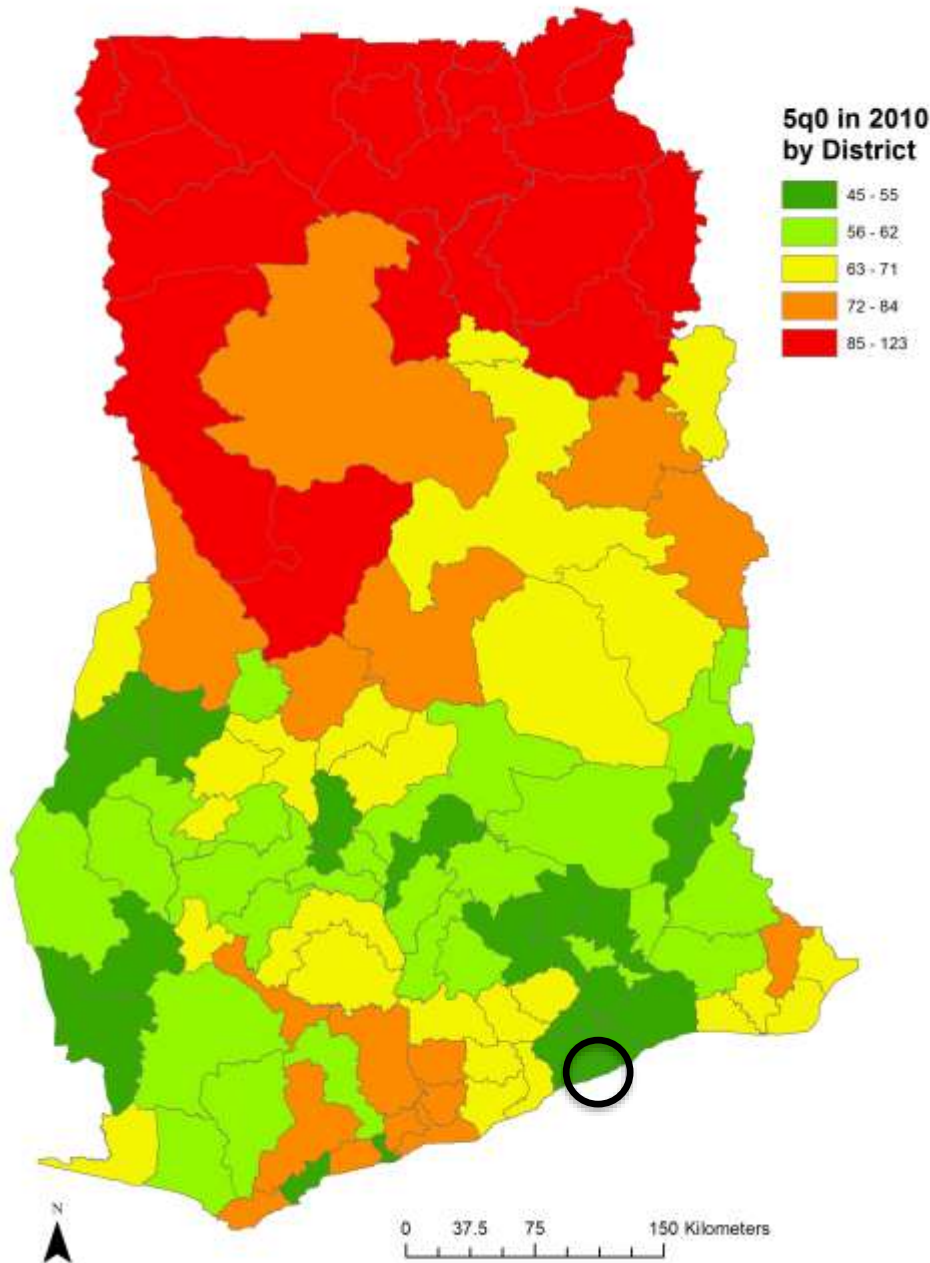
Measuring Child Mortality for the Whole Country:

- © We answer the question of who will “stay” by examining data at the district level (2nd administrative level) using census data for 2010.
- © The lack of a vital registration system means that we must estimate child mortality using indirect methods, in this case basing it on responses that women gave in the census to the number of children ever born and the number surviving as of the census date.
- © Our comparison data were drawn from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) conducted in Ghana in 1988, 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008, and 2014. Since these surveys include complete reproductive histories, including data about child deaths, we related the DHS estimates of under-five mortality (5q0 or CMR) to data collected in those surveys on the percentage of mothers of a given age who had lost at least one child.
- © Thus, for each region at each survey date we calculated the proportion of mothers aged 25-49 who had lost at least one child, and **we calculated the regression equation in which we predict 5q0 based on the proportion of mothers having lost a child.**

5q0 Predicted by Proportion Who Lost a Child ($R^2=.91$)



Data points refer to regions within Ghana from each DHS survey:
1988, 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008, 2014

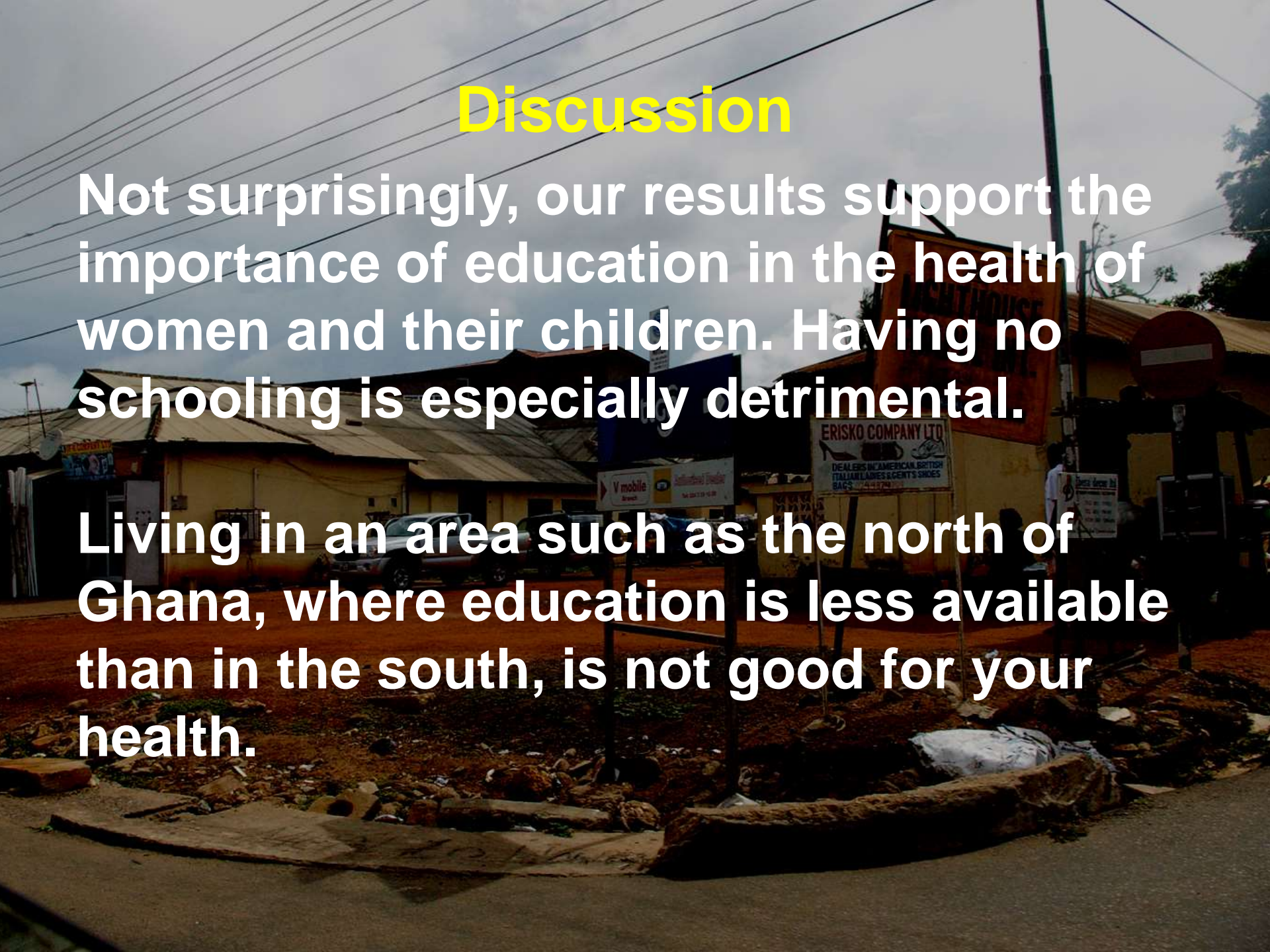


The single most important predictor of child mortality at the district level, based on 2010 census data, was the percentage of women aged 25 or older with no education ($R = .83$), followed by the percentage of men aged 25 or older with no education ($R = .80$)

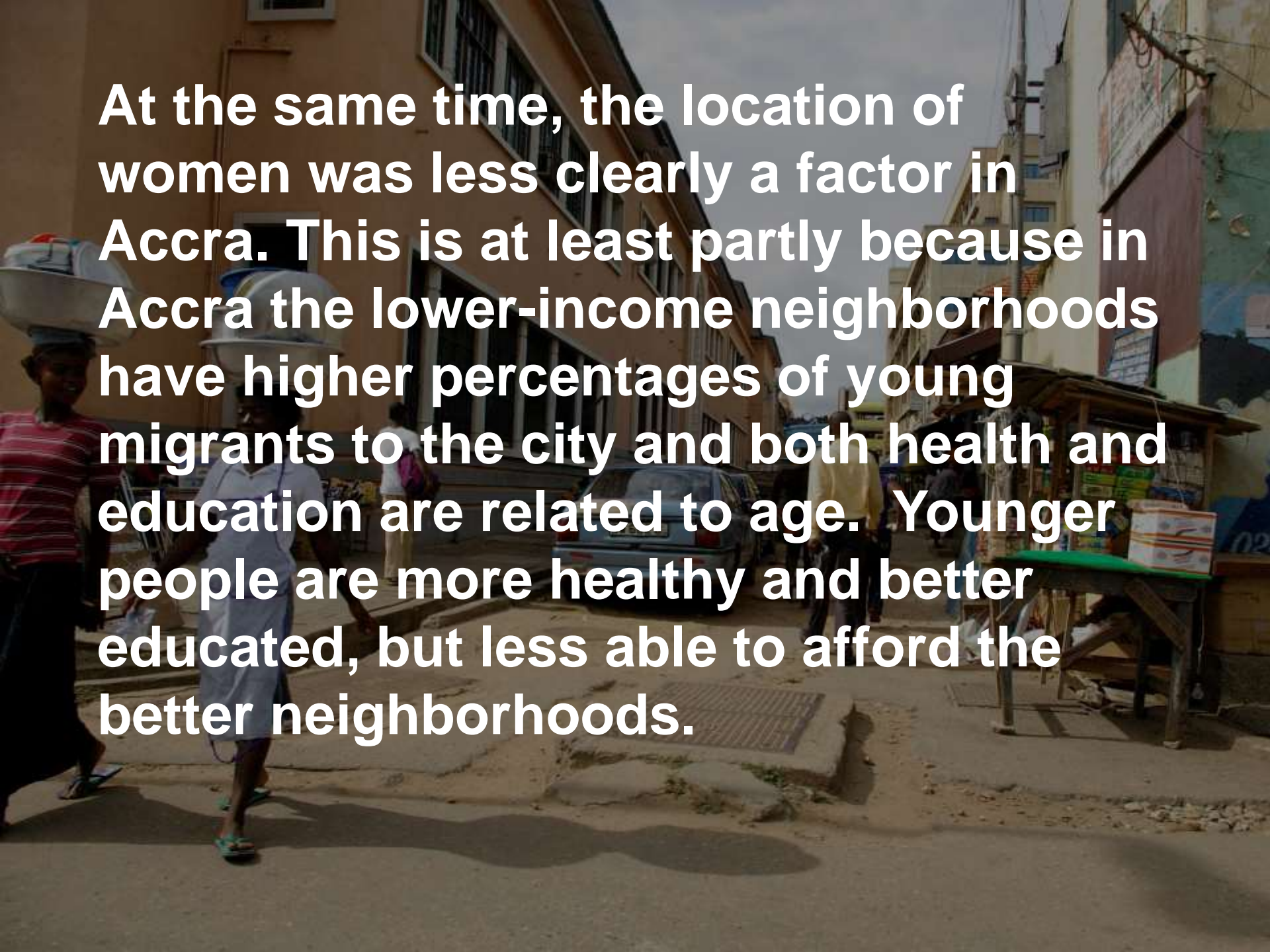
Discussion

Not surprisingly, our results support the importance of education in the health of women and their children. Having no schooling is especially detrimental.

Living in an area such as the north of Ghana, where education is less available than in the south, is not good for your health.



At the same time, the location of women was less clearly a factor in Accra. This is at least partly because in Accra the lower-income neighborhoods have higher percentages of young migrants to the city and both health and education are related to age. Younger people are more healthy and better educated, but less able to afford the better neighborhoods.



GeoJournal Library 110

John R. Weeks
Allan G. Hill
Justin Stoler *Editors*

Spatial Inequalities

Health, Poverty, and Place
in Accra, Ghana

**More information
about our research is
online at:**

<https://ipc.sdsu.edu>

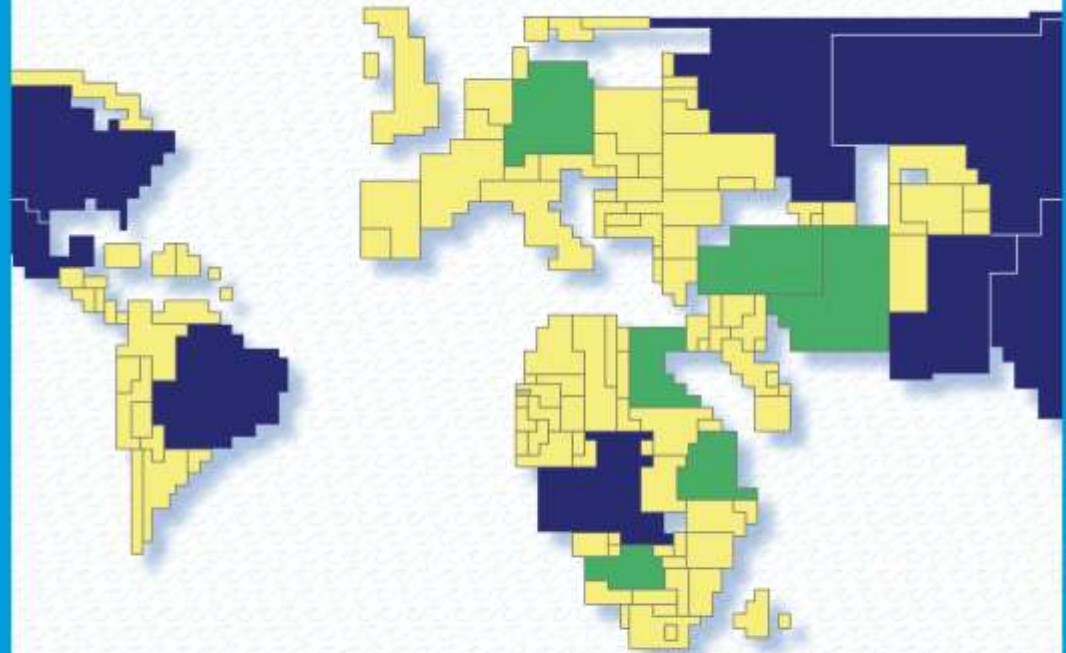
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Thanks!

