

Opposing objective and subjective wellbeing outcomes within an environmentally vulnerable delta: a case study of Volta Delta, Ghana

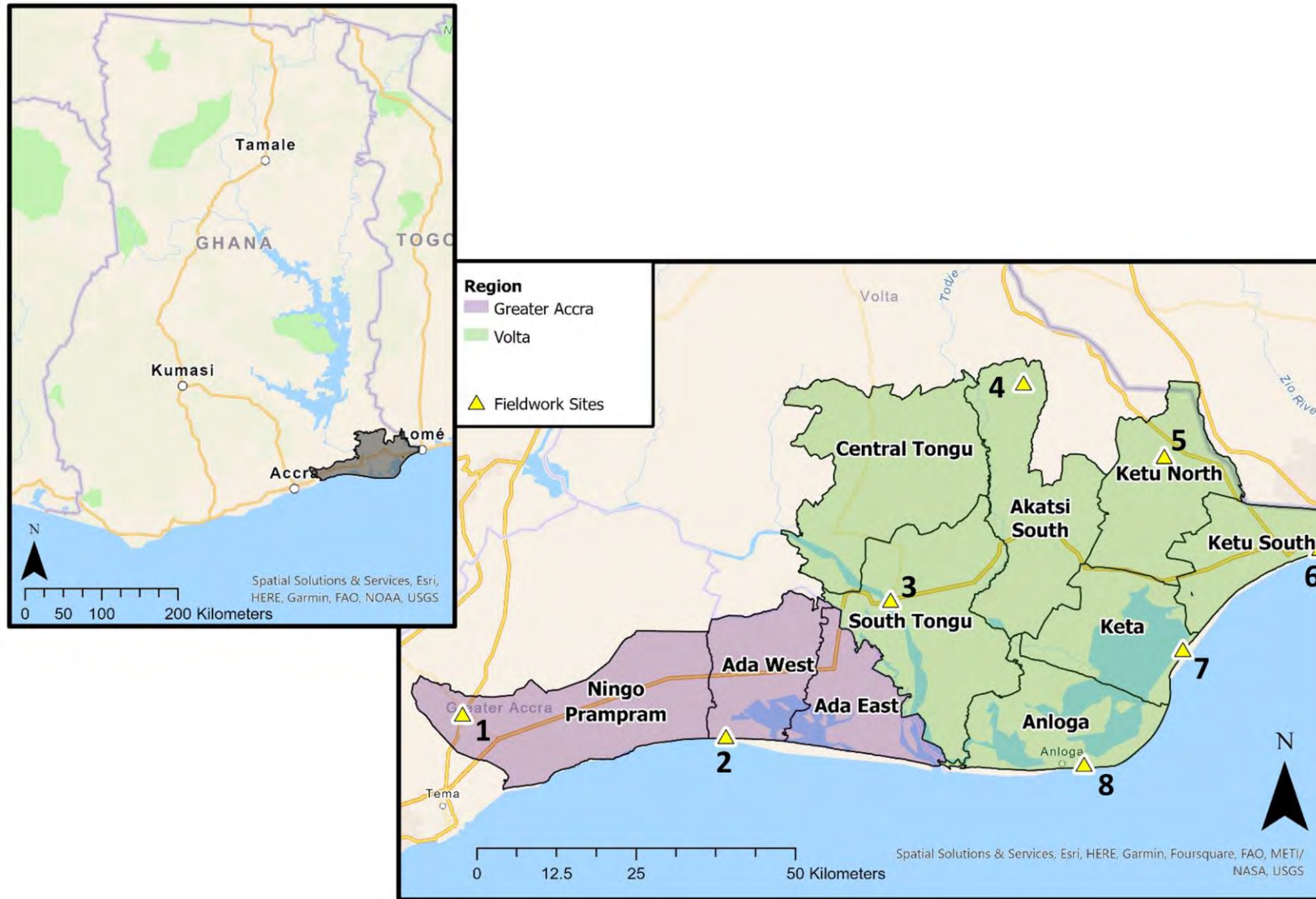
Tyndall 25: Our Critical Decade for Climate Action Conference

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Study site: Volta Delta



What is wellbeing?

a “*favourable state of life desirable for every human being in the world at all times*”

(Böhnke & Kohler, 2010;5)

Objective & Subjective Wellbeing

Objective (OWB)

“universal, measurable and tangible concepts relating to quality of life”

- Income/expenditure
- Educational attainment
- Health indicators (i.e., BMI)
- Physical assets

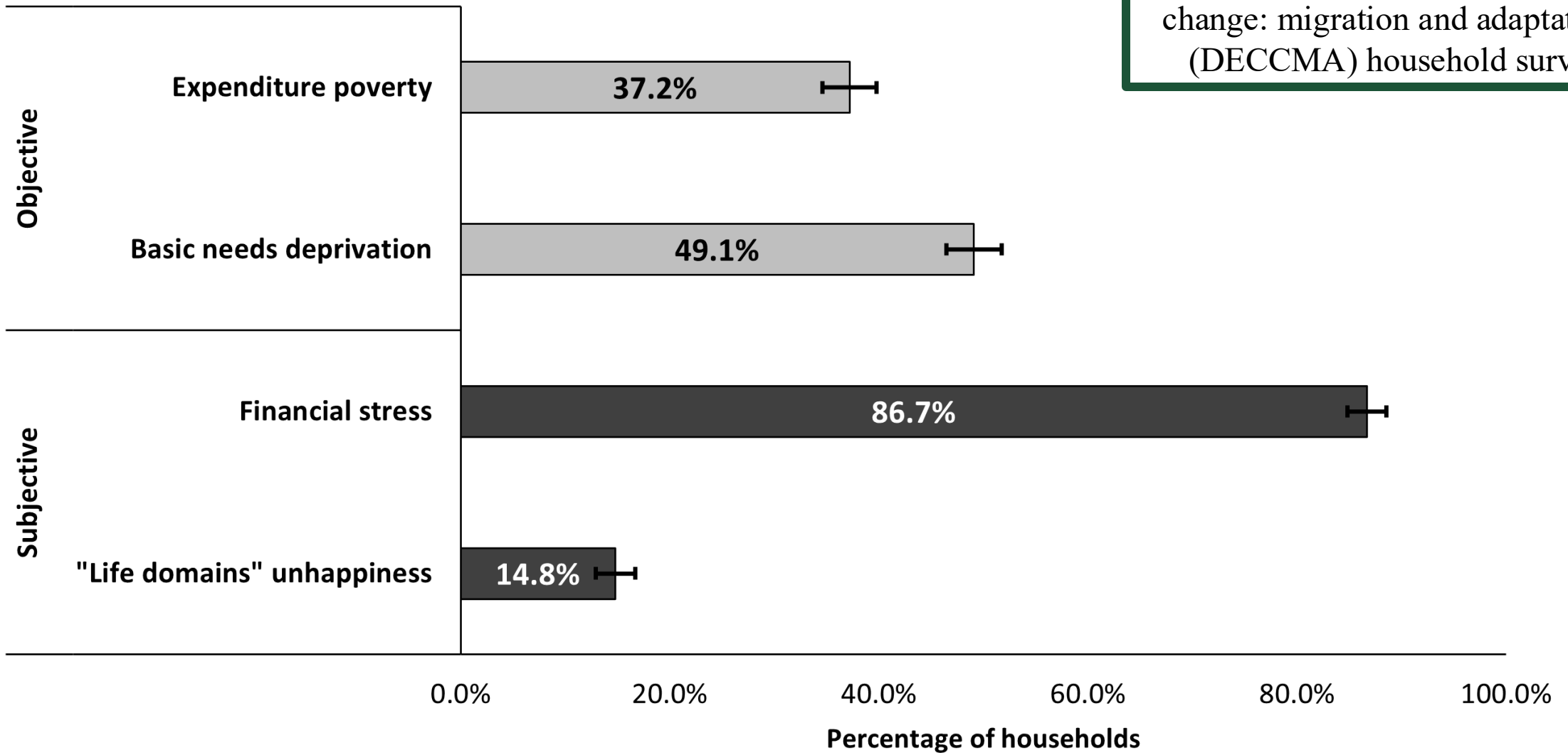
Subjective (SWB)

“individuals’ internal assessments, cognitive judgments and affective reactions”

- Happiness
- Self-evaluated financial security/poverty
- Self-assessed health
- Attachment to place/community

Measuring OWB & SWB

“Deltas, vulnerability and climate change: migration and adaptation”
(DECCMA) household survey



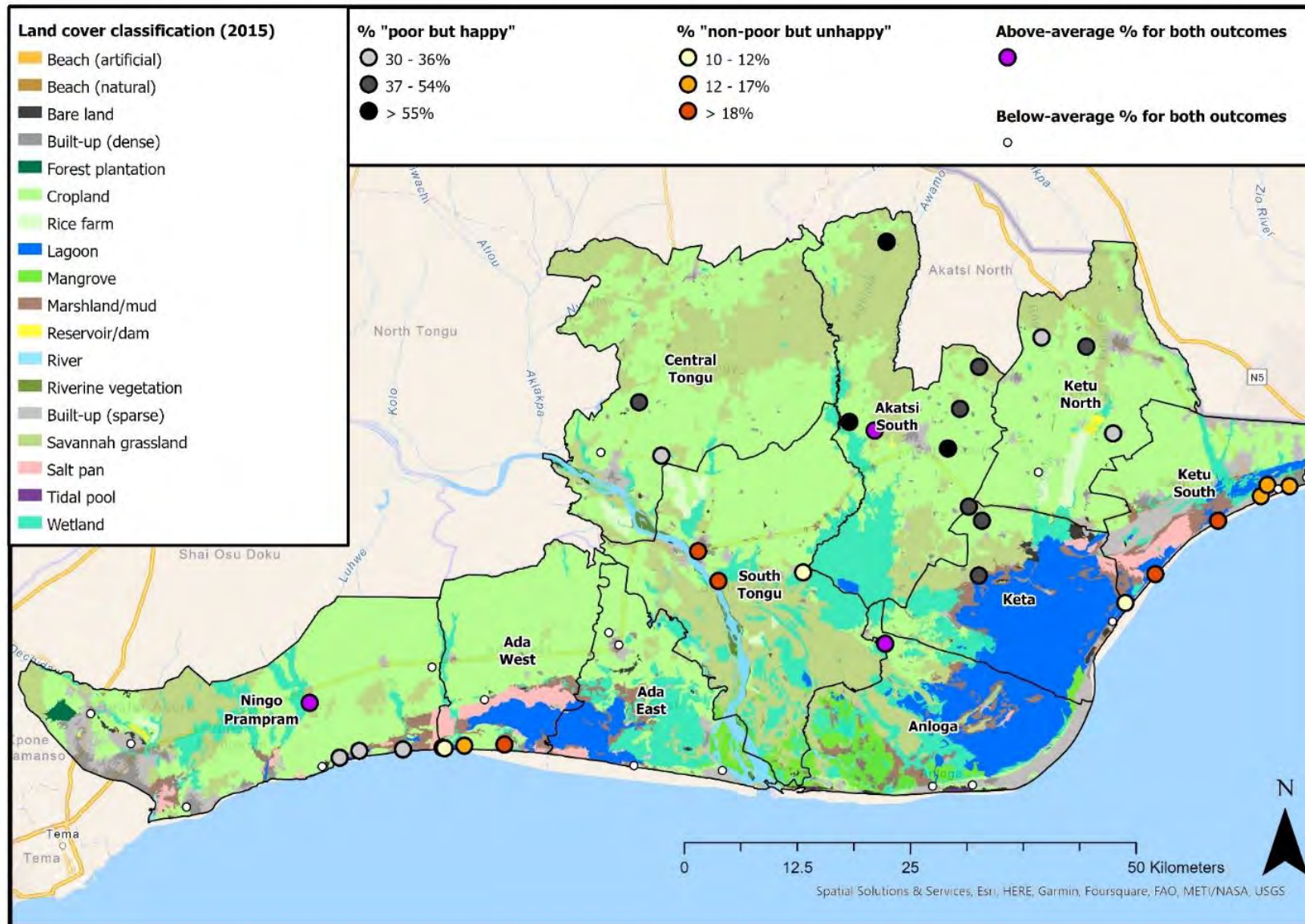
Why research opposing wellbeing outcomes?

- 🌐 Illustrate the dangers of narrowly prioritising specific outcomes at the expense of others.
- 🌐 “Individuals themselves are the best judges of their own situation”.
- 🌐 Exploring emotions and perceptions (SWB) can enhance decision-makers’ understanding of communities’ priorities, actions and buy-in, particularly if they do not align with targeted objective outcomes.
- 🌐 SWB required for long-term, sustainable commitment to policy initiatives.

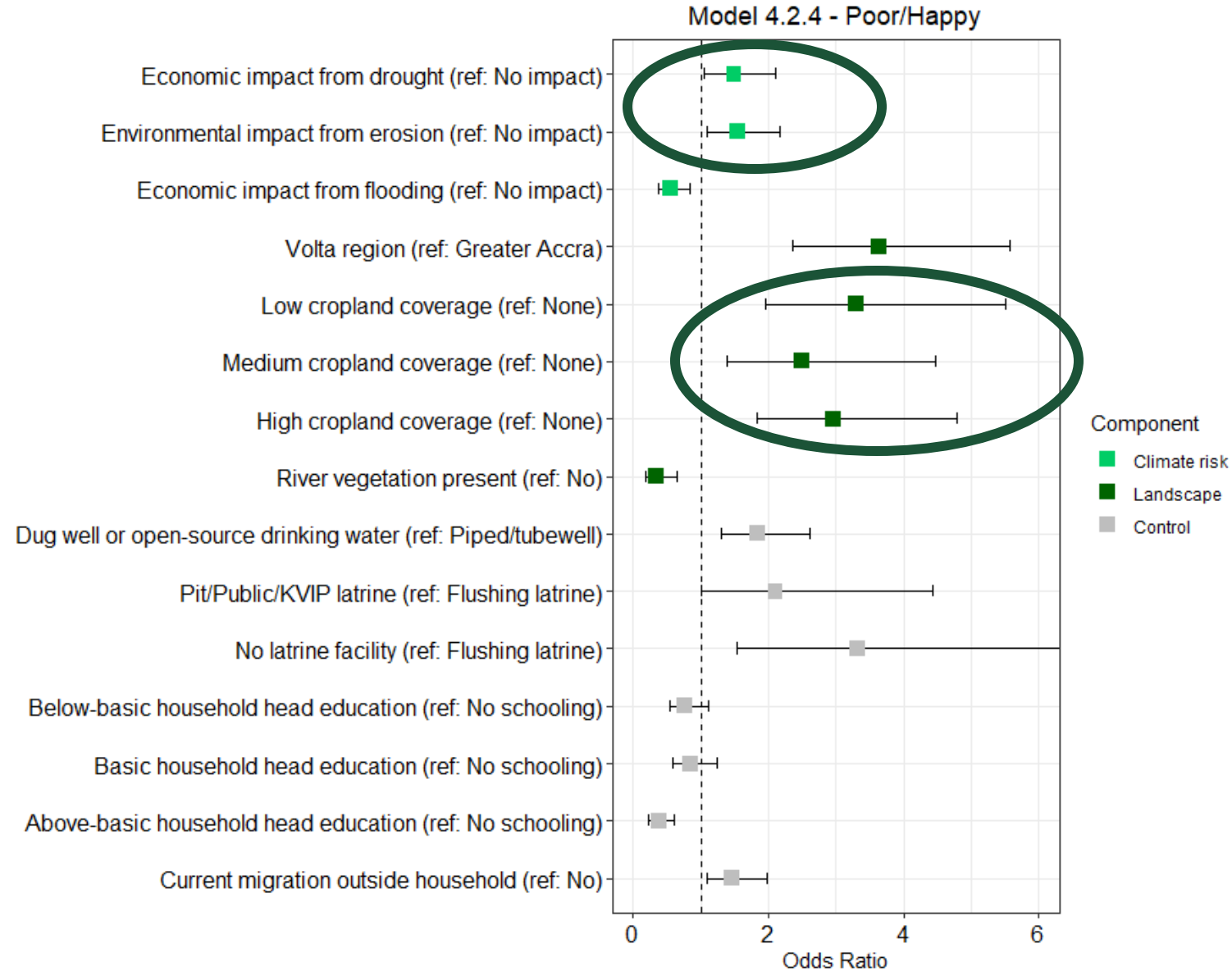
Opposing OWB/SWB outcomes

Expenditure poverty	Life domains unhappiness	
	No	Yes
No	“Non-poor & Happy” (n=744 [55%])	“Non-poor & Unhappy” (n=110 [8%])
Yes	“Poor & Happy” (n=415 [30%])	“Poor & Unhappy” (n=91 [7%])

Opposing OWB/SWB outcomes



Spatial environmental conditions associated with opposing OWB/SWB



Low OWB & High SWB (“poor/happy”)

“The climatic happenings will always be with us it is God who created it like that so we will just have to thrive through it to achieve what we want” (3,FG,M)

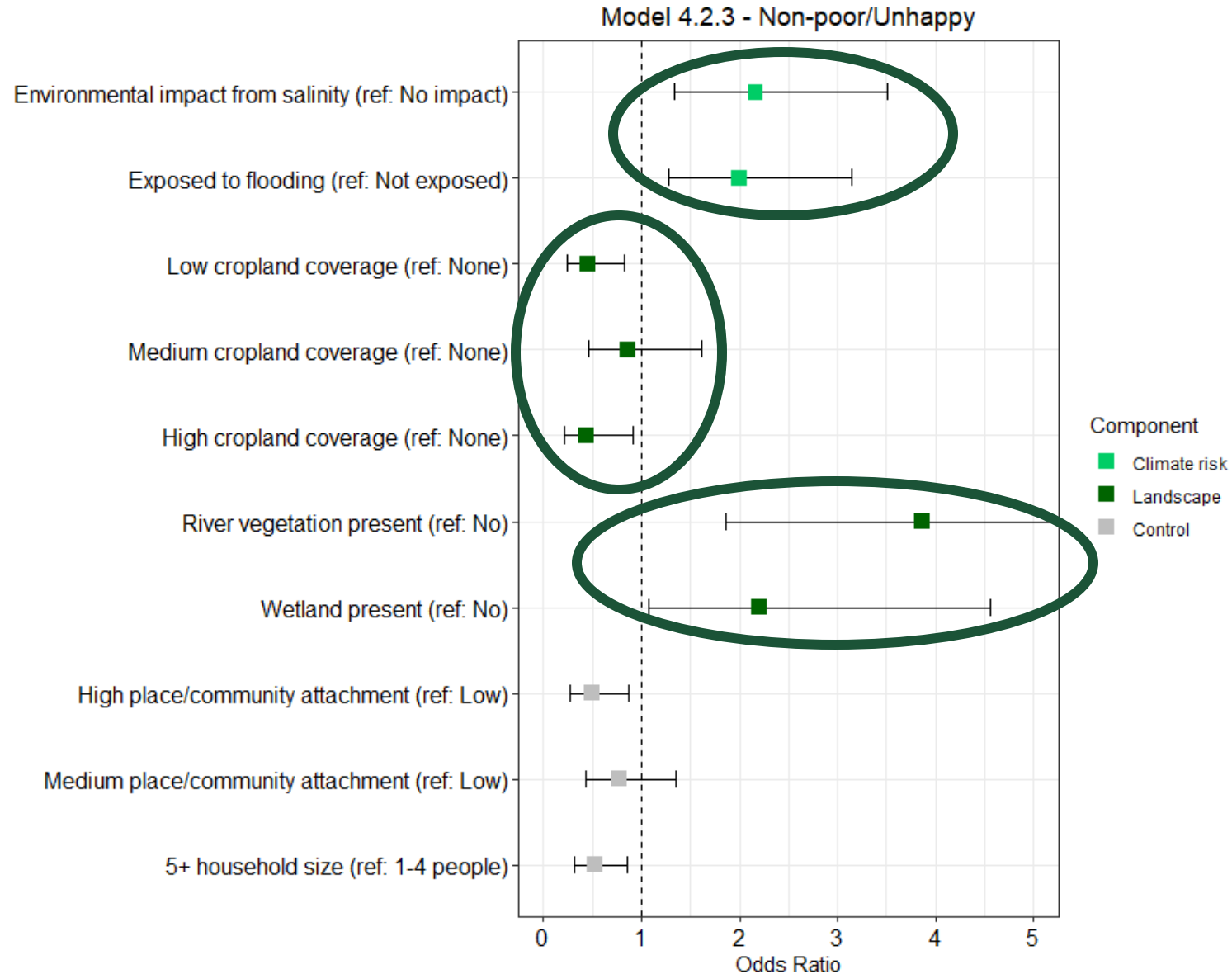
“I am very proud to be associated with this community because this is the land of my youth, I have lived here and have my possessions here and it is just natural...it becomes some sort of pride in you” (5,FG,M)

Low OWB & High SWB (“poor/happy”)

“if it happens that someone is affected by rain, erosion, drought, the community...assists the person, people...bring up ideas that will be of great help to the affected person...we do this because of unity, love, peace for each other” (4,FG,M)

“so if I am privileged to have food at home, I will wish that the same applies to other people in the community...but if am the only happy person and others are in pain it doesn't feel right” (4,CI,M)

Spatial environmental conditions associated with opposing OWB/SWB



High OWB & Low SWB (“non-poor/unhappy”)

“when it comes to a critical point you can still visit the lagoon for fishing and even if the-farm does not do well you will definitely get something small from the lagoon for sale which will sustain you for the day. Other communities do not have these options” (8,FG,M)

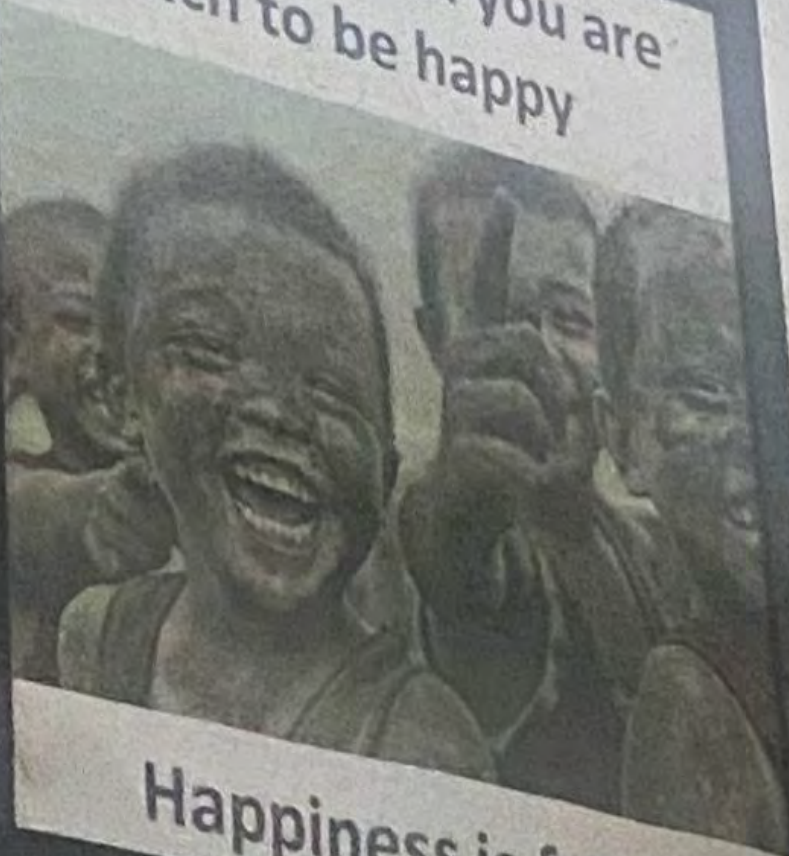
“[More money] is their target, they will do whatever they can to get there. We do not care if you are a thief, the moment you are rich everyone bows to you” (3,CI,M)

High OWB & Low SWB (“non-poor/unhappy”)

“if you are unfortunate to have your work located at the shores of the sea you’ll always be in fear” (2,FG,M)

“We are in fear of amassing assets then later the disaster strikes again...even though people will like to do things to beautify the community, due to the fear of disaster they don’t”
(7,FG,M)

Don't wait until you are
rich to be happy



Happiness is free!