

# **Economic and social injustice and its relationships to psychological wellbeing, happiness and shame**

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At least two perceptions of injustice contribute to the distribution of psychological wellbeing in the population: economic injustice, with roots in economic structures, and social injustice, with roots in patterns of social status. The range of psychological suffering in relation to the economic structure has been explained by consequences of financial marginalization and deprivation. Studies regarding social injustice include aspects of social bonds and transference of stigma. Drawing on the two perceptions of injustice, the disrespect/financial strain-model was developed to be tested in a population-based data set. In this model, injustice was composed of two dimensions: (a) distribution of (a) disrespect and (b) financial strain. The model assumes that differences in wellbeing were related to these dimensions. The data analysis utilized a random populations survey "Life and Health 2008", with responses from 6475 adults (18-84 years) in the county council of Varmland, Sweden. The survey (response rate 55%) investigated aspects of self-reported living conditions. In our model, distribution of disrespect was approximated by a survey item targeting whether 'someone has treated you in a derogatory manner in the past three months', whereas distribution of financial strain was approximated by an item targeting availability of a cash margin (approx. 2,000 euro) in the event of an emergency. The analysis revealed that high degrees of the two injustice dimensions were statistically related to reduced psychological wellbeing, less happiness and more shame. The statistical relationships with these variables were most pronounced when disrespect and financial strain co-occurred. In fact, psychological wellbeing was 7 times more likely to be reduced among individuals who experienced concurrent disrespect and financial strain, compared to individuals who experienced less of both of these dimensions. Our results highlight the importance of health and emotional manifestations of inadequate respect and financial security.

Keywords: Psychological wellbeing, Financial strain, Disrespect, Happiness, Shame