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May 2, 2016

TOO MANY
CHILDREN
LEFT BEHIND

A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON SES ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

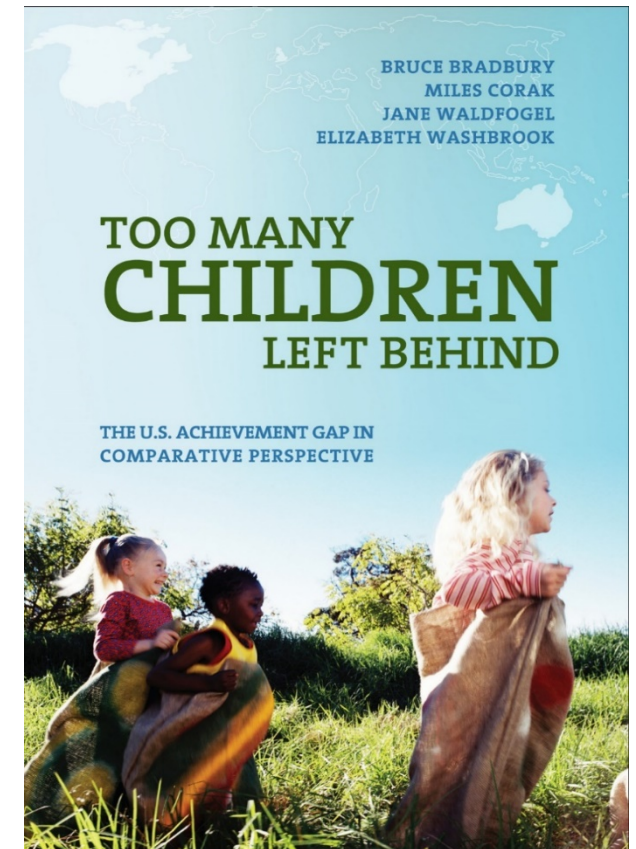
In a new book from Russell Sage Foundation, Bruce Bradbury, Miles Corak, Liz Washbrook, and I use cohort data to study achievement of children in low, medium, & high socioeconomic status (SES) families in 4 peer countries:

United States

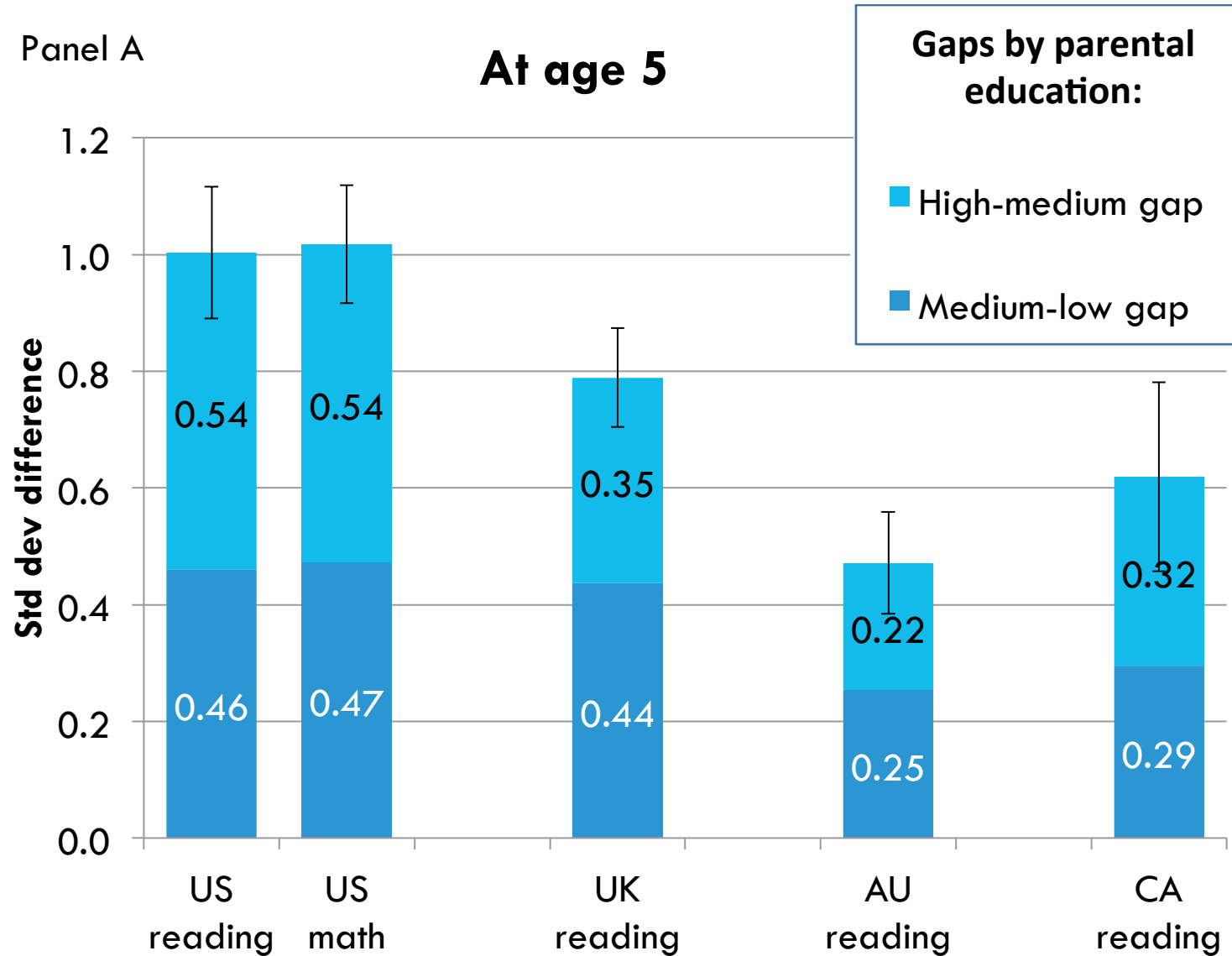
United Kingdom

Canada

Australia

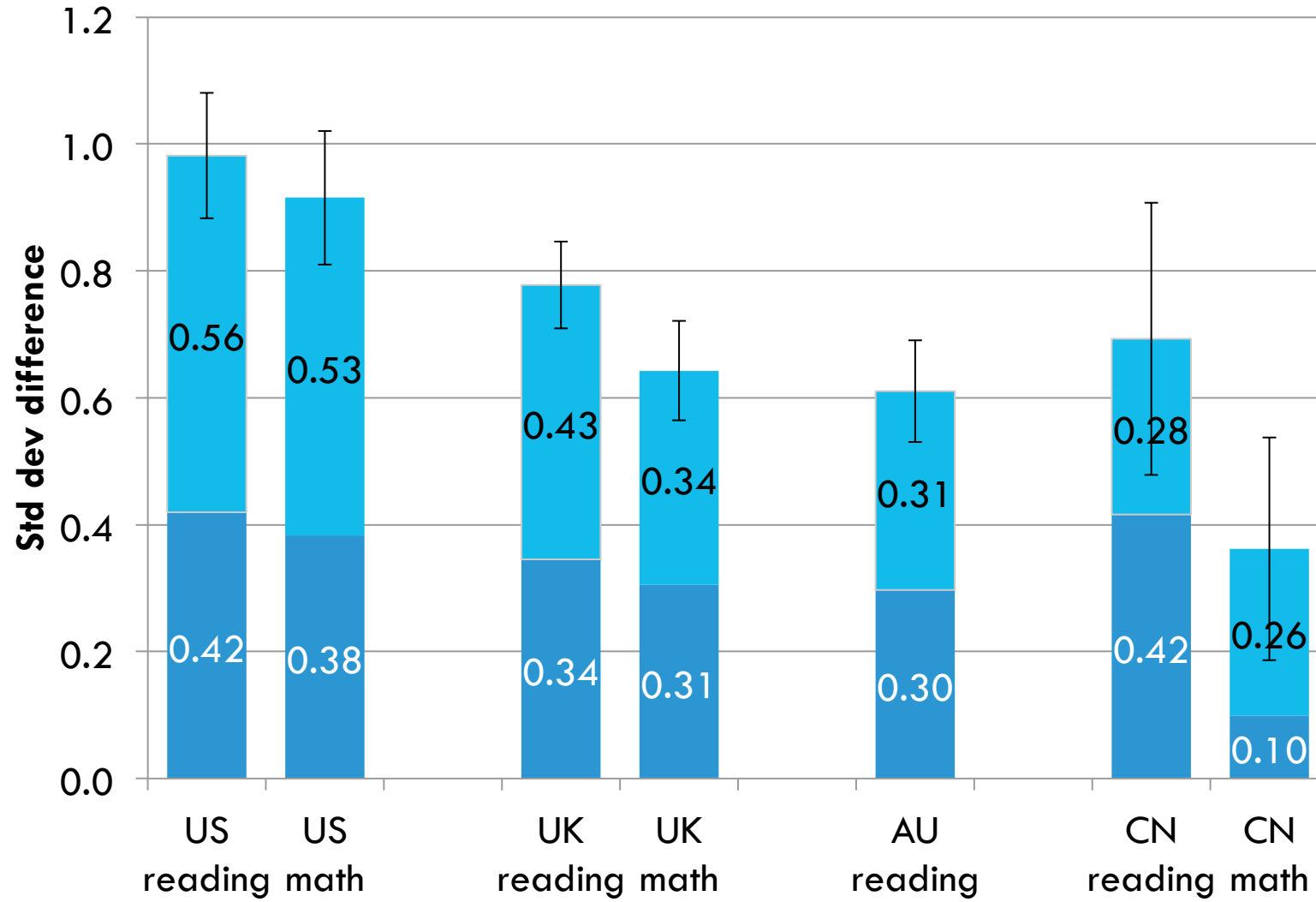


Finding #1 Achievement gaps are largest in the US



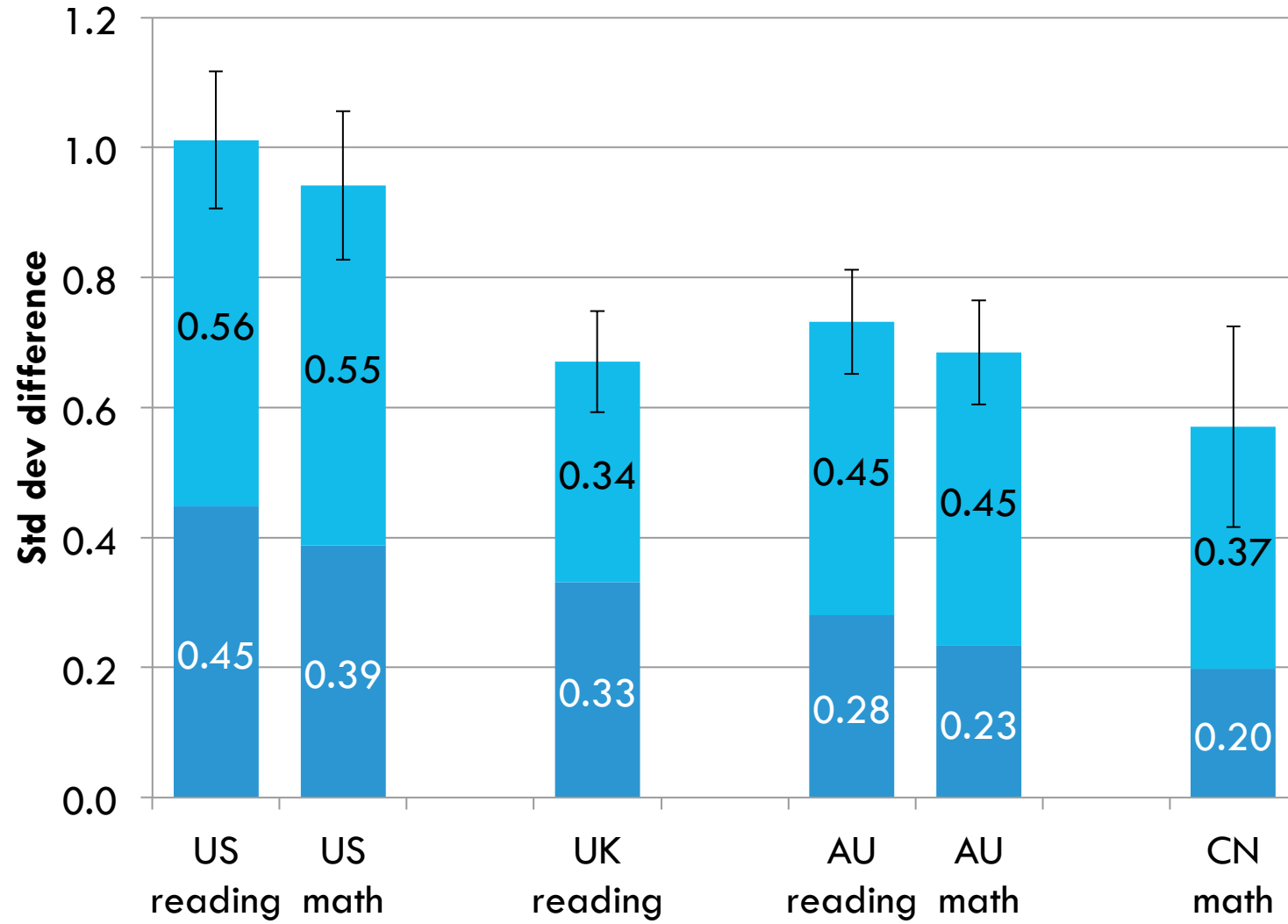
Panel B

At age 7/9



Panel C

And at age 11



Finding #2: Gaps at school entry account for the majority of the gaps in reading at age 11

	US	UK	AU
Age 11 top-bottom gap	1.03	0.69	0.68
Of which:			
Due to initial differences	0.72 (70%)	0.40 (57%)	0.45 (66%)
Due to later divergence	0.31 (30%)	0.29 (43%)	0.23 (34%)
N	9650	10,717	3333

Finding #3: The large SES achievement gaps in the US are not inevitable – we can and should do more to tackle them.

Three key directions for policy:

- 1) support **early learning** through evidence based parenting programs & universal high quality preschool for 3 & 4 year olds
- 2) raise **family incomes** for poor/near-poor through minimum wages, EITC & CTC, food and nutrition programs, paid family and medical leave
- 3) improve **quality of teaching and learning** in schools through more effective teachers, rigorous curriculum, higher expectations/support for low-achieving students

Inequality at age 11 – which would we choose?

