

Social Inclusion and the Struggle against Child Poverty: Lessons from Australian Experience

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1. Introduction

The theme of this meeting is how efforts to eradicate poverty and promote full employment and decent work can help to advance social integration, particularly of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable persons and groups in society.

In this paper, our aim is to bring forward the lessons that can be learned from more than two decades of Australian experience in the struggle against child poverty. We focus on child poverty for a number of reasons. The priority given to this issue in public policy debates reflects the fact that children are among the most vulnerable people in the community, and that poverty is associated with a wide range of negative outcomes for parents and children, including higher risks of joblessness, poorer health status and lower educational attainment, elevated financial and emotional stress for lone parents. These links are complex, however, and causation can run both ways – that is, poverty causes disadvantage and disadvantages can also cause poverty.

Moreover, poverty in childhood raises the risk that children themselves may grow up to be disadvantaged and poor in adulthood. The intergenerational transmission of poverty – (when it occurs and evidence indicates intergenerational transmission of disadvantage is variable, cross-nationally) – undermines both equality of outcomes and equality of opportunity and can be a major contributor to social exclusion, undermining social integration at its base (d’Addio, 2007). This is so because intergenerational mobility is lowest at the bottom and the top of the earnings distribution, that is, poverty and wealth appear to be intergenerationally transmitted. Correspondingly, efforts to promote social integration are very likely to fail unless child poverty is effectively addressed in a sustained manner.

To quote from a recent review of poverty and disadvantage among children in rich and developing countries:

While child poverty, measured according to standard household income and consumption measures, has decreased in many countries in recent years, it is now clear that, in even the richest countries, significant numbers of children still experience economic adversity and deprivation, [---] or face exclusion from activities that other children take for granted, or live in areas where

formal and informal support structures are limited. (Ridge and Saunders, 2009, p. 499)

In this context, we aim to address two of the specific questions raised for discussion at this meeting:

- How are social protection programmes vital to achieving social integration, poverty eradication and employment goals? What are some of the ways in which social protection measures can be structured to enhance the social integration of vulnerable and marginalized groups and persons?
- What are some innovative ways in which social integration policies and practices have helped to achieve poverty eradication and the promotion of full employment and decent work?

To address these questions, we first summarise the lessons of Australia's experience – the achievements of successive governments in developing social protection mechanisms to provide adequate income support for families outside paid work and effective support for low-paid families in work. We also discuss the limitations of this approach, which by focusing on income definitions of poverty, has tended until recently to give insufficient weight to the role of supportive services, in particular early childhood education and care, and - until more recently- did not adequately position policy responses to poverty in the broader context of social integration (or as this concept is now framed in *Australia-social inclusion*); thus downplaying the dynamics of the social inclusion and exclusion processes, which go well beyond the dimensions, both associational and causative, of income poverty alone..

In order to bring out the specifics of Australia's experience, we also compare recent outcomes with those in comparable countries in the OECD. Second, we discuss the importance of recognising and valuing family care-giving and the reconciliation of work and care in employment policies, in other words, making visible in public policy and employment policy the vast infrastructure of care for children, as well as elder care and disability care. Third, we note that much poverty research has been dominated by income studies of statistical poverty, but there is an emerging consensus that to understand fully the underlying causes, outcomes and dynamic nature of poverty, as well as policies that make a difference, it is essential to understand the lived experience of poverty and to hear the voices of people, including children, who are living in economically disadvantaged circumstances (Ridge and Saunders, 2009; Redmond, 2009). Finally, we discuss the emerging Social Inclusion agenda in Australia that seeks to go beyond measures of poverty and deprivation to develop multi-dimensional measures of the interconnections of deprivation, social inclusion and exclusion, in order to produce an evidence-base for more effective and equitable policy development.

Background

In recent decades public policies in many rich countries have focused on the challenge of reducing child poverty. Probably the best known of these anti-poverty programmes is that in the United Kingdom, where in 1999 the Government set a target to reduce the number of children living in low-income households by one quarter by 2004-05, as a contribution to a broader target of halving child poverty by 2010 and eradicating it by 2020. Among other EU countries, the setting of targets for child poverty is also explicit in the National Action Plan of Greece. In Ireland, the Government committed itself to reduce the number of children in consistent poverty to below 2% and, if

possible, to end child poverty completely in 2007. In a similar vein, in 1989 the Canadian House of Commons unanimously resolved to "seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000". In New Zealand, the Agenda for Children (June 2002) embodies a commitment to eliminate child poverty as the Government's top social priority.

One of the first of these pledges was in Australia, in 1987 when the then Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, promised to "end the need for child poverty" by 1990.¹ The policy achievements resulting from this commitment are not well-known internationally. Successive governments in Australia of different political orientations have built on the achievements of this period to develop a highly effective and redistributive system of transfers for low income families with children, based on the tax/benefit principle of vertical equity.

The development of policies to combat child poverty in Australia

Concern with child poverty first emerged strongly in Australia in the 1980s. This reflected the concurrence of a number of trends – rising unemployment from the mid-1970s onwards, the growth in the number of lone parent families with lower employment rates and earnings capacity than mothers in couple families, and then the recession of the early 1980s which in Australia disproportionately affected families with children. These trends were exacerbated by government policies which applied selective indexation provisions to different government benefits in a period of high inflation, such that benefits for adults were largely adjusted in line with prices but benefits for children were not. The inevitable result of rising economic vulnerability and diminishing government financial support was higher rates of poverty among families with children.

Lobby groups and academics drew attention to these trends (Cass, 1983); a major factor in increasing political sensitivity in this period was the development of the Luxembourg Income Study, which by providing the opportunity for consistent cross-country comparisons of income distribution, highlighted the relatively high rate of child poverty in Australia compared to other countries. The Government also established a wide-ranging review of social security in Australia, and its first issues paper (Cass, 1986) set out a comprehensive plan to reform Australian family assistance.

The child poverty pledge in 1987 involved a commitment to increasing rates of benefits for children in low-income families – *both in families receiving income support benefits and in families in low-paid work*. This was a crucial element of the package and involved administrative reforms to integrate the payment of family benefits for those out of work and those in work. This was a particularly important measure to reduce labour force participation disincentives for low income parents, particularly women. Standards of payment adequacy were established which effectively introduced the indexation of family payments, so that families could no longer fall behind people without children. In addition, there were related measures in this period and subsequently, including reforms to the collection and payment of child support for lone parents, the introduction of the Jobs, Education and Training

¹ In Australian research and debate, poverty is defined in relative terms; early research used an Australian developed poverty line which was adjusted by reference to average weekly earnings and later household disposable income; more recent research uses a relative poverty line set at 50% of median disposable household income adjusted for household size.

programme to encourage and support lone parents in employment, as well as the expansion of child care services with fee subsidy support benefiting low and middle income parents. The first assessment of the effectiveness of the child poverty programme introduced by the Government estimated that it would reduce the child poverty rate by around 20% and the poverty gap by close to 50% (Saunders and Whiteford, 1987). While this was far from the abolition of child poverty, it is fair to describe it as significant progress in a very short time period.

To some extent some of the progress achieved in this period of reform was undercut after 1990 when unemployment again increased significantly leading to a further increase in the share of jobless families with children. However, the reformed family assistance system was maintained and in significant ways improved. First in 1995, income-tested benefits for unemployed couples were partially individualised, helping to support families, especially mothers in taking up work which may be part-time and low paid. Then after a change of government in 1996 income support payments for lone parents were indexed to wages and not just prices, while the level of benefits for families was increased further. In 2000, the government introduced a Goods and Services Tax and as part of the compensation package for the increase in indirect taxes, payments for children were increased significantly. Further increases in benefits for families were introduced in 2003.

The scope of these improvements in family payments can be appreciated by the increase in spending over this period – in 1988 spending on family allowances (i.e. benefits targeted specifically at children) was about 0.5% of GDP; by 1996 this had more than doubled to 1.1% of GDP and by 2003 spending reached 1.8% of GDP. Including other payments to families (maternity benefits and income support for lone parents) further increased spending levels to well over 2% of GDP. In 2005, Australian spending on cash benefits for families was the second highest in the OECD, although spending on services was much lower. Australian tax/benefit investment on families is not only comparatively high, it is also targeted on low income households, sharpening its redistributive and poverty alleviation impact.

In summary, successive Australian governments built on the reforms introduced in the 1987-1990 period to develop an integrated system of payments for families outside the workforce and also in paid work, which supports those who are most disadvantaged and also provides financial support for families to join the workforce.

Child poverty in rich countries

Recent research on child poverty in OECD countries (Whiteford and Adema, 2006; Whiteford, 2009) shows that the tax and benefit system in Australia is now one of the most generous to low-income families of all OECD countries and is also one of the most effective in the OECD at reducing child poverty. Measuring poverty reduction in “absolute” terms (the percentage point reduction in poverty rates) Australia is the second most effective country after Ireland. Australia and France are particularly effective in reducing poverty among working families.

An indication of the effectiveness of these policy developments is given in Table 1 which shows net incomes of families receiving social assistance benefits (including housing benefits) as a percentage of median disposable incomes in OECD countries in 2005. The United Kingdom and Australia have the highest benefits in the OECD for jobless families (counting both social assistance and family benefits/tax credits). Moreover, in the United Kingdom and Australia families working at the minimum

wage and receiving their benefit entitlements have the highest disposable incomes of all rich countries.

Despite the generosity and effectiveness of its system of redistribution, child poverty in Australia was just above the OECD average in 2005 and roughly twice as high as in the best-performing Nordic welfare states. However, given the generosity of the benefit system, the recorded incomes of poor families are quite close to the poverty line, and recent OECD studies find that while Australia has an above average poverty headcount rate it has one of the lowest poverty gaps in the OECD (OECD, 2008).

The main reason why Australia – like the United Kingdom – does not have lower levels of child poverty is that it has a very high level of joblessness among families with children. As shown in Table 2, while Australia’s aggregate employment performance appears strong compared to other countries, the concentration of joblessness in households with no paid work is among the highest in the OECD – that is, polarisation between “job rich” and “job poor” households is pronounced in Australia (Dawkins, Gregg and Scutella, 2002; Whiteford, 2009).

The employment and family status of parents are of crucial significance in determining poverty risks (Table 3). Lone parents are represented three times as often in the poor population as in the working-age population – with Australia being close to four to one; jobless households are over-represented by a factor of more than five to one, and jobless lone parents by more than six to one. Therefore, in most OECD countries joblessness is strongly associated with much higher risks of child poverty.

Countries like Sweden and Denmark not only have generous welfare support for families, but they have very low rates of family joblessness. *It is this combination – effective redistribution and high family employment – that is crucial to achieving low child poverty rates.* Moreover, the OECD countries that have relatively high levels of child poverty appear mainly to have very high levels of poverty among working families, and tax and benefit systems that are not effective in reducing it (Whiteford and Adema, 2006).

Recent improvements in data collection have also made an important contribution to understanding of poverty in Australia. Australia has developed a number of new longitudinal surveys, especially the Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey that shows that child poverty and related problems like family joblessness have a very important time dimension. For example, in each year between 2001 and 2006 about 10-12% of Australian children experienced relative poverty (in families with incomes below 50% of the median income), but nearly three-quarters of all children never experienced poverty during this period. However, around 6% of children were living in poverty for three or more years and around 1.3% for all five years (Headey and Warren, 2008). It is this sub-set of poor families experiencing long term deprivation who are likely to face the most significant forms of social exclusion.

In this context it should be noted that Australia, with the Nordic countries and Canada, has one of the highest rates of intergenerational mobility among the OECD countries, indicating that the extent to which individuals’ social status (as measured by indicators such as earnings and educational attainment) improves intergenerationally is high (Hayes, et al, 2008; d’Addio, 2007). However, policy attention must be and is currently focused on the longer-term persistence of poverty for a small minority of children, whose families experience long-term joblessness – an

issue of considerable importance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families (Vinson, 2009).

Family joblessness in Australia – a challenge to social integration

Long-term trends in family joblessness reflect a number of factors. Lone parents have increased over the last 25 years as a share of families with children, and because lone mothers and fathers have lower employment rates than partnered parents, family joblessness has increased. Lone parenthood in Australia is predominantly a consequence of the ending of a relationship, either through separation, divorce or widowhood, rather than ex-nuptial birth. In the early 1980s and 1990s, rising unemployment disproportionately affected parents: in the initial stages of economic recovery family unemployment did not fall as rapidly as overall unemployment. 1998 to 2008 saw a sustained fall in family joblessness, ending close to its level in the early 1980s, mainly due to strong overall employment growth, and the rate of reduction accelerated after 2005. However, in 2008-09 when unemployment began to rise family joblessness rose by two percentage points, comparable to increases in the first recession years of the 1980s and 1990s.

For both partnered mothers and lone mothers full-time employment rates increase with the age of children – from under 10% when the youngest child is under one year old to close to 40% when the youngest child is 14 years old. Part-time employment rates also increase with the age of the youngest child, although for partnered mothers they are highest in the early school years (6 to 11 years), and decline thereafter, as mothers are then more likely to work full-time. Up until the age of around 10 years differences in part-time employment rates are much larger than differences in full-time employment; that is, lone mothers have lower employment rates than partnered mothers, mainly because of lower part-time employment among mothers with young children.

Taking a gendered approach to balancing employment and care responsibilities

These data show how important is to take a gendered approach to issues of unemployment, joblessness and poverty, since the relationship between labour force attachment, and the sustaining of employment, so critical for the material, emotional and social wellbeing of children and families, may be seriously constrained by mothers' struggles to balance employment and care, especially if employment arrangements and public policies do not sufficiently recognize or support family and other care-giving responsibilities (Giullari and Lewis, 2005; Ridge, 2009). In priority-setting for addressing family joblessness, this suggests that emphasis must be placed on the characteristics of jobs which are not short-term and precarious, but provide job security as well as family and carer friendly flexible practices and family leave arrangements, accompanied by provision of accessible, affordable and suitable childcare, elder care and disability care services, so that both employment and care-giving responsibilities may be reconciled (Mahon, 2006; Pocock, 2003). It is counterproductive at the personal, social and economic levels to separate employment issues from family responsibilities, since promoting economic and labour market capacity and income generation for all adults (the increasingly normative "adult worker model") must be accompanied by the valuing and supporting of care-giving, which lies at the heart of family and community relationships and constitutes a vast non-marketised economic infrastructure.

Policies to reconcile employment and care may be located in several key public policy domains (Lewis, 2006):

- *The domain of statutory policy* which include payments recognising care through the social protection system; the provision of paid maternity, parental and other carer leave arrangements (including leave for aged and disability care); the right to request flexibility in employment hours to accommodate caring responsibilities; the introduction of gendered employment leave policies which mandate certain periods of leave for the mother and certain periods of leave for the father in order to encourage better sharing of care and fathers' involvement in their children's lives; public provision or subsidisation of child care, elder care and disability care services which are accessible, affordable and of high quality (Glendinning and Kemp, 2006; Brennan, 2007; Cass, 2007, Mahon, 2006).
- *The domain of workplace and employment relations*, where the balancing of employment and care would be part of employee/employer negotiations, so as to set the parameters of decent jobs which recognise care responsibilities.

These are significant considerations for the development of social integration policies for families, carers, children and other family members rendered vulnerable by disability, ageing and chronic illness.

Moving beyond predominant reliance on income measures of poverty and conceptualisation of economic activity which precludes non-market social contributions

Important questions have been raised about the use of an income poverty rate alone in bearing morally persuasive powers sufficient to influence public policymakers. Saunders (2008: p.8) notes that "the standard poverty approach is subject to a number of limitations, including the use of a single poverty line and failure to connect with the actual living conditions of those identified as poor". Saunders cites the argument of Burchardt, Le Grand and Piachaud (2002, p.6) that measures of social exclusion attempt to identify not only those who lack resources, but also those whose non-participation arises in various ways, including discrimination, chronic ill-health, geographical location, or ethnic/cultural identification. They note that lack of material resources remains a central cause of non-participation, but does not exhaust the possibilities. We would add to the causes of social exclusion from social and economic participation and income adequacy the circumstances of disability, and informal care-giving for family members with disability, long-term illness and frailty due to ageing. Taking this into consideration, the public policy issue is not only unemployment in the technical sense, but a more expanded concept of *joblessness*, where disability and care-giving responsibilities constrain economic participation (Bittman, et al, 2007; Hayes et al, 2008). Disability affects the employment not only of the person with disability but also of the person who takes primary responsibility for their care (Gray, et al, 2008) This is also of critical importance in Australia and in countries of the global North and South for children and young people who may themselves be taking on the responsibilities of care-giving, with consequent impacts early in their life-course on their educational attainment, employment entry and continuing labour force attachment (Cass et al, 2009; Becker, 2007).

While much poverty research has been dominated by income studies of poverty, there is an emerging consensus that to understand fully the causes, outcomes and dynamic nature of poverty, as well as policies that make a difference, it is essential to understand the lived experience of poverty and to hear the voices of people, including children, who are living in economically disadvantaged circumstances (Ridge and Saunders, 2009; Redmond, 2009). There is now a growing body of international research, including in Australia, which recognizes that children in disadvantaged circumstances have *agency*, and that researchers should listen and attend to the voices of children and young people (as well as adults) in circumstances of disadvantage and potential exclusion, in order to bring their “voices and experiences to the very centre of the political stage. This in turn can lead to better policy making through the formulation of coherent, informed policies for children and their families across a wide range of policy areas, including poverty reduction, employment, education, social assistance and health.” (Ridge and Saunders, 2009, p.500)

The Australian Social Inclusion Agenda

In recent years, emphasis in both research and public policymaking discourses in Australia have shifted to multi-dimensional concepts of deprivation, social inclusion and exclusion. In the Australian context, Peter Saunders and colleagues at the Social Policy Research Centre have developed new indicators of both deprivation and social exclusion. Deprivation is defined as inability to afford essential items as identified by a majority of Australians as essential for all; social exclusion is defined across three categories – *disengagement* or lack of engagement in social and community activities; *service exclusion* or lack of access to key services where needed; *economic exclusion* or restricted access to economic resources and low economic capacity (Saunders et al, 2009). Their Australia-wide survey conducted in 2008 of low income people and families who were clients of welfare services found that economic exclusion was the most common form of exclusion experienced, pointing to the intersections of relative lack of material resources with restricted economic capacity and participation.

In the domain of government policymaking, in 2002, the South Australian State government established the Social Inclusion Initiative, consisting of a Social Inclusion Board and Social Inclusion Unit, emphasising the provision of opportunities for social as well as economic participation, especially for the most disadvantaged citizens, often focussing on children and young people, Indigenous communities, and most recently jobless families. The key public policy governance method involves interlinked government agency responses - “joined-up” government initiatives involving also non-government organisations - to meet the multiple, complex needs of people, families, households and communities in disadvantaged circumstances. In December 2007, the Australian Government at national level established a Social Inclusion Unit within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, a Social Inclusion Committee of Cabinet, as well as a Social Inclusion Board to advise the government on ways to combat economic and social disadvantage in Australia. Through its Social Inclusion Agenda, the Australian Government is aiming to combat economic and social disadvantage and maximise participation through a Social Inclusion Strategy envisages that all Australians “will have the resources, opportunities and capability to:

- learn by participating in education and training

- work by participating in employment, in voluntary work and in family and caring
- engage by connecting with people and using their community's resources
- have a voice so that they can influence decisions that affect them.”

(Australian Government, 2008; 2009)

It is significant that while the domains of social inclusion as set out above include recognition of participation in family and caring, as well as employment and voluntary work, the objective given highest priority in developing public policies pertaining to social inclusion is ‘addressing the needs of jobless families with children’ (Australian Government, 2008). A recent multi-level meeting of Ministers across all government jurisdictions (including the Federal, State and Territory Governments) published a communiqué stating that social inclusion policies in the recovery from the “global financial crisis” would need to ensure that the most disadvantaged demographic groups and communities are not excluded from the recovery, and in so doing the communiqué placed priority on:

- children at risk of disadvantage
- disengaged young people
- jobless families
- locational disadvantage. (Australian Government, 2009)

It is evident that the domains of public policy accorded priority in the Australian governmental social inclusion agenda are those most integrally connected to addressing family joblessness, and in so doing preventing or alleviating children and young people’s poverty and disadvantage. This is of particular concern in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, subject to very significant discrepancies and inequalities in health and disability status, educational attainment, employment rates and income levels, compared with the non-Indigenous population (Vinson, 2009).

A key lesson evident from the social inclusion agendas in various countries (Australia, the UK and other European countries) is the importance placed on delivering the integrated services required to address multiple manifestations of disadvantage and exclusion; and placing the person, family and community at the centre of the web of services, in an empowering way, rather than constructing them as voiceless recipients (Hayes et al, 2008; South Australian Government Social Inclusion Initiative, 2009).

Conclusions

In summary, Australian experience shows that adequate social protection is a fundamental pre-requisite to reducing the risk of social exclusion. But Australian and international experience also shows that adequate income support while necessary is not by itself sufficient to eradicate child poverty. It is of crucial importance to emphasise that all countries with low child poverty combine effective redistribution **and** low family joblessness.

These considerations point to the conclusion that policy choices in this area should not be constructed as choosing between either employment or social protection, but require a balanced approach that encourages increased employment among parents

and also increases the rewards of paid work, and creates carer-friendly employment arrangements, at the same time. In this context three points are relevant: first, in virtually all countries non-employed families are the most economically disadvantaged, so increased employment will assist those who are among the most disadvantaged; second, a policy of encouraging employment must be accompanied by effective and adequate transfer redistribution to low income families and children. Third, given the higher rates of joblessness among people, predominantly women, with child care responsibilities and other care-giving responsibilities for family members with chronic illness or disability, it is not sufficient to place emphasis only on employment itself as the end point. Rather, public policy development must also be focussed on providing decent, secure jobs that are not short-term and precarious, and that provide family and carer-friendly employment arrangements, including flexibility, family and carer leave arrangements and a supportive infrastructure of child care and other social care services to enable employment and care to be reconciled. Further, in order to do this, family care giving must be recognised and valued.

A further lesson of Australian and international experience is that social integration or inclusion needs to be seen in a broader framework than income poverty. Families in long-term poverty and with complex circumstances of disadvantage require both adequate social protection, as well as individually tailored education, training and employment programs, and services to address specific problems including, where relevant, appropriate health services and/or disability services, so that over time they can enter the paid labour market and maintain their labour market attachment. The challenge is to develop the comprehensive mix of policies that support secure employment which is family and carer friendly, and also provide adequate income support and social protection, in a manner which places the person, family and community at the centre of the web of services, in an empowering, capacity-building way.

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Table 1: Indicators of incomes of social assistance recipients with children and minimum wages, OECD countries, 2005

	Benefits as % of median household income		Earnings needed to reach poverty line, % of average wage		Minimum wage as % of median wage of full-time workers	Net incomes of full-time minimum wage earners % of median income	
	Lone parent	Couples with children	Lone parent	Couples with children		Lone parent	Couples with children
Australia	60	62	0	0	57	88	75
Austria	50	50	45	60	..	..	..
Belgium	43	37	58	67	51	50	47
Canada	36	33	60	93	40	48	43
Czech Republic	45	49	50	59	39	53	53
Denmark	61	52	2	79	..	..	..
Finland	52	54	24	74	..	..	..
France	44	42	29	43	62	52	45
Germany	54	54	31	33	..	..	..
Greece	2	2	56	65	48	42	36
Hungary	33	38	49	52	48	56	47
Ireland	52	58	26	52	54	77	60
Italy	0	0	59	67	..	..	..
Japan	52	48	63	72	33	58	53
Luxembourg	41	45	70	84	41	45	53
Netherlands	48	44	51	85	44	56	47
New Zealand	55	36	5	45	54	64	54
Norway	52	51	64	83	..	..	..
Poland	50	40	22	58	43	70	58
Portugal	32	40	68	59	48	39	45
Spain	27	23	75	87	44	31	27
Sweden	49	51	36	79	..	..	..
Switzerland	45	42	74	92	..	..	..
Turkey	0	0	38	44	37	41	35
United Kingdom	70	68	0	0	45	93	82
United States	21	22	98	116	32	36	34
OECD	41	40	44	63	46	55	50

Note: Includes housing benefits, assuming that rent is 20% of average wages.

Source: OECD 2007, Benefits and Wages, OECD Indicators and OECD.StatExtracts.

Table 2: Individual, household and family joblessness, 2005

	Non-employment rate for working age population	Share of working age population in jobless households	Share of households with children jobless	Ratio of household to individual joblessness	Ratio of family to individual joblessness
Australia	28.4	14.2	11.9	0.50	0.42
Austria	31.4	11.0	5.3	0.35	0.17
Belgium	39.0	18.6	12.0	0.48	0.31
Canada	27.5	6.2	3.9	0.23	0.14
Czech Republic	35.2	10.1	7.3	0.29	0.21
Denmark	24.5	9.2	4.7	0.38	0.19
Finland	32.0	7.3	3.9	0.23	0.12
France	37.7	11.6	4.4	0.31	0.12
Germany	34.5	19.4	16.3	0.56	0.47
Greece	39.7	6.5	1.4	0.16	0.04
Hungary	43.1	19.1	14.7	0.44	0.34
Iceland	..	2.1	1.7	..	..
Ireland	32.9	11.7	11.4	0.36	0.35
Italy	42.5	9.6	3.3	0.23	0.08
Japan	30.7	5.1	1.5	0.17	0.05
Korea	36.3	5.5	3.9	0.15	0.11
Luxembourg	36.4	7.1	2.3	0.20	0.06
Mexico	40.4	3.8	3.2	0.09	0.08
Netherlands	28.9	9.1	5.8	0.31	0.20
New Zealand	25.4	9.3	9.6	0.37	0.38
Norway	24.8	13.1	7.5	0.53	0.30
Poland	47.0	14.0	8.3	0.30	0.18
Portugal	32.5	5.9	3.9	0.18	0.12
Slovak Republic	42.3	10.6	6.4	0.25	0.15
Spain	35.7	5.8	3.5	0.16	0.10
Sweden	26.1	6.2	3.6	0.24	0.14
Switzerland	22.8	5.9	2.8	0.26	0.12
Turkey	54.1	10.4	7.5	0.19	0.14
United Kingdom	27.4	16.3	14.9	0.59	0.54
United States	28.5	6.3	4.5	0.22	0.16
OECD	34.1	9.7	6.4	0.28	0.19

Note: .. : Data not available. Source: OECD, *Growing Unequal* (2008) and OECD Income Distribution questionnaire.

Table 3: Poverty risks among households with children, around 2005

	Lone parents			All jobless households with children			Non-working lone parents		
	% of households with children	% of poor households with children	Poverty Risk	% of households with children	% of poor households with children	Poverty Risk	% of households with children	% of poor households with children	Poverty Risk
Australia	11.4	43.0	3.8	11.9	69.9	5.9	5.9	34.7	5.9
Austria	8.1	23.1	2.8	5.3	27.1	5.1	2.4	12.4	5.1
Belgium	9.5	25.3	2.7	12.0	54.8	4.6	4.3	19.5	4.6
Canada	9.4	33.4	3.5	3.9	26.0	6.7	2.1	14.0	6.7
Czech Republic	6.6	30.2	4.6	7.3	48.1	6.6	2.4	15.6	6.6
Denmark	12.3	49.3	4.0	4.7	39.8	8.4	2.8	23.3	8.4
Finland	9.4	34.3	3.6	3.9	35.5	9.1	1.9	17.3	9.1
Germany	13.9	43.9	3.2	16.3	63.2	3.9	7.1	27.5	3.9
Greece	2.6	5.7	2.2	1.4	5.8	4.2	0.4	1.5	4.2
Hungary	4.5	14.8	3.3	14.7	45.8	3.1	1.4	4.4	3.1
Iceland	9.5	23.4	2.5	1.7	6.6	3.9	1.3	5.2	3.9
Ireland	10.3	34.9	3.4	11.4	52.1	4.6	4.7	21.3	4.6
Italy	2.9	3.6	1.2	3.3	11.2	3.4	0.3	1.1	3.4
Korea	5.8	12.1	2.1	3.9	15.2	3.9	1.6	6.3	3.9
Luxembourg	4.3	16.1	3.7	2.3	7.1	3.2	0.4	1.3	3.2
Mexico	5.9	9.8	1.7	3.2	6.9	2.1	1.5	3.3	2.1
Netherlands	9.1	38.5	4.2	5.8	39.6	6.8	3.1	21.4	6.8
New Zealand	10.5	32.7	3.1	9.6	36.4	3.8	5.3	20.2	3.8
Norway	13.7	49.5	3.6	7.5	61.7	8.2	4.4	36.2	8.2
Poland	3.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0
Portugal	3.1	7.1	2.3	3.9	13.9	3.5	0.3	1.2	3.5
Slovak Republic	3.3	10.9	3.4	6.4	42.3	6.6	0.7	4.9	6.6
Spain	2.8	7.8	2.8	3.5	17.1	4.9	0.5	2.5	4.9
Sweden	16.1	35.2	2.2	3.6	24.1	6.8	2.2	15.2	6.8
Turkey	1.7	3.3	1.9	7.5	11.2	1.5	1.1	1.6	1.5
United Kingdom	15.7	43.1	2.7	14.9	62.9	4.2	8.2	34.7	4.2
United States	11.8	32.0	2.7	4.5	22.4	5.0	2.4	12.0	5.0
OECD	8.1	24.6	2.9	6.8	31.4	4.8	2.6	13.3	4.8

Notes: The poverty risk is the ratio of the share each group among poor households relative to their share among all households with children. ...: Data not available

Source: Calculated from OECD Income Distribution Study.

