

# **Children's Experiences with Poverty and Social Exclusion- challenges for Research and Policies**

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# Children's level of living – the impact of family economy for children's lives

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# Aim

- Connections between the family's economic situation and certain aspects of children's daily life.
- Children and parents' own strategies
- Identify adequate measures

Longitudinal study: 2003, 2006, 2009

Quantitative and qualitative data

Children and parents

## Samples

Two representative samples of informants from all parts of Norway.

- *Low-income sample*: children in families with equalised incomes below 60 % of median (1937 parents and 779 10-12 years-olds)
- *Control sample (smaller)*: children in families from all income groups

## Participants 2003

- Children: 779 10-12-years-olds
- Parents: 1937 - on behalf of themselves and of children aged 6-9
- Overall response rate: 54.4 %

# Content

## *Children:*

- School, leisure activities, health, family relations and their own financial means
- Harter (1982) "The perceived competence scale for children"
- Nowicki & Strickland (1973) "Locus of Control Scale"
- Bullying

## *Parents:*

- Demography, standard of living, social networks and health
- Relationship between parent and child & satisfaction with couple relationship

**Method:** Computer Assisted Interviewing

# Characteristics of samples

*Majority of control & one third of low-income sample:*

- Two-working-parent families with Norwegian or western background

*Overrepresented in low-income sample:*

- Lone parents: 21 % compared to 14 %
- Ethnic minority backgrounds: 21 % compared to 3 %
- Workless families.

## Standard of living – expected differences

Owned house:	55 % - 85 %
Children own room:	69 % - 91 %
Almost all families owned a phone, TV and CD-player	
A car/PC: %	80 % - 90
Annual holidays:	83 % - 96 %
Health problems:	22 % - 13 %
Psychological stress:	35 % - 25 %
Reduced quality of life:	26 % - 14 %
Insufficient money to cover needs:	12 %
Use saving:	5 %

## Fewer differences reported by the children

Enjoying school:	8 out of 10 children
Good relationship with teacher:	8 out of 10
Good relationship with pupils:	8 out of 10
Performing as well as others:	9 out of 10
Participating in leisure activities:	7 out of 10 - 9 out of 10
Stable friendships:	7/ 8 out of 10

Difficult economic situation: 6 % of low income children

## Differences in disfavour of low-income children

Performance below average	13 % - 6 %
Special education:	22 % - 14 %
Rarely inviting friends home:	28 % - 15 %
Three consumer items:	55 % - 79 %

Perceived self-confidence (Harter 1982):  
86.07 - 88.90,  $F = 8.88$ ,  $p < 0.003$ .

External locus of control (Nowicki&Strickland 1973):  
88.10 - 85.45,  $F = 13.25$ ,  $p < 0.000$

*NB. Children in ethnic minority families particularly disadvantaged.*

# Conclusions:

- Distribution of poverty within the family - parents try to protect their children
- Still: Differences on important areas in disfavour of low-income children
- Research design and the rhetoric of child poverty
- Ethics of work –ethics of care

# A rights-based approach to combat child poverty

## *A strong defence for universal welfare arrangements*

- Earning capacity of household
- Social transfers
- Day care facilities for children

## *A child-based perspective on existing welfare arrangements*

- Audit of welfare arrangements with regard to consequences for children
- Legal framework and service approaches of social assistance and child welfare protection

## *Free access to educational institutions and leisure activities*

- Compensation for school work
- Pocket-money
- Transportation