Poverty in lone parents: a gender perspective

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Eurofound

Experts meeting on Women and Poverty
Vilnius, 18 November 2015
Measurement of poverty

- Poverty is a multi-dimensional concept that goes beyond material conditions
- Europe2020 AROPE indicator: at risk of poverty or social exclusion
- Important to look at subjective measure (ability to make ends meet)
- Also relevant to consider broader context:
  - Mental well-being
  - Housing situation
  - Access to public services
### European Quality of Life Survey

#### Rounds

#### 4th EQLS (2016):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target population</th>
<th>Resident population of 18+ years living in private households, EU28 and AL, ME, fYR MK, RS, TR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork period</td>
<td>Sept-Dec 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>Minimum N=1000, an increase in 6 countries; top-up by countries possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling type</td>
<td>Random probability sampling: name-based and household registers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Random route sampling where above not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample stratification</td>
<td>By region and urbanisation level (except MT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview type</td>
<td>F2F - CAPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-administered – web add-on in 5 (TBC: DE, UK, PL, DK, SI) countries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eurofound’s conceptual framework on measuring quality of life

- Quality of life is measured by objective as well subjective indicators
- Quality of life as overarching frame that entails concepts at level of individual, family, community, and society
- EQLS is based on a multi-dimensional concept of QoL:
  - Goes beyond focus on living conditions or resources
  - Covers broad spectrum of domains of life
  - Analyses interrelationship between domains (such as work, family, health and wellbeing)
  - Addresses quality of society: trust, intergroup relations, quality of public and neighbourhood services
  - Gives voice to citizens and the perspectives that may not always be heard
Contents:

- Subjective wellbeing
- Health and mental wellbeing
- Living standards
- Work-life balance
- Public services
- Trust and tensions
- Participation and exclusion

Gender-relevant improvements to the 4th EQLS

- Expert meeting on **work-life balance and organisation of care** (November)
- Expert meeting on **participation in society** (November)
- Enlarged set of **childcare questions**
- New items on **non-material deprivation and child deprivation**
- Work: measurement of **work-intensity**?
- Living standards: **access to benefits**?
- Background variables (to identify **lone mothers**, blended families, etc.)

**Timeline:**
- above additions / dropping: 1st week of December
- Final review: 2nd week of December (7-11 DEC)
- Identification of items for cognitive testing: (14 DEC)
• Analysis of different types of European families
• Situation of lone parents is considerably worse than that of couple families

% Reporting difficulties making ends meet

Couple family: 16%

Single parent: 33%

(Eurofound, Third European Quality of Life Survey)
Analysis of lone parent families using EQLS data

• Analysis of different types of European families
• Situation of lone parents is considerably worse than that of couple families
• Employment matters

% Reporting difficulties making ends meet

Couple family
- Working: 10%
- Jobless: 55%

Lone parent
- Working: 26%
- Jobless: 52%

(Eurofound, Third European Quality of Life Survey)
Social exclusion (scale 1-5)

Couple family

Working: 2.0
Jobless: 2.6

Lone parent

Working: 2.2
Jobless: 2.9

(Eurofound, Third European Quality of Life Survey)
Lone parents: gender-specific differences (EQLS)

• Lone mothers are more vulnerable than lone fathers
• Lone mothers are more likely than lone fathers to be in precarious employment (part-time work; short-term contracts)
• Most lone mothers would be willing to work if given the opportunity to choose their working hours, with over 50% of inactive lone mothers expressing a preference to work part time
• Working lone mothers, whether they work full time or part time, work fewer hours than their male counterparts
• New Eurofound study, to be published in December 2015

• Analysis of social situation of disadvantaged families using EU-SILC data

• Examination of policy measures that mitigate the situation of disadvantaged families
Lone parents: EU SILC 2012

% At risk of poverty

% Reporting difficulties making ends meet
• Adequate income is key to supporting lone parents
• Lone parents must be helped to reconcile care responsibilities with employment
• Vulnerability is multi-dimensional
• Information and access to benefits and programmes should be simple
• Targeted support is equitable but too-narrow targeting defeats its purpose
Thank you

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Material deprivation

- Lone parent, working: 27% high deprivation, 31% low deprivation
- Lone parent, not working: 63% high deprivation, 27% low deprivation
- Couple family, two earners: 13% high deprivation, 21% low deprivation
- Couple family, one earner: 22% high deprivation, 32% low deprivation
- Couple family, neither working: 57% high deprivation, 26% low deprivation
- All families: 22% high deprivation, 26% low deprivation

(Eurofound, Third European Quality of Life Survey)
% reporting housing insecurity

(Couple family)

Working: 3%
Jobless: 17%

(Single parent)

Working: 9%
Jobless: 17%

(Eurofound, Third European Quality of Life Survey)
WHO-5 Index (Scale 0-100)

Couple family
- Working: 64
- Jobless: 57

Single parent
- Working: 59
- Jobless: 49

(Eurofound, Third European Quality of Life Survey)
## Access to childcare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Availability</th>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Difficulty with any</th>
<th>Difficulty with all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lone parent working part time</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone parent working full time</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone parent not working</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All single parents</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple: both working full time</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple: both working, one full time, one part time</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Couple: both working part time</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple: one working (full time)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple: one working (part time)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple: neither work</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All couple parents</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Q54a_1 Could you please tell me for each of the following care services if you or someone close to you has used it or would have liked to use it in the last 12 months? – Child care services – I or someone else in my household

Q55 To what extent did each of the following factors make it difficult or not for you, or someone close to you, to use childcare services? – Cost, Availability (such as waiting lists, lack of services), Access (for example, because of distance or opening-hours), Quality of care

Red shading indicates greater difficulty; green shading, less difficulty.