

# An International Comparison of Policies and Outcomes for Young Children

Shelley Phipps

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# Foreword

In November 1996, the Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) gathered a diverse group of Canadians in the boardroom of the Laidlaw Foundation to brainstorm the design of a project to address the question: *What is the Best Policy Mix for Canada's Children?* What drew the group together was the common desire to bridge the gap between research knowledge about child development and evidence of deterioration in the environment that shapes the lives of families and children. Participants included academics, federal and provincial policy advisors, representatives of professional organizations, child advocates, and independent analysts. (The presence of baby Anna underlined the vulnerability and potential of Canada's children.)

The participants considered the kinds of policy research needed to inform public understanding and create the political will needed to improve the lives of children and their families. The scope of the project was vast – work, family, health, education, recreation, transportation, social services, public safety, the environment, and so on. We realized that three key elements were missing from the existing knowledge base: 1) an understanding of how the needs of parents and children have changed over time, 2) basic information on how the social, economic and policy context affects families, and 3) an understanding of how the pieces fit together, in other words, what potential policy models might work for Canadians.

Workshop participants mapped a research schema, which demanded information on: the values and preferences of Canadians; how other countries deal with family policy issues; and the state of the evaluation research on policies that support children. CPRN's job would be to create new ways for *all* stakeholders – including families, employers, federal, provincial, and municipal governments, education and health institutions, and community organizations – to think about healthy child development. Suzanne Peters, Director of CPRN's Family Network, took on the challenge of transforming the workshop results into a research plan. Seven research papers were commissioned for the *Best Mix* project, all of which will be available over the next year. CPRN will also produce a synthesis report that interweaves the findings of these diverse projects.

This is the second of two major research projects on the international experience that were commissioned in tandem. Each was intended to provide a unique perspective on family policies in several industrialized countries in Europe and North America. In addition to using traditional forms of analysis, both studies included data on core social values and contained assessments of how different values may be linked to national policy strategies and differing child outcomes.

The first study, *Comparative Family Policy: Eight Countries' Stories* by CPRN Research Fellow Kathy O'Hara, was published in December 1998. It examines the *development* of family policies that affect children and families in eight countries. Although diverse in their political histories, each of the countries has been struggling with the same sets of issues, especially the transforming workplace, an evolving family structure, and the changing economic role of women. In this complementary study, Shelley Phipps from the Department of Economics at Dalhousie University compares social values data, tax and transfer policies, and child *outcomes* for five countries for which outcomes data are available.

The five countries Phipps studied – Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States – have all experienced a number of the same broad social and demographic trends. These include declining fertility rates, higher divorce rates, and increased labour force participation among mothers. However, there are marked differences between countries when these elements are compared directly. Other differences are found in the beliefs citizens hold about, for example, the reasons for income inequality (e.g., personal laziness versus social injustice). These markedly different core values are reflected in the different policy approaches that have – or have not – been taken to address issues such as this in the countries studied.

When child outcomes, in physical or behavioural terms, are compared across countries, differences are also evident. By overlaying child outcomes data on national policy approaches, a picture begins to emerge of how desired outcomes might be achieved with different policy strategies. This original research offers Canadians a chance to reflect on the complexity surrounding child outcomes. It also provides an opportunity to reflect on which policy approaches might best suit our particular social and political structures and also contribute to good outcomes for children.

I want to thank Shelley Phipps for her contributions to the *Best Mix* project and for this paper in particular. Thanks is also due to the members of the Advisory Committee who continue to contribute good ideas and valued advice. A special thanks is extended to the foundations and government agencies who funded the work. Their names are listed at the end of this publication.

Judith Maxwell  
January 1999

# Acknowledgments

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# An International Comparison of Policies and Outcomes for Young Children



# I

## Introduction

The goal of this project is to explore possible linkages between social policy mix and outcomes for young children (i.e., aged 0 to 11 years) in Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States. Of course, social policy is obviously not the only potential determinant of children's well-being. Some children are likely to be affected by almost any policy enacted (or not enacted) in any country. For example, monetary and fiscal policy, by affecting levels of interest rates and unemployment in the country, will affect the well-being of some children whose parents may or may not be able to afford to buy a house, whose parents may or may not find paid employment. The characteristics of the unemployment insurance programme will be vitally important for the well-being of some children whose parents face unemployment. However, since it is obviously not possible to consider every policy available in one country, let alone five countries, this study focuses on social policies explicitly designed with young children in mind. Further, since the analysis is quantitative in nature, the focus is primarily on the tax and transfer programmes available in the five countries that can more easily be studied using quantitative techniques.<sup>1</sup>

Until very recently, lack of appropriate data has meant that we have very little cross-country evidence comparing specific child outcomes in Canada with those experienced by children elsewhere. Thus the principal goal of this research is to establish

some initial benchmark comparisons, framed by a survey of the values/sociodemographic/policy context of each of the countries studied.

Why have we chosen to compare Canada with the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States? These four countries include two with programmes fairly similar in broad outline to those offered in Canada (the United Kingdom and the United States) and two that offer quite a different mix (the Netherlands and Norway). It is also true, for example, that Norway offers more extensive programmes for young children than Canada, while the United States offers less. Choosing countries with variation in both level of benefits and mix of programmes increases what can be learned from cross-country comparisons.

It should, however, be noted at the very beginning that the five countries studied differ significantly in terms of geography and culture. Canada and the United States are huge geographically, relatively "young" and have more ethnically heterogeneous populations than, for example, Norway or the Netherlands. Results should be interpreted with such differences in mind – some countries may have "easier problems"<sup>2</sup>; it may not always be possible to straightforwardly transfer a particular policy mix from one country to another, given differences in history, culture and circumstance.

Any country's policy mix can be characterized in many dimensions. A few of the more important

questions to ask about programmes for young children include:

1. What is the overall *level* of support provided?
2. Are children regarded as a public responsibility or primarily as the private responsibility of their parents? To re-phrase, are children viewed as “junior citizens” with rights of their own, or are they regarded as “consumer goods” chosen by their parents?
3. To what extent does concern about the work incentives of parents influence the design of policy for children?
4. Are programmes generally designed for all children; for all poor children; for some poor children? In part, this is the issue of whether or not programmes are targeted or universal. But, it is also true that receipt of some benefits depends not just on income but on other characteristics of (typically) the child’s parents.
5. Are benefits primarily delivered through the tax system, the cash transfer system or in kind? For example, some countries prefer to provide public daycare while others prefer to offer tax allowances for parents who pay for daycare.
6. Does the mix of programmes offered support/reinforce either the “stay-at-home mom” family or the two-earner family? For example, are generous/flexible parental leave programmes available? How do the tax and transfer systems affect the marginal return to women’s labour-force participation?
7. How do programmes for children affect the balance of power *within* families? For example, family allowances/child benefits issued in the mother’s name may increase financial resources under her control and may thus increase a mother’s power, which, some have argued, is to the advantage of children. Means-testing social assistance on a family basis, on the other hand, may mean that a woman is ineligible for income

she needs for her children on the assumption that her partner shares resources with her, though this may not always be true. Such a policy structure can reduce women’s relative bargaining power within a relationship.

This research attempts to move us toward an improved understanding of possible links between the mix of programmes available for children in any country and outcomes for children in that country. That is, do policy variations matter for the current well-being of young children? This is an extremely broad question and certainly not one which can be “answered” in any definitive way through the work presented here. Nonetheless, learning more about which programmes are available elsewhere and which outcomes for children are associated with these alternative policies can at least generate hypotheses about which aspects of policy matter and thus point the way to further research.

The analysis draws on a wide variety of data sources, including published sources (e.g., the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD]) but focussing on original analysis of microdata from the World Values Survey, the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) and five microdata sources that focus on child health and well-being (the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth [NLSCY] for Canada; the Stietz Archive Social Inequality and the Health of Children Survey for the Netherlands; Statistics Norway Health Survey; the National Child Development Study for the United Kingdom; and the National Survey of Children for the United States). While the microdata on outcomes were collected by individual countries for their own purposes, some comparisons of particular outcomes are possible (there is considerable overlap in content for Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom). While far from perfect, these comparisons provide a benchmark in an area about which little is currently known.

The organization of this report is as follows: Section II sets the stage with a general picture of

sociodemographic trends studied over the past 20 to 30 years in the five countries. Section III discusses the “family values” context of each country in a comparative way. Section IV provides a snapshot of contemporary sociodemographic characteristics. Section V outlines the policy mix available in each country in the period preceding outcomes data

collection (since it makes little sense to know about policy changes that occurred after evidence on child outcomes was gathered). Section VI briefly discusses the macroeconomic environment. Section VII outlines outcomes. Section VIII offers some preliminary conclusions. Charts and tables appear at the end of their respective sections.



## II

# Setting the Stage: Trends in Sociodemographic Characteristics for Five Countries

Each of the countries under study has experienced major social change over the last 30 to 40 years. With some important exceptions, the pattern and direction of change is the same in all countries, though there are important variations in degree.

In all countries, male labour-force participation rates have declined somewhat, though roughly 80 percent of men aged between 15 to 64 remain active in the labour force in all five countries (see Chart 2.1). Over the same period of time, female labour-force participation rates have increased dramatically (see Chart 2.2). For example, labour-force participation by women doubled in Canada, Norway and the Netherlands between 1960 and 1994. The rate of increase was slightly lower for the United States, but still dramatic (from 42.6 to 70.5 percent). Women's labour-force participation increased in the United Kingdom, but the rate at which this occurred was somewhat lower than in the other four countries, since the United Kingdom had the highest rate of participation in 1960 (46.1 percent) and one of the lowest in 1994 (65.6). While the upward trend in labour-force participation for women is common to all countries, there were/are important differences in levels of participation. For example, while the increase in female labour-force participation was most dramatic for the Netherlands, it is still true that women in the Netherlands are much less likely than those in the other countries to be engaged in paid labour (57.4 percent of women in the Netherlands were in

the labour force in 1994 versus 67.8 percent in Canada).<sup>3</sup> Rates of female labour-force participation are highest in the United States and Norway (70.5 and 71.6 percent, respectively).

Fertility (as measured by average number of children per woman aged 15 to 44) has declined in all five countries between 1970 and 1994 (for example from 2.3 to 1.7 for Canadian women, see Chart 2.3). The upward trend in female labour-force participation and downward trend in fertility mark changing roles for women in all countries (though this has been accompanied by some ambivalence in attitude as expressed by both men and women – see Section III). Interestingly, however, fertility rates are lowest in the Netherlands (1.56) where labour-force participation is lowest, and highest in the United States (2.00), one of the countries with the highest level of labour-force participation.

In all countries, the most significant reductions in fertility occurred before 1975. In the Netherlands, for example, fertility rates have been relatively constant, and consistently lower than in the other countries, since 1975. In the United States, fertility rates have also been relatively constant since 1975 and in general higher than in the other countries, with a further small increase since 1992. Norway also has relatively high fertility rates, with a slightly different pattern than the other countries. As in the other countries studied, fertility rates fell dramatically and consistently in Norway from 1970

to 1980. Since that time there has been a fairly consistent, though small, upward trend in fertility (though end of period fertility is still about half beginning of period fertility).

Divorce rates have also increased dramatically in all countries studied (see Chart 2.4), though the United States stands out as starting and ending with much higher divorce rates than elsewhere (4.76 divorces per 1,000 population in 1992 as compared with 3.01 in the United Kingdom, 2.71 in Canada, 2.38 in Norway and only 2.01 in the Netherlands).

These social trends mean that in any of the five countries studied, a child born in 1994 is more likely than a child born in 1960 to experience the divorce of his/her parents and to live for a time in a lone-parent home; to have a mother who has a job outside the home; and to have no siblings. However, while the trends are in the same direction, it is important to keep in mind that there are significant differences across countries in the levels of these variables. For example, a child born in 1994 in the Netherlands is much less likely

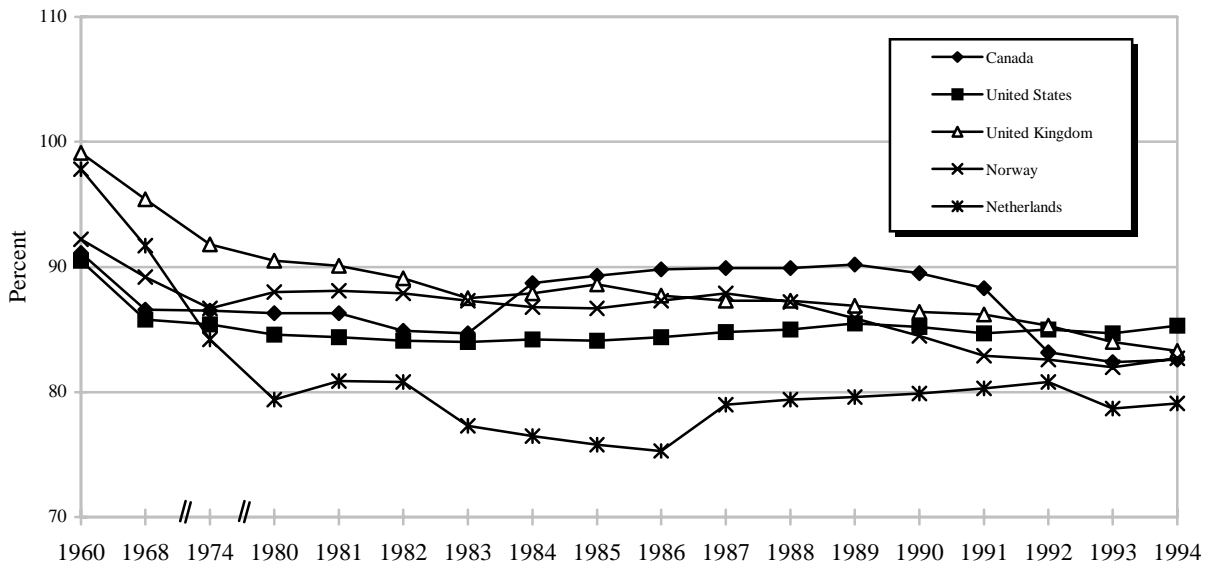
than a child born the same year in the United States to experience the divorce/separation of his/her parents, to live in a lone-parent household, and/or to have his/her mother in paid employment. It is also key to remember that the experience of these events in different countries (as well as at different points in time in the same country) has very different meanings, given differences in mediating policy context (e.g., availability of quality child care, availability of benefits for lone-parent families, etc.).

Income inequality (as measured with a Gini coefficient) has increased in all five countries (though only very slightly in Canada, despite significant increases in earnings inequality) during the 1980s and first half of the 1990s. The increase in income inequality has been particularly dramatic in the United Kingdom (see Smeeding and Gottschalk, 1998). The overall level of income inequality (as measured using a Gini coefficient) is much higher in the United States than the other countries; the United Kingdom has the second highest level of inequality; Norway has by far the lowest level of overall income inequality (see Chart 2.5).



**Chart 2.1**

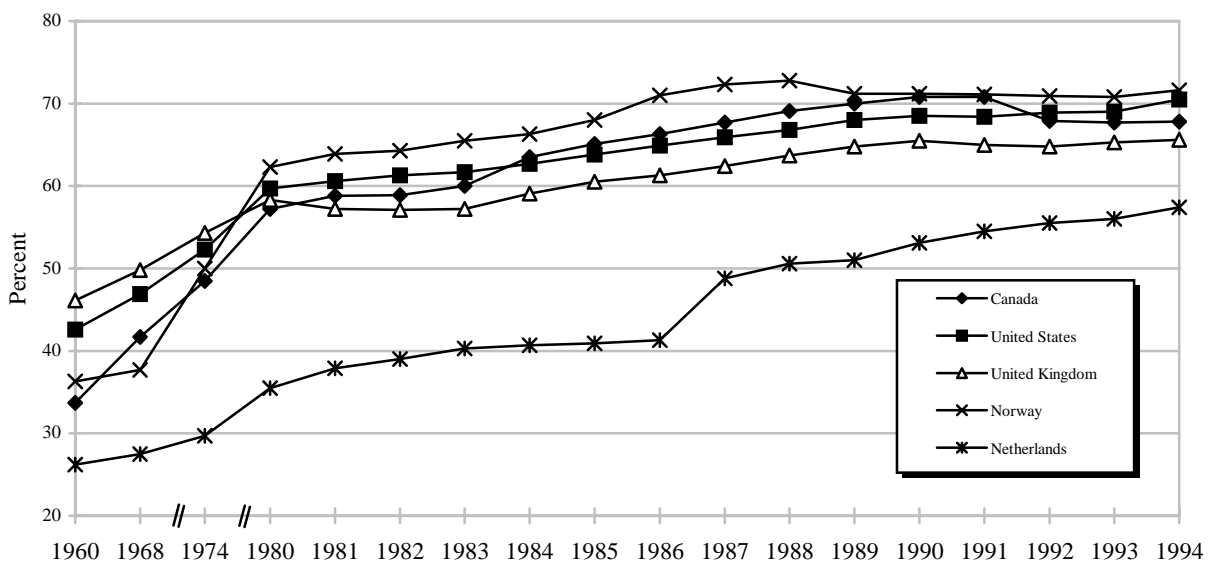
**Male Labour Force as a Percent of Male Population (Ages 15 to 64)**



Source: Historical statistics, OECD (1960-93/1960-94).

**Chart 2.2**

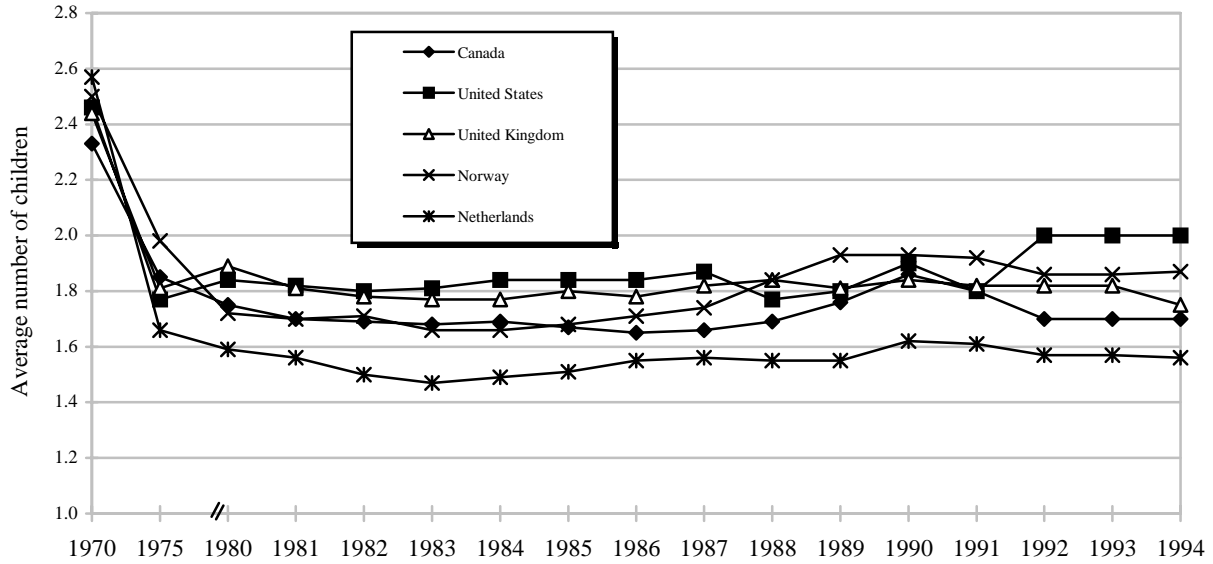
**Female Labour Force as a Percent of Female Population (Ages 15 to 64)**



Source: Historical statistics, OECD (1960-93/1960-94).

**Chart 2.3**

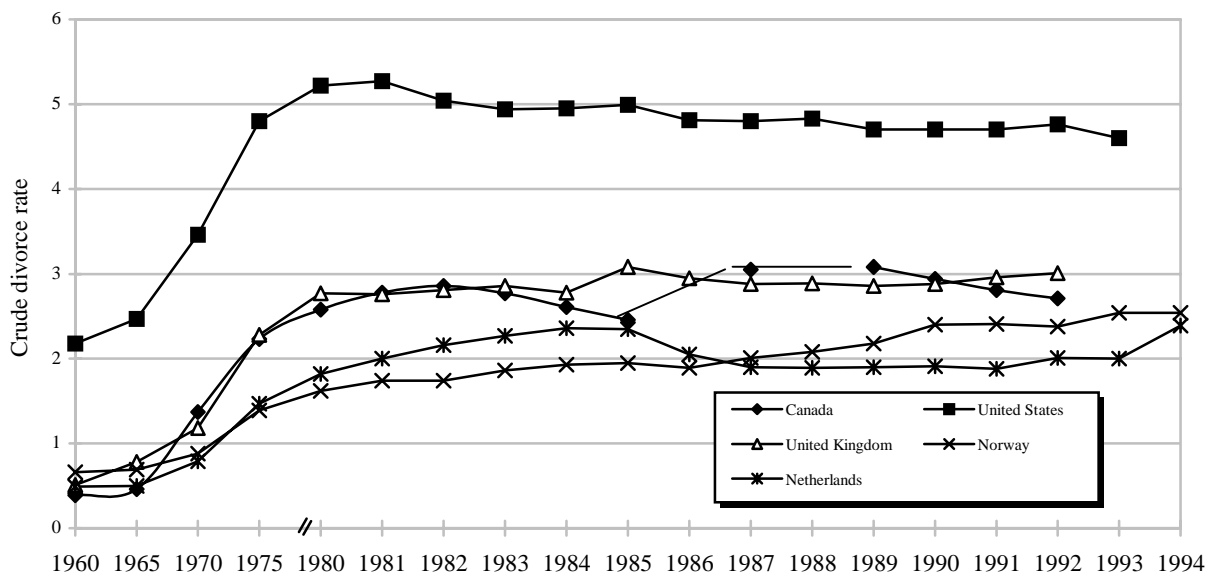
**Fertility Rates, Average Number of Children per Woman (Aged 15 to 44)**



Source: OECD (1993).

**Chart 2.4**

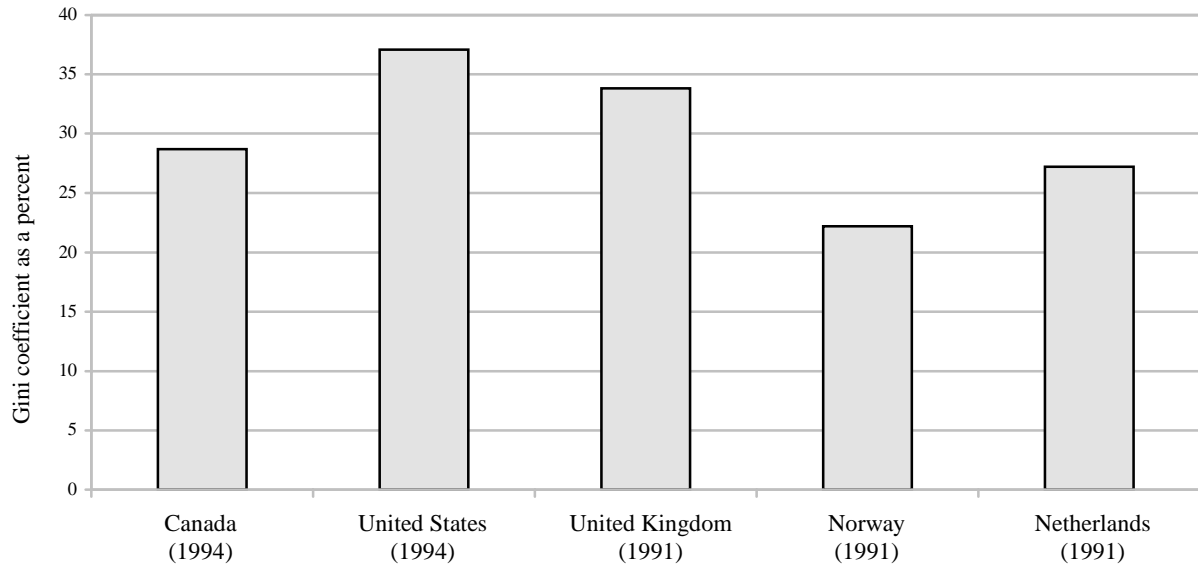
**Crude Divorce Rates by Urban/Rural Residence**



Source: United Nations Demographic Yearbook, New York (1976, 1982, 1990, 1994).

**Chart 2.5**

**Income Inequality as Measured with Gini Coefficients**



Source: Osberg and Xu (1997).



# III

## Values

An important dimension of the environment that children experience is the prevailing set of social values. To elaborate, this section presents results tabulated using the World Values Survey.<sup>4</sup>

It has been argued (e.g., Kamerman, 1980; Phipps, 1995*a*) that people in Europe are willing to accept social responsibility for children while people in North America are more likely to view children as a private responsibility. While policy choices certainly indicate that this is so, policy choices may or may not reflect the “average” values of men and women living in the country. Unfortunately, there is no question in the World Values Survey that specifically addresses this issue. Tables 3.1*a* and 3.1*b* give some idea of societal attitudes toward children by comparing reported ideal family sizes for men versus women and for individuals with and without children, respectively.<sup>5</sup> For all countries, it is clear that the modal choice of ideal family size is two children. Very few respondents reported that zero or one child would be their ideal family size. Three children is the second most likely choice. This basic pattern appears common across the countries, though a multivariate analysis<sup>6</sup> of data from the five countries pooled indicates that Canadians report larger ideal family sizes than any of the other countries studied (though our fertility rates are not higher, as noted in the previous section). There is no statistically significant difference between men and women, nor according to income level; however,

individuals with children report larger ideal family sizes than those without.

Does this indicate that children are more important to Canadians? This is not obvious. It is one thing to like the idea of having more children yourself; it is another to care about other people’s children. Another question asked in the World Values Survey, which is relevant here, is “Which groups of people would you NOT like to have as neighbours?” One of the possible choices was “large families.” Tables 3.2*a* and 3.2*b* again report answers to this question for men and women and for individuals with and without children, respectively. Table 3.2*c* reports the results of a probit analysis (of the probability of mentioning that you would not like to have a large family as neighbour). Results suggest that women are less likely to be worried about living beside large families. This is also true for individuals who are married and/or who have children of their own. Income is not a statistically significant predictor. Individuals living in the United States or the United Kingdom are more likely than Canadians to report that they would not like to have a “large family” as neighbour; there is no statistically significant difference between individuals living in Canada and those living in Norway or the Netherlands. Again, this is far from being evidence that people in the United States or the United Kingdom would be less willing to support policies for children, though it is consistent with a less child-friendly policy environment in these countries.

Since ideas about what constitutes a “good parent” may influence both the policy choices made in a country and the style of parenting most commonly adopted (which will influence outcomes for children directly), Tables 3.3 and 3.4 report on individual attitudes toward parenting, regardless of whether or not the individual has or has ever had children. Tables 3.3a, 3.3b and 3.3c focus on the issue of whether parents “should do the best for their children *even at the expense of the parents’ well-being*,” or whether they should *not* be asked to sacrifice themselves for their children. The form of the sacrifice is not specified – it could presumably include sacrifice of living standard and/or career aspirations and/or leisure time, according to the respondent’s own interpretation. If people in general in a country feel that parents should sacrifice standard of living when they choose to have children, then such an attitude might be associated with lower level/fewer programmes for families with children. If people in general feel that parents (typically mothers) should sacrifice career aspirations, then policies that help to balance family and workplace responsibilities are likely to be less well developed (e.g., maternity leave, leave for sick children, child care). Of course, “sacrificing” *one-self* for one’s children (as opposed to thinking someone else should sacrifice himself/herself for his/her children) indicates dedication to children, which may be positively associated with child outcomes (or may not be, if the parent feels too “sacrificed” he/she may not be happy and therefore may not be the best parent).

A first important point to take from Tables 3.3a to 3.3c is that women are significantly less likely than men to state that parents should be prepared to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their children. Presumably it is easier to say that sacrifices should be made when you are less likely to be the one having to make the sacrifice. On the other hand, individuals with children are more likely to say that parents should make sacrifices for their children. Higher-income individuals are less likely to believe sacrifices should be made for children as are younger individuals.<sup>7</sup> Finally, Canadians are less likely to say sacrifices should be made than individuals in

the other countries studied; there is no other significant difference between countries. This is surprising, since Canadian policy is much less supportive of families with children than policy in, for example, Norway. This is perhaps indicative of a certain level of ambivalence among Canadians who appear to think that parents should not necessarily make sacrifices for children, yet are not prepared to pay for programmes that would mean less sacrifice by parents (e.g., via cash transfers or via increased services for families with children).

Tables 3.4a to 3.4m report on qualities people feel children should learn at home. This should affect children directly both in terms of what parents try to teach and in terms of expectations/pressures children face. Notice, first, that there are some broad similarities across countries. For example, a majority of respondents (male and female) in all countries cite good manners and tolerance and respect for others as qualities children should learn at home. Responsibility is mentioned by a majority of respondents in all countries, except the United Kingdom (where nearly half of respondents mention this quality). On the other hand, imagination and thrift are not viewed as particularly important in any country (fewer than one-third of respondents mention these qualities). While there is some consensus about what children should learn at home, there are also striking differences across the countries. Respondents in Norway answer these questions rather differently than do Canadians: they are much more likely to mention independence, more likely to mention good manners, responsibility and imagination, much less likely to mention hard work or unselfishness, less likely to mention religious faith or tolerance/respect. Respondents in the United Kingdom are much more likely than those in Canada to mention the importance of good manners, unselfishness and obedience; they are significantly less likely to mention responsibility, hard work, imagination or religious faith. Respondents in the United States are somewhat more likely than Canadians to mention independence, hard work, imagination and religious faith; they are less likely to mention tolerance/respect.

We might, a priori, expect people without children to answer these questions somewhat differently from people with children. However, Table 3.4b indicates that broad patterns of responses are not very different. Regression results indicate that parents respond differently from non-parents for about 6 of the 11 qualities (they are more likely to mention good manners, independence, responsibility and determination; less likely to mention hard work or tolerance/respect).

There are also some significant gender differences. Women are significantly more likely to mention independence, responsibility, tolerance/respect and religious faith; they are less likely than men to mention hard work, thrift or determination.

Finally, answers differ by income level in 9 of 11 cases. Individuals with higher incomes are more likely to mention independence, responsibility, imagination, tolerance/respect, determination, and unselfishness; they are less likely to mention good manners, thrift or religious faith. (The World Values Survey unfortunately does not report education levels of respondents. However, since higher education is usually associated with higher incomes, these results may reflect differences in level of education.)

An interesting question to ask is whether or not there are any observable differences in children's behaviour that reflect differences in emphasis across countries in what children are expected to learn (and correspondingly in pressures children face to learn/achieve). To the extent that parents have different expectations of what children should learn/be, parents may also make different assessments of how their children behave. For example, since parents in the United States value independence more highly than do Canadian parents, they may, on the one hand, be less willing to admit that their child "clings"; on the other hand, if children in the United States are more likely to be taught independence (and so are in general more independent), then a small amount of "clinging" (which might be disregarded in another country) could be mentioned as a behaviour problem in the United States.

These issues are further developed in Section VII, which reports on behavioural outcomes for children in the five countries.

The World Values Survey contains other indicators of attitudes toward "family-related" matters that show differences across the countries. For example, Tables 3.5a through 3.5f examine attitudes toward abortion in a variety of circumstances. In all countries, there is much more support for abortion in a situation where the mother's health is at risk; much less support if the abortion is because the woman is not married or the couple want no more children. Women are significantly more likely than men to support abortion (except in the case where the couple want no additional children, where there is no statistical difference).

Individuals with children are less likely to favour abortion in the case where the woman is unmarried or the couple do not want additional children. Higher-income individuals are in all cases more likely to approve of abortion. Individuals in Norway are in all cases more likely than individuals in Canada to approve of abortion. Individuals in the United States are less likely than Canadians to approve of abortion when the mother's health is at risk or the child might be born physically handicapped; there is no statistical difference between Canada and the United States otherwise. Individuals in the United Kingdom are in general more supportive of abortion than are Canadians. Individuals in the Netherlands are more supportive in the cases where the mother's health may be at risk, or the child may be born physically handicapped. Otherwise, there is no statistically significant difference.

Acceptance of single-mother families also varies across the countries. Tables 3.6a, 3.6b and 3.6c focus on the question: "Is it okay for a single woman to have a child even though she doesn't have a stable relationship with a man?" Women are significantly less likely to disapprove; older people are significantly more likely to disapprove. Individuals in Norway are significantly more likely to disapprove than Canadians; otherwise, there are no significant cross-country differences.

Tables 3.7a, 3.7b and 3.7c analyse the question “Can a working mother establish just as warm/secure a relationship with her children as a mother who doesn’t work outside the home?” Women are significantly less likely to disagree with this statement than are men. The same is true for individuals with children versus those without. Older respondents are more likely to disagree as are married people. Higher income is associated with a lower probability of disagreeing (there is, of course, an endogeneity problem that has not been addressed here insofar as families with mom working outside the home are probably less likely to feel that this is damaging to their children). Finally, across countries, respondents in the United States, Norway and the Netherlands are less likely to disagree that working moms can have warm relationships with their children than Canadian respondents. There is no statistically significant difference between Canada and the United Kingdom in answers to this question.

Tables 3.8a, 3.8b and 3.8c address much the same issue, though with a focus on younger children, which appears to be an even more sensitive issue: “Will a pre-school child suffer if his or her mother works outside the home?” Again, women are much less likely than men to believe this to be so. Older respondents are more likely to feel the child will suffer. Higher-income respondents are less likely to think the child will suffer. Respondents in Norway and the United States are less likely than Canadians to worry that working mothers will cause pre-schoolers to suffer; in this case respondents in the Netherlands are more likely to worry. There is again no statistical difference between Canada and the United Kingdom.

Tables 3.9 and 3.10 move away from specifically child or family focussed values to more general social attitudes, which may be associated with style of welfare state (i.e., the nature of social policy in general, as well as child-related policy in particular). Tables 3.9a, 3.9b and 3.9c study answers to the question “Why are there people who live in need?” Possible answers include: unlucky, laziness, social injustice, part of progress, none of the above. As a quick glance at Table 3.9a reveals, there are important differences in answers to this question by gender and by country. For example,

women in all countries are less likely to believe that people live in need because they are lazy; more likely to feel that people live in need as a result of social injustice (though there is very little difference between male and female answers to this question in Norway). Multivariate probit analysis of the determinants of the probability of believing people live in need because they are lazy indicates that individual living in the United States are significantly more likely than Canadians to believe this is true, individuals living in any of the other countries are significantly less likely to believe this is true. Moreover, the differences between Canada and the United States and between Canada and the United Kingdom, while significant, are small relative to the differences between Canada and either Norway or the Netherlands. This pattern accords with much cross-country comparative research on social policy in general (e.g., Esping-Andersen, 1990; Gauthier, 1996; and Ringen, 1987), all of which groups Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom together as “liberal” countries very much focussed on preserving efficiency through the maintenance of appropriate work incentives. That is, policy discussion in these countries is extremely concerned that “too generous” transfers will lead people, naturally lazy, to take advantage of the programmes by working less for pay and “enjoying” more time jobless. Such thinking goes back many years (e.g., the British Poor Laws of the 17th century), but still characterizes policy discussion today.

Finally, Tables 3.10a, b and c focus on attitudes toward income inequality. Survey respondents were asked “On a scale of 1-10, what are your views about income distribution?” Table 3.10c indicates that women are much more egalitarian than men; higher-income individuals are less egalitarian. Individuals living in the United States are significantly less egalitarian than Canadians; respondents living in any other country are significantly more egalitarian than Canadians. Again, this is particularly true of respondents from Norway and the Netherlands, where income inequality is much lower than it is in Canada or the United States, in large part because people have been willing to interfere with market-based income distribution through extensive taxes and transfers.



**Table 3.1a**  
**Societal Attitudes toward Children, by Gender**

Ideal number of children	Canada		United States		United Kingdom		Norway		Netherlands	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0	1.77	0.94	2.20	2.27	0.65	0.66	10.88	11.94	2.03	2.58
1	1.78	1.83	2.85	3.35	1.96	3.08	0.79	0.83	1.42	3.86
2	47.20	44.86	52.14	48.59	64.61	57.31	47.00	37.98	54.35	47.51
3	30.45	30.05	23.60	25.54	19.53	26.39	33.44	36.65	30.71	28.47
4	14.75	18.13	12.18	15.04	9.89	11.31	6.47	11.11	8.88	16.16
5 or more	4.05	4.19	7.03	5.19	3.35	1.24	1.42	1.49	2.61	1.43
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	99.98	99.99	99.99	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.01

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.1b**  
**Societal Attitudes toward Children, Individuals without and with Children**

Ideal number of children	Canada		United States		United Kingdom		Norway		Netherlands	
	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children
0	3.12	0.59	4.26	1.47	1.19	0.43	12.01	11.15	5.22	0.70
1	2.16	1.66	3.49	2.87	2.71	2.46	0.84	0.80	4.12	1.93
2	49.56	44.48	55.23	48.82	66.32	58.53	49.44	39.82	54.81	48.42
3	29.61	30.52	23.45	24.82	20.08	24.33	29.61	37.20	20.88	34.36
4	12.29	18.26	11.05	14.73	7.87	11.79	6.42	9.67	13.33	12.43
5 or more	3.26	4.47	2.52	7.30	1.84	2.45	1.68	1.37	1.65	2.16
Total	100.00	99.98	100.00	100.01	100.01	99.99	100.00	100.01	100.01	100.00

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.2a**

**Societal Attitudes toward Large Families, by Gender**

Would not like to have people with large families as neighbours	Canada		United States		United Kingdom		Norway		Netherlands	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Mentioned	6.38	6.34	9.08	8.91	11.15	10.44	7.72	4.64	10.43	4.93
No mention	93.62	93.66	90.92	91.09	88.85	89.56	92.28	95.36	89.57	95.07
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.2b**

**Societal Attitudes toward Large Families, Individuals without and with Children**

Would not like to have people with large families as neighbours	Canada		United States		United Kingdom		Norway		Netherlands	
	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children
Mentioned	6.65	6.23	13.17	7.32	8.89	11.60	7.52	5.68	8.10	7.09
No mention	93.35	93.77	86.83	92.68	91.11	88.40	92.48	94.32	91.90	92.91
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.2c****Probit Regression, Groups of People You Would Not Like as Neighbours – Large Families**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	-0.121*	0.045
Dummy = 1 if married	-0.175*	0.055
Dummy = 1 if children	-0.161*	0.060
Age of respondent	0.018**	0.008
Age squared	-0.0001	0.0001
Income	0.011	0.009
Dummy = 1 if United States	0.138**	0.068
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	0.265*	0.063
Dummy = 1 if Norway	-0.099	0.083
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	0.077	0.106
Intercept	-1.920*	0.179
Ordered value = 1 mention = 0 no		481 5,509

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey

**Table 3.3a**

**Societal Attitudes toward Parents' Responsibility, by Gender**

Parents' responsibility to their children	Canada		United States		United Kingdom		Norway		Netherlands	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Sacrifice own well-being	70.42	63.63	77.03	72.16	74.74	73.29	77.51	67.28	77.19	57.05
Neither	11.04	12.24	7.48	10.11	5.69	7.56	13.72	20.74	8.10	15.78
Not sacrifice own well-being	18.54	24.13	15.49	17.73	19.58	19.15	8.77	11.97	14.71	27.17
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.01	100.00	100.00	99.99	100.00	100.00

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.3b**

**Societal Attitudes toward Parents' Responsibility, Individuals without and with Children**

Parents' responsibility to their children	Canada		United States		United Kingdom		Norway		Netherlands	
	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children
Sacrifice own well-being	61.84	69.12	68.66	77.07	64.57	78.10	61.65	76.96	57.28	71.57
Neither	12.57	11.27	9.89	8.43	9.50	5.43	24.15	14.29	17.05	9.47
Not sacrifice own well-being	25.59	19.61	21.46	14.50	25.93	16.47	14.20	8.76	25.67	18.96
Total	100.00	100.00	100.01	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.01	100.00	100.00

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.3c****OLS Regression,<sup>1</sup> Attitudes toward Parents' Responsibility**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	0.139*	0.020
Dummy = 1 if married	-0.011	0.026
Dummy = 1 if children	-0.194*	0.028
Age of respondent	0.009**	0.004
Age squared	-0.0001*	0.00004
Income	0.011*	0.004
Dummy = 1 if United States	-0.098*	0.030
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	-0.080*	0.028
Dummy = 1 if Norway	-0.146*	0.034
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	-0.031	0.047
Intercept	1.436*	0.079
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		0.036

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.

1 Dependent Variable = Which of the following statements best describes your views about parents' responsibilities to their children?

1. Parents' duty is to do the best for their children even at the expense of their own well-being.

2. Neither.

3. Parents have a life of their own and should not be asked to sacrifice their own well-being for the sake of their children.

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.4a**

**Attitudes toward Qualities Children Should Learn at Home, by Gender**

Qualities children should learn at home	Canada		United States		United Kingdom		Norway		Netherlands	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Good manners	75.97	74.13	77.24	77.73	88.23	89.67	76.06	77.98	80.27	80.13
Independence	40.99	46.49	46.73	58.40	36.96	48.40	83.15	88.91	46.37	52.18
Hard work	40.08	30.29	55.41	41.50	34.68	23.38	8.35	4.80	20.54	10.73
Responsibility	71.67	78.29	68.78	73.18	46.54	48.57	87.87	91.56	86.98	84.92
Imagination	24.98	20.77	26.53	27.53	20.44	16.51	27.24	35.60	17.35	26.54
Tolerance and respect for others	79.62	80.37	70.10	73.89	77.27	81.00	58.58	69.04	83.19	88.85
Thrift/value of money and things	22.26	20.57	29.80	26.92	24.55	27.94	22.68	20.53	26.77	28.09
Determination	37.98	37.36	36.84	34.11	33.37	29.04	35.43	29.97	35.71	27.52
Religious faith	27.71	33.19	51.43	56.38	16.40	21.15	11.50	16.89	15.82	11.97
Unselfishness	43.48	41.05	35.51	38.46	57.74	57.10	12.13	6.79	25.15	20.67
Obedience	26.11	30.61	38.47	36.64	38.15	40.47	32.60	29.97	31.42	32.80

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.4b**  
**Attitudes toward Qualities Children Should Learn at Home, Individuals without and with Children**

Qualities children should learn at home	Canada		United States		United Kingdom		Norway		Netherlands	
	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children
Good manners	73.73	75.58	78.29	77.35	87.50	89.62	71.03	79.43	74.54	83.46
Independence	45.24	43.19	51.07	53.04	41.98	43.32	85.24	86.25	53.02	47.47
Hard work	37.10	34.18	50.18	47.86	32.77	27.06	6.13	6.82	11.48	17.43
Responsibility	73.59	75.70	64.77	73.55	43.99	49.17	87.19	90.68	82.69	87.70
Imagination	27.31	20.88	31.67	25.48	18.78	18.23	34.82	29.89	28.31	18.84
Tolerance and respect for others	78.61	80.61	69.04	72.93	80.24	78.76	62.40	64.20	86.34	86.19
Thrif/value of money and things	20.29	21.87	25.80	29.35	19.77	29.18	18.94	22.73	24.23	29.36
Determination	42.90	35.40	38.26	34.53	33.41	30.11	30.92	33.52	28.69	32.79
Religious faith	22.39	34.03	45.02	57.53	16.03	20.11	15.32	13.64	9.07	16.45
Unselfishness	44.12	41.42	37.90	36.60	62.73	55.08	10.58	9.09	25.17	21.33
Obedience	24.69	30.03	36.65	38.54	37.67	40.09	34.82	29.89	33.33	31.49

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

Table 3.4c

**Probit Regression, Important Qualities That Children Can Be Encouraged to Learn at Home – Good Manners**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	-0.045	0.036
Dummy = 1 if married	0.151*	0.045
Dummy = 1 if children	0.103***	0.049
Age of respondent	-0.036*	0.007
Age squared	0.0004*	0.0001
Income	-0.032*	0.008
Dummy = 1 if United States	0.026	0.050
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	0.582*	0.052
Dummy = 1 if Norway	0.057	0.056
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	0.158**	0.079
Intercept	1.351*	0.144
Ordered value = 1 mention = 0 no		4,676 1,314

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.  
Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

Table 3.4d

**Probit Regression, Important Qualities That Children Can Be Encouraged to Learn at Home – Independence**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	0.283*	0.033
Dummy = 1 if married	-0.158*	0.041
Dummy = 1 if children	0.136*	0.044
Age of respondent	0.012**	0.006
Age squared	-0.0002*	0.0001
Income	0.026*	0.0069
Dummy = 1 if United States	0.262*	0.046
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	-0.029	0.044
Dummy = 1 if Norway	1.333*	0.061
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	0.210*	0.072
Intercept	-0.493*	0.125
Ordered value = 1 mention = 0 no		3,225 2,765

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.  
Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.



**Table 3.4e**

**Probit Regression, Important Qualities That Children Can Be Encouraged to Learn at Home – Hard Work**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	-0.309*	0.034
Dummy = 1 if married	-0.007	0.042
Dummy = 1 if children	-0.203*	0.046
Age of respondent	0.022*	0.006
Age squared	-0.0002*	0.0001
Income	0.011	0.0073
Dummy = 1 if United States	0.340*	0.047
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	-0.190*	0.045
Dummy = 1 if Norway	-1.168*	0.070
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	-0.707*	0.085
Intercept	-0.745*	0.131
Ordered value = 1 mention = 0 no		1,779 4,211

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent. Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.4f**

**Probit Regression, Important Qualities That Children Can Be Encouraged to Learn at Home – Responsibility**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	0.157*	0.034
Dummy = 1 if married	0.007	0.042
Dummy = 1 if children	0.114**	0.046
Age of respondent	0.006	0.006
Age squared	-0.00003	0.0001
Income	0.029*	0.007
Dummy = 1 if United States	-0.076	0.049
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	-0.750*	0.046
Dummy = 1 if Norway	0.646*	0.065
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	0.539*	0.090
Intercept	0.151	0.129
Ordered value = 1 mention = 0 no		4,361 1,629

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent. Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.4g****Probit Regression, Important Qualities That Children Can Be Encouraged to Learn at Home – Imagination**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	0.005	0.035
Dummy = 1 if married	-0.071	0.044
Dummy = 1 if children	0.025	0.047
Age of respondent	-0.008	0.006
Age squared	-0.00005	0.0001
Income	0.024*	0.007
Dummy = 1 if United States	0.164*	0.050
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	-0.119**	0.049
Dummy = 1 if Norway	0.324*	0.055
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	0.064	0.078
Intercept	-0.401*	0.134
Ordered value = 1 mention = 0 no		1,498 4,492

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.  
Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.4h****Probit Regression, Important Qualities That Children Can Be Encouraged to Learn at Home – Tolerance/Respect**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	0.162*	0.035
Dummy = 1 if married	0.082***	0.043
Dummy = 1 if children	-0.080***	0.047
Age of respondent	0.027*	0.006
Age squared	-0.0003*	0.0001
Income	0.028*	0.007
Dummy = 1 if United States	-0.211*	0.051
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	-0.009	0.050
Dummy = 1 if Norway	-0.467*	0.056
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	0.335*	0.091
Intercept	0.028	0.132
Ordered value = 1 mention = 0 no		4,615 1,375

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.  
Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.4i**

**Probit Regression, Important Qualities That Children Can Be Encouraged to Learn at Home – Thrift**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	-0.074**	0.035
Dummy = 1 if married	0.090**	0.043
Dummy = 1 if children	-0.030	0.047
Age of respondent	0.005	0.006
Age squared	0.00005	0.0001
Income	-0.060*	0.007
Dummy = 1 if United States	0.084***	0.050
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	0.135*	0.048
Dummy = 1 if Norway	-0.101***	0.059
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	0.094	0.079
Intercept	-0.791*	0.135
Ordered value = 1 mention = 0 no		1,477 4,513

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.4j**

**Probit Regression, Important Qualities That Children Can Be Encouraged to Learn at Home – Determination**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	-0.068**	0.032
Dummy = 1 if married	-0.149*	0.041
Dummy = 1 if children	0.088**	0.044
Age of respondent	-0.006	0.006
Age squared	0.00001	0.0001
Income	0.065*	0.007
Dummy = 1 if United States	0.011	0.047
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	-0.242*	0.045
Dummy = 1 if Norway	-0.097***	0.053
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	-0.125***	0.073
Intercept	-0.381*	0.125
Ordered value = 1 mention = 0 no		2,070 3,920

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.4k**

**Probit Regression, Important Qualities That Children Can Be Encouraged to Learn at Home – Religious Faith**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	0.126*	0.035
Dummy = 1 if married	0.106**	0.043
Dummy = 1 if children	-0.009	0.048
Age of respondent	0.016**	0.006
Age squared	-0.00005	0.0001
Income	-0.042*	0.008
Dummy = 1 if United States	0.536*	0.047
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	-0.466*	0.049
Dummy = 1 if Norway	-0.654*	0.061
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	-0.642*	0.088
Intercept	-0.964*	0.135
Ordered value = 1 mention = 0 no		1,776 4,214

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent. Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.4l**

**Probit Regression, Important Qualities That Children Can Be Encouraged to Learn at Home – Unselfishness**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	-0.016	0.033
Dummy = 1 if married	0.030	0.041
Dummy = 1 if children	-0.066	0.045
Age of respondent	-0.002	0.006
Age squared	-0.0002	0.0001
Income	0.015**	0.007
Dummy = 1 if United States	-0.115**	0.046
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	0.455*	0.044
Dummy = 1 if Norway	-1.066*	0.063
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	-0.475*	0.076
Intercept	-0.117	0.126
Ordered value = 1 mention = 0 no		2,134 3,856

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent. Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.4m****Probit Regression, Important Qualities That Children Can Be Encouraged to Learn at Home – Obedience**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	-0.051	0.032
Dummy = 1 if married	0.082**	0.041
Dummy = 1 if children	0.066	0.044
Age of respondent	-0.013**	0.006
Age squared	0.0001**	0.0001
Income	-0.063*	0.007
Dummy = 1 if United States	0.1521*	0.048
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	0.331*	0.045
Dummy = 1 if Norway	-0.006	0.055
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	-0.003	0.076
Intercept	-0.013	0.125
Ordered value = 1 mention		1,995
= 0 no		3,995

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.5a**

**Societal Attitudes toward Abortion, by Gender**

Abortion approval under particular circumstances	Canada		United States		United Kingdom		Norway		Netherlands	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Mother's health is at risk	91.74	92.12	84.77	86.78	90.81	94.47	97.09	98.15	93.18	93.98
Child to be born handicapped	63.21	63.55	53.16	54.35	76.46	82.43	73.54	66.67	63.48	65.35
Woman is not married	31.96	32.63	28.18	29.92	32.97	36.76	44.89	45.36	30.98	32.58
Couple want no more children	30.72	29.17	25.55	25.56	42.29	38.95	47.33	44.46	28.19	29.53

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.5b**

**Societal Attitudes toward Abortion, Individuals without and with Children**

Abortion approval under particular circumstances	Canada		United States		United Kingdom		Norway		Netherlands	
	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children
Mother's health is at risk	91.11	92.29	86.38	85.41	94.29	92.03	96.25	98.15	93.55	93.65
Child to be born handicapped	60.75	64.51	58.08	52.64	77.10	80.58	64.08	72.72	59.98	67.15
Woman is not married	40.61	28.74	37.41	25.68	35.44	34.73	46.93	44.39	35.26	29.85
Couple want no more children	35.19	27.68	34.29	22.04	40.54	40.57	45.03	46.30	35.04	25.39

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.5c****Approve or Disapprove of Abortion under These Circumstances, Where the Mother's Health Is at Risk by the Pregnancy**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	0.169*	0.047
Dummy = 1 if married	0.083	0.057
Dummy = 1 if children	-0.80	0.064
Age of respondent	0.021*	0.008
Age squared	-0.0002*	0.0001
Income	0.059*	0.010
Dummy = 1 if United States	-0.220*	0.064
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	0.054	0.066
Dummy = 1 if Norway	0.585*	0.100
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	0.194***	0.116
Intercept	0.570*	0.172
Ordered value = 1 approve = 2 disapprove		5,440 462

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.5d****Approve or Disapprove of Abortion under These Circumstances, Where It Is Likely the Child Would Be Born Physically Handicapped**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	0.074**	0.034
Dummy = 1 if married	-0.015	0.042
Dummy = 1 if children	-0.019	0.047
Age of respondent	0.017*	0.006
Age squared	-0.0001***	0.0001
Income	0.047*	0.007
Dummy = 1 if United States	-0.151*	0.048
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	0.527*	0.048
Dummy = 1 if Norway	0.228*	0.057
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	0.126***	0.076
Intercept	-0.463*	0.130
Ordered value = 1 approve = 2 disapprove		3,682 1,921

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.5e****Approve or Disapprove of Abortion under These Circumstances, Where the Woman Is Not Married**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	0.118*	0.033
Dummy = 1 if married	-0.125*	0.042
Dummy = 1 if children	-0.177*	0.045
Age of respondent	0.020*	0.006
Age squared	-0.0002*	0.0001
Income	0.053*	0.007
Dummy = 1 if United States	-0.018	0.049
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	0.078***	0.046
Dummy = 1 if Norway	0.368*	0.055
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	0.020	0.075
Intercept	-1.059*	0.130
Ordered value = 1 approve = 2 disapprove		1,954 3,733

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.5f****Approve or Disapprove of Abortion under These Circumstances, Where a Married Couple Do Not Want to Have Any More Children**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	0.025	0.033
Dummy = 1 if married	-0.158*	0.042
Dummy = 1 if children	-0.145*	0.045
Age of respondent	0.021*	0.006
Age squared	-0.0002*	0.0001
Income	0.052*	0.007
Dummy = 1 if United States	-0.072	0.049
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	0.285*	0.046
Dummy = 1 if Norway	0.446*	0.055
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	0.016	0.076
Intercept	-1.121*	0.129
Ordered value = 1 approve = 2 disapprove		1,953 3,798

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.



**Table 3.6a**  
**Acceptance of Single-mother Families, by Gender**

Is it okay for a single woman to have a child?	Canada		United States		United Kingdom		Norway		Netherlands	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	Approve	36.91	38.16	38.12	39.30	38.96	32.33	23.82	31.09	35.23
Depends	19.37	21.90	14.36	15.41	15.05	18.25	27.03	22.63	11.39	22.63
Disapprove	43.72	39.94	47.52	45.29	45.99	49.43	49.16	46.29	53.38	30.85
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.01	100.01	100.01	100.00	100.00

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.6b**  
**Acceptance of Single-mother Families, Individuals without and with Children**

Is it okay for a single woman to have a child?	Canada			United States			United Kingdom			Norway			Netherlands		
	Without children	With children	Total	Without children	With children	Total	Without children	With children	Total	Without children	With children	Total	Without children	With children	Total
	Approve	44.59	34.56	48.71	34.87	43.14	32.16	32.66	25.21	48.64	37.29				
Depends	18.55	21.57	16.18	14.39	15.92	17.06	21.39	26.30	17.98	17.29					
Disapprove	36.85	43.87	35.11	50.74	40.94	50.79	45.95	48.48	33.38	45.42					
Total	99.99	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.01	100.00	99.99	100.00	100.00					

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.6c****Approve or Disapprove of a Woman Who Wants to Have a Child as a Single Parent  
But Does Not Have a Stable Relationship with a Man**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	-0.052**	0.023
Dummy = 1 if married	0.098*	0.029
Dummy = 1 if children	0.018	0.032
Age of respondent	-0.006	0.004
Age squared	0.0002*	0.00004
Income	0.003	0.005
Dummy = 1 if United States	0.015	0.034
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	0.015	0.032
Dummy = 1 if Norway	0.139*	0.039
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	-0.059	0.053
Intercept	1.787*	0.090
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		0.077

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.7a**

**Working vs Stay-at-home Mothers' Relationship with Their Children, by Gender**

	Canada		United States		United Kingdom		Norway		Netherlands	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
A working mother can establish as warm a relationship with her child as a stay-at-home mom										
Strongly agree	23.28	30.35	21.61	31.86	15.57	25.20	33.60	52.17	25.92	34.27
Agree	40.48	45.01	43.96	48.05	50.94	47.62	28.21	25.08	35.75	45.21
Disagree	31.50	21.11	31.25	17.93	28.47	24.65	25.52	15.55	30.89	17.08
Strongly disagree	4.74	3.53	3.18	2.15	5.02	2.52	12.68	7.19	7.44	3.45
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	99.99	100.00	99.99	100.01	99.99	100.00	100.01

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.7b**

**Working vs Stay-at-home Mothers' Relationship with Their Children, Individuals without and with Children**

	Canada		United States		United Kingdom		Norway		Netherlands	
	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children
A working mother can establish as warm a relationship with her child as a stay-at-home mom										
Strongly agree	30.35	25.44	26.52	26.94	17.10	22.05	34.46	45.94	29.18	31.18
Agree	42.65	42.88	51.20	43.86	54.65	46.92	32.20	24.46	44.71	38.69
Disagree	23.57	27.27	20.26	26.16	25.67	26.83	23.45	19.54	22.52	23.89
Strongly disagree	3.43	4.42	2.03	3.03	2.58	4.21	9.89	10.06	3.59	6.24
Total	100.00	100.01	100.01	99.99	100.00	100.01	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.7c****Agree or Disagree – A Working Mother Can Establish Just as Warm/Secure a Relationship with Her Children vs a Mother Who Does Not Work**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	-0.281*	0.021
Dummy = 1 if married	0.087*	0.027
Dummy = 1 if children	-0.099*	0.029
Age of respondent	-0.002	0.004
Age squared	0.0001**	0.00004
Income	-0.025*	0.005
Dummy = 1 if United States	-0.104*	0.031
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	0.020	0.030
Dummy = 1 if Norway	-0.151*	0.035
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	-0.124**	0.049
Intercept	2.294*	0.083
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		0.058

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.8a**  
**Attitudes toward Pre-school Children of Working Mothers, by Gender**

	Canada		United States		United Kingdom		Norway		Netherlands	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his/her mother works										
Strongly agree	9.76	9.67	10.57	9.08	12.04	9.79	18.04	8.46	26.30	14.91
Agree	48.06	38.55	45.56	36.12	44.86	42.70	36.39	27.75	47.59	35.07
Disagree	37.31	43.51	40.38	49.27	39.25	40.91	26.25	31.98	22.94	41.45
Strongly disagree	4.87	8.27	3.49	5.53	3.85	6.60	19.32	31.81	3.17	8.57
Total	99.69	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.8b**  
**Attitudes toward Pre-school Children of Working Mothers, Individuals without and with Children**

	Canada		United States		United Kingdom		Norway		Netherlands	
	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children
A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his/her mother works										
Strongly agree	8.62	10.19	10.07	9.73	6.64	12.72	11.33	14.20	13.25	24.04
Agree	40.50	44.34	35.45	43.18	44.33	43.48	31.73	32.36	38.96	41.81
Disagree	43.58	39.16	50.19	42.33	44.60	38.15	30.88	28.29	40.17	28.90
Strongly disagree	7.31	6.31	4.29	4.76	4.43	5.65	26.06	25.15	7.61	5.24
Total	100.01	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	99.99	99.99

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.8c****Agree or Disagree – A Pre-school Child Is Likely to Suffer if His/Her Mother Works**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	0.219*	0.020
Dummy = 1 if married	0.005	0.026
Dummy = 1 if children	0.018	0.028
Age of respondent	-0.003	0.004
Age squared	0.0001***	0.00004
Income	0.014*	0.004
Dummy = 1 if United States	0.053***	0.030
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	0.013	0.028
Dummy = 1 if Norway	0.286*	0.034
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	-0.152*	0.047
Intercept	2.496*	0.079
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		0.080

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.9a**  
**Attitudes toward People Living in Need, by Gender**

Why are there people who live in need?	Canada		United States		United Kingdom		Norway		Netherlands	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	Unlucky	8.50	9.12	8.17	7.88	13.91	15.91	14.72	14.43	26.08
Laziness	34.68	29.04	40.13	38.03	27.86	25.77	14.72	7.39	18.14	12.20
Social injustice	30.37	33.20	30.57	34.35	33.97	34.88	44.98	52.75	29.30	42.57
Part of progress	22.62	22.81	18.26	16.07	21.91	20.26	22.01	21.48	19.11	14.98
None of the above	3.83	5.83	2.87	3.68	2.35	3.17	3.56	3.95	7.36	5.58
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.01	100.00	99.99	99.99	100.00	99.99	99.99

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.9b**  
**Attitudes toward People Living in Need, Individuals without and with Children**

Why are there people who live in need?	Canada		United States		United Kingdom		Norway		Netherlands	
	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children
	Unlucky	8.49	8.95	9.12	7.66	16.28	14.36	12.93	15.26	25.48
Laziness	33.00	31.31	38.73	39.08	23.11	28.40	9.77	11.74	15.96	14.32
Social injustice	29.62	32.75	32.22	32.64	39.02	32.42	51.44	47.65	35.98	36.81
Part of progress	24.93	21.78	18.44	16.61	18.59	22.15	24.43	20.66	16.25	17.23
None of the above	3.97	5.22	1.49	4.01	3.01	2.68	1.44	4.69	6.33	6.43
Total	100.01	100.01	100.00	100.00	100.01	100.01	100.01	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.9c****Probit Regression, Why Are There People in This Country Who Live in Need? Because They Are Lazy.**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	-0.146*	0.034
Dummy = 1 if married	0.038	0.043
Dummy = 1 if children	-0.015	0.047
Age of respondent	-0.018*	0.006
Age squared	0.0003*	0.0001
Income	-0.015**	0.007
Dummy = 1 if United States	0.153*	0.048
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	-0.168*	0.046
Dummy = 1 if Norway	-0.748*	0.063
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	-0.606*	0.087
Intercept	-0.058	0.131
Ordered value = 1 mention		1,582
= 0 no		4,253

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.



**Table 3.10a**

**Views about Income Distribution, by Gender**

On a 1-10 scale what are your views about income distribution?	Canada		United States		United Kingdom		Norway		Netherlands	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Income should be equal										
1	8.13	11.73	3.99	7.73	3.65	5.48	4.29	8.43	3.55	4.29
2	3.54	2.88	2.41	2.72	3.88	4.53	2.22	4.22	2.05	3.73
3	4.34	3.83	5.14	4.49	4.31	7.82	5.87	8.94	6.14	6.55
4	4.63	3.96	5.04	5.75	6.53	6.76	7.30	6.75	8.68	10.38
5	7.65	8.93	9.34	12.54	8.63	11.83	16.03	19.56	11.28	15.90
6	7.62	6.56	8.81	12.54	8.28	11.27	11.90	10.79	10.62	14.05
7	9.42	10.15	13.54	12.85	13.69	14.82	18.57	12.98	19.37	23.67
8	20.27	22.97	23.08	18.50	29.17	21.74	19.84	15.51	26.07	16.63
9	11.54	9.81	10.91	9.72	8.82	7.27	4.60	5.90	6.82	2.70
Greater individual effort										
10	22.87	19.16	17.73	13.17	13.05	8.48	9.37	6.91	5.43	2.09
Total	100.01	99.98	99.99	100.01	100.01	100.00	99.99	99.99	100.01	99.99

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.10b**

**Views about Income Distribution, Individuals without and with Children**

On a 1-10 scale what are your views about income distribution?	Canada		United States		United Kingdom		Norway		Netherlands	
	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children	Without children	With children
Income should be equal										
1	11.29	9.40	4.17	6.37	5.11	4.37	5.37	6.67	3.38	4.28
2	3.38	3.13	2.90	2.50	3.89	4.36	4.24	2.76	2.49	3.22
3	3.64	4.27	5.08	4.65	6.91	5.78	7.06	7.48	8.64	5.03
4	4.46	4.21	5.63	5.29	9.44	5.44	9.60	5.98	11.01	8.76
5	9.91	7.61	11.07	11.02	9.51	10.62	17.51	17.84	16.85	11.95
6	8.40	6.50	11.07	10.37	8.58	10.35	9.89	11.97	12.10	12.68
7	8.08	10.53	15.25	12.52	16.41	13.35	14.97	16.23	23.70	20.49
8	22.02	21.50	21.96	20.10	21.96	26.81	16.95	18.07	16.10	23.88
9	11.09	10.47	9.62	10.94	8.58	7.77	6.78	4.60	2.84	5.65
Greater individual effort										
10	17.72	22.37	13.25	16.24	9.62	11.16	7.63	8.40	2.90	4.07
Total	99.99	99.99	100.00	100.00	100.01	100.01	100.00	100.00	100.01	100.01

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.

**Table 3.10c****Views on Income – Scale 1-10<sup>1</sup>**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard error
Dummy = 1 if respondent is female	0.470*	0.066
Dummy = 1 if married	-0.005	0.083
Dummy = 1 if children	-0.115	0.090
Age of respondent	-0.010	0.012
Age squared	0.0001	0.0001
Income	-0.154*	0.014
Dummy = 1 if United States	-0.207**	0.096
Dummy = 1 if United Kingdom	0.246*	0.091
Dummy = 1 if Norway	0.673*	0.109
Dummy = 1 if Netherlands	0.573*	0.150
Intercept	5.310*	0.254
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		0.046

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.

1 1: agree completely with greater incentives for individual effort, 10: agree completely with incomes should be made more equal.

Source: Author calculations, World Values Survey.



# IV

## Current Sociodemographic Profile

So, how different across countries are the basic social/demographic circumstances in which young children (i.e., those aged 0 to 11 years) live in the 1990s? To gain a reasonably contemporary snapshot of what it is like to be a child in the various countries studied, we make use of microdata from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS).<sup>8</sup> Since the goal of this study is to understand something about environments that generate particular outcomes for children, we focus our discussion on the period of time preceding outcome data collection rather than on the most recent data available (though in many cases these are the same). Further, since the focus of the study is on young children, we employ the LIS option of taking the child rather than the family as the basic unit of analysis, selecting only children aged 0 to 11 years. Appendix Table A-1 documents the survey years and original sources of the LIS data sets used.

An important point to keep in mind is that while sociodemographic characteristics are discussed prior to policies, it is not at all clear that this is the most appropriate sequence to follow. In some cases, it may be true that changes in demographic circumstances lead to policy responses. It may well be equally true that some sociodemographic outcomes are the result of policy rather than a generator of policy. For example, low rates of labour-force participation may reflect policies as diverse as poor quality or limited availability of child care, high rates of taxation for married women or social

transfers designed to support moms to stay at home to care for their children.

A first question to ask is “What are the relative probabilities of a young child living in a two-parent family versus a lone-parent family?”<sup>9</sup> Before this question can be addressed, however, it is very important to note that the countries under study collect information on marital status in somewhat different ways. For Canada and the United Kingdom, “married” includes both “legally married” and “living together as married.” For the Netherlands, “married” again includes “legally married” and “living together” and, in addition, includes couples who are separated. For the United States, “married” means “legally married”; cohabiting couples would be classified as “single never married,” if neither partner had previously been married (or divorced/separated, as appropriate). For Norway, “married” means “spouse is present in the household.” Table 4.1a shows marital status frequencies for parents of children aged 0 to 11 years<sup>10</sup> as indicated by each of the LIS data sets employed for analysis in this section. It is noticeable that the percentage of “marrieds” is low and the percentage of “single never marrieds” is high for the United States, which is in part a result of the definitions discussed above.

To simplify further analysis, Table 4.1b attempts to separate children currently living with two parents from those currently living with one parent (regardless of whether the two parents are legally

married to one another and regardless of whether the lone parent was ever married, is widowed, legally divorced or separated). Keeping in mind the limited comparability of cross-country marital status data, this table nonetheless confirms the patterns evident in the trend data on divorce: children are most likely to live in a lone-parent family in the United States and least likely to live in a lone-parent family in the Netherlands. (Recall, however, that data from the World Values Survey did not indicate above average levels of disapproval of lone-parent families in the Netherlands.) Canada and the United Kingdom appear very similar; Norway has a relatively high percentage of children living in lone-parent families.

Relative probabilities of living in a two- versus one-parent household are quite constant for children of different ages in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States. This is not true of Canada and Norway: in Canada, the probability of a child living in a lone-parent family increases with the child's age (from 10.8 percent for infants to 17.5 percent for children aged 6 to 11) while in Norway, the probability of living in a lone-parent family is higher for infants (33.3 percent) than for older children (21.7 percent for children aged 6 to 11).

In all five countries, Table 4.2 indicates that children living in a lone-parent household are much more likely to be living with a mother than a father. Differences across the countries in these probabilities again are very connected with the definition of "marriage." For example, couples with children who are "living together" in the United States would appear in the "lone-parent/male head"<sup>11</sup> category while such a family would be classified as "married" in the Canadian data.

For much of the rest of this discussion of differences in the sociodemographic circumstances of children, we separate the children into those living with two parents and those living with a lone mother. We focus on lone mothers (excluding the lone-father families) for three reasons: 1) lone-father families typically have a much higher material standard of living and are thus less "vulnerable"

economically, and it is particularly interesting to compare outcomes for vulnerable children as well as for all children; 2) for some countries, we have too few lone fathers to allow for statistically meaningful comparisons; and 3) the category of "lone father" will actually include, for some of the countries, couples who are living together but who are not legally married. Living with a "lone mother" means very much the same thing across the five countries; living with a "married couple" at least means that two parents are present for all countries (except the Netherlands, where separated individuals are included as "married").

Table 4.3 demonstrates that the mean age of children studied is basically the same in all countries (5.5 years), regardless of whether the child lives with a couple or a lone mother (except that children with lone mothers are somewhat older in the Netherlands at 7.1 years).

Tables 4.4a and 4.4b report on the age of mothers for children in two-parent and lone-mother families, respectively, and by age of child for two-parent families.<sup>12</sup> Consider, first, infants living with two parents. In all countries, a majority of infants living with two parents have mothers who are in the 26 to 35 age category (82 percent in the Netherlands and roughly 60 percent elsewhere). The second most likely age is the 20 to 25 age category, which is especially common in Norway. Very few infants have teenaged mothers (less than 3 percent in the United Kingdom; less than 2 percent everywhere else). To summarize, women in the Netherlands, who have fewer children on average than women in the other countries studied, also have their children somewhat later in life. Women in Norway, with relatively high fertility rates, are somewhat more likely than others to have children earlier. It is also worth pointing out that in the United States, almost as many infants have mothers who are 36+ as have mothers who are 20 to 25 (19.7 versus 22.4 percent). There are more "older" new moms in the United States than elsewhere.

By definition, mothers age with their children, so that about half of all children aged 6 to 11 have

mothers aged 36+; the rest have mothers aged 26 to 35. (While infants in the United States are more likely to have older mothers, this is not true for older children, suggesting that increased births to older mothers is a relatively recent phenomenon.)

How does maternal age structure differ for children living with lone mothers? (Again, we cannot obtain breakdowns by age of child given insufficient observations for some countries.) Overall, the mothers of children living in lone-parent families are younger than the mothers of children living with two parents, except in the Netherlands. Again, there are very few teenaged lone mothers (contrary to stereotype), but there are more lone than married mothers in the 20 to 25 age category (except in the Netherlands). This difference is particularly marked for Norway and the United Kingdom.

What of sibling status? Are there differences across countries in the probability of having brothers and/or sisters? Table 4.5a indicates that, overall, children aged 0 to 11 years and living in married-couple families are most likely to have one sibling in all countries. The second-most likely outcome, again in all countries, is to have two or more siblings. Children living in lone-mother families are much more likely to be only children than are children living with two parents (Table 4.5b). This is true for all countries, with the difference being especially notable for Norway and the Netherlands. Having two or more siblings is less common for children in lone-mother households in Canada, the Netherlands and Norway, but about equally common in the United Kingdom and the United States.

Is there a difference across countries in how likely parents are to work for pay? Tables 4.6a and 4.6b indicate patterns of labour-force participation, where labour-force participation is defined as having any weeks of part-time work, full-time work or unemployment. (This information is only available for Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.) Tables 4.7a and 4.7b indicate labour-force participation as measured by having any positive wages/salaries. (This is a less traditional measure of labour-force participation. It will exclude any

individuals who were unemployed for the entire year and hence had no earnings. Compare, for example, “neither mom nor dad a labour-force participant” figures for the United Kingdom. In general, however, the patterns indicated by the “positive wages” tables are the same as indicated by the more usual labour-force participation figures. We focus on these to allow comparability across the five countries.)

Notice, first, that children living with two parents in Norway are most likely to have both parents working outside the home (72 percent). The two-earner family is also the most common arrangement in the United States and Canada (about 60 percent of children in married-couple families have both mom and dad working outside the home in both countries). These figures, taken in conjunction with the fact that about 30 percent of individuals with children in all three countries believe that a mother working outside the home will be damaging to the children, suggest potential conflict between reality and values.

Two-earner families are much less common in the United Kingdom (38 percent) and in the Netherlands (only 34 percent). This is a dramatic and extremely important cross-country difference. In the Netherlands, a majority of children living with two parents experience the “traditional family” pattern, with mom at home and dad in the workplace (55 percent of children live in “stay-at-home mother” families). Taken together with the lower rate of lone-parent families, this indicates a more “traditional” pattern of family life in the Netherlands. However, it is interesting that expressed *values* in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands are not as different as actual patterns of behaviour, perhaps suggesting less role conflict in these countries.

Yet, despite the fact that most married mothers work outside the home (except in the Netherlands), it is still true that their earnings constitute a much smaller share of family earnings than do their husbands’. Table 4.8 indicates that in Canada, Norway and the United States, mothers’ earnings make up only about 20 percent of household gross income

(which includes transfers and other income sources as well as earnings) while fathers' incomes make up 54 percent. This is because mothers work fewer hours in the paid labour market than fathers and because they earn less for each hour worked. Thus it is important to keep in mind that while much has changed, much remains the same. Men still earn the larger share of family income.

As previously noted, table 4.7b illustrates cross-country differences in percentages of lone mothers with positive earnings. The same cross-country pattern of labour-force participation is evident for lone moms as for married moms. Rates of participation in the paid labour market are highest in Norway (77.9 percent), followed by the United States (61.2 percent) and Canada (50.4 percent); they are lowest in the United Kingdom (27.9 percent) and, especially, the Netherlands (19.3 percent). In Canada and the Netherlands, fewer lone mothers than married mothers work for pay. In Norway, more lone mothers work for pay; in the United States and the United Kingdom, rates of labour-force participation are about the same for lone and married mothers. These differences in rates of labour-force participation are striking. They could reflect differences in attitude, differences in opportunities (e.g., labour-market conditions), and/or differences in policy (e.g., availability of quality daycare). Further exploration of this should be the subject of another paper.

Tables 4.9a and 4.9b report on income sources. First, for children in two-parent families, nearly 100 percent of families receive some income in the form of earnings, regardless of the age of the child.

The exception is for children in the United Kingdom, where only about 90 percent receive earnings.

What about the relative importance of other sources of family income? How do these differ across the sample countries? In the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom, where universal family allowances are available, some social transfer income is also received in nearly 100 percent of cases; social transfers were received 90 percent of the time in Canada (higher-income Canadian families are ineligible for child benefits, thus not all families with children receive benefits). The US experience differs dramatically from the other countries in this instance since social transfers are received by only 40 percent of children.

For children in lone-mother families, receipt of social transfers is higher in Canada and much higher in the United States (this cannot, of course, be true for the European countries where all children in two-parent families receive social transfers). For children in lone-mother families, Canada resembles the European countries, with social transfers received in basically 100 percent of cases; social transfers are received by 90 percent of children in the United States. Thus there is a bigger difference between living in a two-parent family and living in a lone-mother family in the United States, where children in lone-mother families receive social transfers but children in two-parent families most often do not. This may well have consequences for the stigma associated with receipt of transfers in the various countries (with stigma presumably more likely where fewer people receive transfers).



**Table 4.1a****Complete Marital Status of Parents of Children Aged 0 to 11 years**

(Frequencies in percent)

	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
Single (never married)	6.2	2.2	16.2	6.4	12.3
Married	84.0	92.2 <sup>b</sup>	75.8	83.0 <sup>c</sup>	68.7
Divorced		4.9	5.1	6.1	10.7
Widowed	9.9 <sup>a</sup>	0.7	1.0	1.2	2.0
Separated		- <sup>b</sup>	2.0	3.3	6.2

a For Canada this category is referred to as "other," which includes divorced, widowed, and separated.

b For the Netherlands, the "married" category includes those who are currently separated.

c For the United Kingdom, the "married" category includes those who are legally married with the spouse in the house (78.4 percent) and those who are cohabiting (4.6 percent).

Source: Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 4.1b****Marital Status of Parents**

Age of child	Canada (1994)		Netherlands (1991)		Norway (1991)		United Kingdom (1991)		United States (1994)	
	Lone	Married	Lone	Married	Lone	Married	Lone	Married	Lone	Married
	(Percent)									
< 1	10.8	89.2	6.5	93.6	33.3	66.7	16.1	83.9	28.8	71.2
1	12.3	87.7	4.2	95.8	27.7	72.3	16.5	83.5	31.5	68.5
2-3	15.4	84.7	7.0	93.0	24.3	75.7	18.0	82.0	31.8	68.2
4-5	16.7	83.4	7.6	92.4	25.3	74.7	16.2	83.8	32.9	67.1
6-11	17.5	82.5	8.9	91.2	21.7	78.3	17.2	82.9	30.8	69.2
All children (0-11)	16.0	84.0	7.8	92.2	24.2	75.8	17.0	83.0	31.3	68.7

Note: "Married" for the United States includes legally married only; for the United Kingdom it includes married with spouse in the house, married with spouse not in the house, and living together; for Canada, living together is included; for the Netherlands separated is included, and for Norway married is when spouse is present.

Source: Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 4.2****Sex of Parent, for Children Living in Lone-parent Families**

Age of child	Canada (1994)		Netherlands (1991)		Norway (1991)		United Kingdom (1991)		United States (1994)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
(Percent)										
All children (0-11)	12.7	87.3	28.0	72.0	37.3	62.8	6.1	93.9	19.9	80.2

Source: Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 4.3****Mean Age of Child**

	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
All children	5.5	5.6	5.4	5.3	5.5
Children with married parents	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.3	5.5
Children with lone parents	5.7	7.1	5.0	5.3	5.6

Source: Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 4.4a****Age of Mothers, for Children Living in Married-couple Households**

Age of child	Age of mother	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
(Percent)						
< 1	< 20	1.4	1.1	1.5	2.4	1.8
	20-25	20.2	10.8	26.8	22.6	22.4
	26-35	64.9	81.6	63.1	64.0	56.0
	36+	13.5	6.4	8.7	11.0	19.7
1	< 20	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.9	1.6
	20-25	13.1	8.8	17.9	23.3	18.1
	26-35	67.6	82.4	71.8	63.4	56.8
	36+	18.5	8.8	10.3	12.5	23.5
2-3	< 20	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.7
	20-25	10.0	5.4	14.4	16.9	15.8
	26-35	69.3	80.0	67.7	65.2	55.3
	36+	20.5	14.6	17.8	17.7	28.2
4-5	< 20	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
	20-25	5.1	2.6	7.9	9.8	9.7
	26-35	63.1	74.0	66.9	64.5	55.5
	36+	31.8	23.4	25.2	25.8	34.7
6-11	< 20	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
	20-25	1.1	0.5	0.5	1.3	2.3
	26-35	44.0	47.9	48.5	49.4	44.8
	36+	55.0	51.6	51.0	49.4	52.8
All children (0-11)	< 20	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.4
	20-25	5.9	3.2	7.6	9.6	8.7
	26-35	55.3	63.1	58.1	57.3	50.3
	36+	38.6	33.6	34.2	32.6	40.6
Mean age in years		34.2	33.8	33.7	33.3	34.6

Source: Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 4.4b****Age of Lone Mother, for Children Living in Lone-mother Households**

Age of mother	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
	(Percent)				
< 20	1.3	0.0	3.6	2.8	2.0
20-25	14.5	4.1	26.6	25.1	17.2
26-35	49.7	48.7	56.3	42.7	46.5
36+	34.5	47.2	13.5	29.4	34.3
Mean age	33.8	35.2	29.2	32.3	34.1

Source: Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 4.5a****Number of Siblings, for Children Living in Married-couple Households**

Age of child	Number of siblings	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
		(Percent)				
< 1	0	40.6	33.7	38.4	39.9	35.8
	1	37.9	41.2	28.2	40.3	38.0
	2+	21.6	25.1	33.4	19.9	26.2
1	0	38.5	30.5	29.2	38.8	33.3
	1	40.3	50.0	34.8	38.6	38.0
	2+	21.3	19.5	36.0	22.6	28.7
2-3	0	21.1	13.2	20.0	21.1	22.2
	1	50.3	55.9	47.3	51.5	44.4
	2+	28.6	30.9	32.7	27.4	33.4
4-5	0	13.0	3.8	12.1	12.2	14.0
	1	49.9	57.4	47.4	54.3	45.9
	2+	37.2	38.7	40.6	33.6	40.1
6-11	0	10.2	6.1	11.5	12.9	11.6
	1	48.3	52.8	47.3	47.0	43.2
	2+	41.5	41.1	41.2	40.1	45.2
All children (0-11)	0	17.4	11.1	16.7	19.3	17.4
	1	47.4	52.9	44.9	47.6	43.1
	2+	35.2	36.0	38.5	33.2	39.5
Mean number of siblings		1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.5

Source: Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 4.5b****Number of Siblings, for Children Living in Lone-mother Households**

Age of child	Number of siblings	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
(Percent)						
All children (0-11)	0	30.3	31.1	53.6	28.6	25.5
	1	41.4	40.9	33.5	37.3	33.1
	2+	28.4	28.1	12.9	34.1	41.4
Mean number of siblings		1.1	1.0	0.6	1.3	1.5

Source: Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 4.6a****Labour-force Participation of Parents, for Children Living in Married-couple Households**

Age of child	Labour-force participation	Canada (1994)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
(Percent)				
< 1	Only mom	1.9	3.6	2.2
	Only dad	22.7	47.7	26.3
	Both	73.4	38.1	69.5
	Neither	1.5	10.5	2.1
1	Only mom	0.9	7.0	1.4
	Only dad	27.3	47.8	33.1
	Both	69.4	34.9	63.4
	Neither	2.6	10.3	2.1
2-3	Only mom	1.4	6.2	1.6
	Only dad	28.1	40.6	30.2
	Both	68.4	44.9	66.1
	Neither	2.1	8.3	2.1
4-5	Only mom	1.2	7.3	2.0
	Only dad	27.1	32.0	29.5
	Both	69.6	49.8	65.8
	Neither	2.1	10.9	2.7
6-11	Only mom	1.5	8.7	2.6
	Only dad	21.7	29.5	25.8
	Both	74.5	51.3	69.4
	Neither	2.3	10.5	2.3
All children (0-11)	Only mom	1.4	7.4	2.2
	Only dad	24.3	35.4	27.8
	Both	72.1	47.1	67.7
	Neither	2.2	10.2	2.3

Note: For Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States the labour-force participation (LFP) means the individual reported positive weeks of full-time employment, part-time employment or unemployment during the survey year.

Source: Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 4.6b****Labour-force Participation of Mothers, for Children Living in Lone-mother Households**

	Canada (1994)		United Kingdom (1991)		United States (1994)	
	In labour force	Not in labour force	In labour force	Not in labour force	In labour force	Not in labour force
	(Percent)					
All children (0-11)	60.7	39.3	33.8	66.3	68.2	31.8

Note: For Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States labour-force participation (LFP) means the individual reported positive weeks of full-time employment, part-time employment or unemployment during the survey year.

Source: Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 4.7a****Percentage of Parents with a Positive Wage, for Children Living in Married-couple Households**

Age of child	Parent with a positive wage	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
< 1	Only mom	7.2	6.3	3.8	5.1	6.6
	Only dad	24.8	43.9	20.3	46.2	29.6
	Both	61.7	40.8	75.5	26.7	57.6
	Neither	6.3	8.9	0.4	22.0	6.1
1	Only mom	7.3	0.8	4.6	9.1	4.4
	Only dad	29.8	59.0	23.7	42.6	36.1
	Both	55.9	32.7	69.6	27.0	53.9
	Neither	7.0	7.6	2.0	21.4	5.6
2-3	Only mom	7.8	1.7	5.1	8.3	5.4
	Only dad	30.5	59.4	18.9	38.5	33.8
	Both	53.0	33.1	73.6	34.2	55.2
	Neither	8.7	5.8	2.4	19.0	5.7
4-5	Only mom	7.1	2.5	6.2	8.5	6.0
	Only dad	28.9	59.1	21.5	28.8	32.0
	Both	54.8	29.9	67.5	40.8	54.5
	Neither	9.2	8.5	4.8	21.9	7.6
6-11	Only mom	7.9	3.3	6.8	12.4	6.4
	Only dad	25.6	53.6	16.4	25.4	28.3
	Both	58.2	34.8	73.3	42.8	58.8
	Neither	8.3	8.3	3.5	19.4	6.5
All children (0-11)	Only mom	7.6	3.0	6.0	10.0	6.0
	Only dad	27.3	55.1	18.6	31.9	30.6
	Both	56.9	34.1	72.3	37.9	57.0
	Neither	8.2	7.9	3.2	20.2	6.4

Source: Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 4.7b****Percentage of Parents with a Positive Wage, for Children Living in Lone-mother Households**

	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
All children (0-11)	50.4	19.3	77.9	27.9	61.2

Source: Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 4.8****Parental Earnings as a Percent of Household Gross Earnings**

		Canada (1994-95)	Netherlands (1992)	Norway (1995)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
Two-parent families	Mother	0.19	0.08	0.21	0.12	0.20
	Father	0.54	0.72	0.54	0.54	0.54
Lone-mother families		0.28	0.28	0.11	0.36	0.36

Source: Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 4.9a****Income from Alternative Sources, for Children Living in Married-couple Households**

Age of child	Source of income	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
(Percent)						
< 1	Earnings	96.3	94.8	100.0	86.0	97.8
	Social transfers	93.4	87.0	97.1	97.7	41.9
	Other	33.5	60.1	91.9	75.8	69.7
1	Earnings	96.6	96.6	100.0	88.0	97.7
	Social transfers	93.9	100.0	100.0	99.2	43.1
	Other	31.9	71.0	91.4	75.1	69.3
2-3	Earnings	95.7	96.9	99.5	89.8	97.9
	Social transfers	92.2	99.6	99.5	98.9	42.7
	Other	33.9	63.3	90.4	77.7	69.3
4-5	Earnings	96.2	96.2	97.9	88.7	97.2
	Social transfers	92.1	100.0	99.9	99.5	39.8
	Other	35.7	59.6	89.7	76.1	69.8
6-11	Earnings	96.6	95.6	99.0	88.5	97.8
	Social transfers	89.9	99.9	99.4	99.4	41.7
	Other	37.2	62.2	90.0	79.2	70.0
All children (0-11)	Earnings	96.3	95.9	99.1	88.5	97.7
	Social transfers	90.8	98.8	99.4	99.1	41.7
	Other	35.6	62.4	90.3	77.7	69.8

Note: Percentages indicate households receiving any income from respective sources.  
Source: Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 4.9b****Income from Alternative Sources, for Children Living in Lone-mother Households**

	Source of income	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
(Percent)						
All children (0-11)	Earnings	60.3	21.2	81.1	36.0	71.4
	Social transfers	99.8	99.2	99.5	100.0	90.0
	Other	35.8	33.7	88.3	54.7	44.8

Note: Percentages indicate households receiving any income from respective sources.  
Source: Luxembourg Income Study.



# V

## Policy Mix: An Overview of Programmes for Children

This report focuses on policies (and later outcomes) for which data are available so that we can determine what children *actually* receive rather than what children are *supposed* to receive. Thus we study mainly tax and cash transfer programmes designed to influence the well-being of children. To be specific, the package of programmes upon which we focus includes: the tax treatment of families (e.g., allowances for a dependent spouse or children, child care allowances), cash transfers (e.g., family allowances, social assistance, special benefits for lone parents), maternity/parental/family-related leave programmes, child support and advance maintenance systems.

We also include a very brief and general discussion of health, education and child care policies. These are obviously vitally important programmes for families with children, so we do not want to exclude them entirely. However, it should be noted that data constraints mean that it is not possible to identify the actual receipt of any of these last three types of benefits by particular families.

Charts 5.1 and 5.2 provide an introduction to the general policy environment in each of the five countries under study as a way of setting the stage for a more detailed discussion of the available mix of policies for children that follows. Notice, first, that the Netherlands and Norway have, overall, larger state sectors: levels of taxation are higher and levels of spending on social security programmes,

as a percentage of GDP, are higher than in the other three countries. The United Kingdom, while starting the period with a relatively large state sector has enacted tax and programme cuts so that it ends the period with a smaller state sector. The United States consistently has the lowest levels of taxation and the lowest level of social spending.

Table 5.1 provides a further perspective on the general pattern of taxes paid and transfers received in the five countries using microdata estimates from the LIS data. Table 5.1 reports total taxes<sup>13</sup> paid by *everyone* in the household; and total transfers received by *everyone* in the household, though of course individuals file separately in some countries. If we focus on families with the head aged less than 65 years and at least one child less than 18 years present, it is clear that the most taxes are paid in the Netherlands, Norway and Canada. In the Netherlands, rates are high (25 percent) and almost every household pays taxes; in Norway, rates are lower (14 percent), but 90 percent of households pay; in Canada, only 86 percent of households with children pay taxes, but at an average rate of 18 percent. Tax payments are lowest in the United States, where only 81 percent of households pay, at an average rate of 11 percent.

Virtually 100 percent of families with children receive some social transfers in the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom, given universal family allowances. Only half of families with children

in the United States receive social transfers, but for those who do, this is a more significant component of family gross income.

## Tax Structures

One means of public support for families is through the tax system; foregoing revenue by offering tax deductions is equivalent in overall budgetary terms to spending money on transfer programmes. In some countries, parents may be offered tax relief for dependent children through a tax exemption (which is of greater benefit to higher-income families with higher marginal tax rates) or a tax credit (which is usually valued at the lowest marginal tax rate and so is of equal value for families of any income level). For example, the United States offers tax exemptions for children though it does not offer child benefits; Norway offers both child benefits and tax credits for dependent children; Canada, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands do not offer tax relief for dependent children.

Some countries also help families with the cost of child care by allowing some portion of child care expenditures to be deducted from income before tax is calculated. Canada and the United States offer relatively greater support for child care in this fashion than through direct provision of public child care. Norway and the Netherlands also provide some support in this way, though Norway spends more on direct provision of public child care (Gornick, Meyers and Ross, 1996). Child care exemptions are typically available only to two-earner families (or to lone mothers in the labour force). However, one-earner families can often claim tax relief for dependent spouses.

To summarize the net effects of alternative tax provisions on families across the countries, Table 5.2 presents Tobit estimates of the level of taxes paid by all households, controlling for level and major source of income. All currency figures have been converted to 1994 Canadian dollars.<sup>14</sup> The key question addressed in this table is “At the same

income, do households with and without children pay the same taxes?” In all countries except the United Kingdom, households with children pay significantly less tax than households without children, if the two households have the same before-tax income (the dummy variable for having any children in the household is negative and statistically significant). The largest reduction in taxes for families with children is found in Norway, which also offers the most generous cash transfers. That is, Norway supports families with children very generously through both the tax and transfer systems. The United States also offers very significant tax breaks for families with children, though the United States offers extremely limited cash transfers for families with children. Thus the United States focuses on the tax rather than the transfer system. While neither Canada nor the Netherlands offers tax breaks to all families with children, both countries offer tax write-offs for child care expenditures and, in Canada, lone parents can claim an “equivalent to married” credit for their first child. In both countries, regression results show that households with children pay less tax, at the same income, than those without, though the magnitude of the impact is much smaller than in Norway or the United States.

In an attempt to assess whether different tax structures favour one- versus two-earner families, Table 5.3 reports Tobit estimates of the level of taxes paid by couples with children less than 18. It is otherwise extremely difficult to sort out the final implications for taxes, given differences in dependent spouse allowances, child care write-offs, and the relative advantages of income splitting in the presence of progressive rate structures (with different marginal tax rates). The base case here is a one-earner couple. This is compared with two-earner couples and two-earner couples with preschool children (who could potentially have the largest child care expenditures). Despite the availability of dependent spouse tax relief, two-earner couples pay less tax than one-earner couples at the same income levels in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. For example, if two people each earn \$30,000, they may have lower marginal

tax rates than one person earning \$60,000. The magnitude of the effect is nearly identical in Canada and the United States; and much larger in the United Kingdom. There is no statistically significant difference between one- and two-earner couples in the Netherlands or Norway.

Two-earner couples with pre-school children pay significantly lower taxes in Canada, the United States and Norway (and all three countries allow some degree of tax write-off for child care expenditures). The magnitude of the effect is nearly identical in Canada and the United States; it is substantially larger in Norway.<sup>15</sup>

## Child Benefits

Chart 5.3 and Table 5.5 depict trends in levels of child benefits<sup>16</sup> from 1975 to 1990, expressed as a percentage of average male manufacturing wages for each of the four countries that offer child benefits. (The United States does not pay any family allowances.) It is clear, first of all, that the average level of benefits is low in Canada relative to the other countries studied (with the obvious exception of the United States). It is also apparent that between 1975 and 1990, the level of benefits fell in Canada, remained relatively steady (at a high level) in the Netherlands, but increased in Norway.

In 1993 in Canada, universal family allowances were replaced with income-tested child benefits in combination with “earned income supplements” for poor children with parents in the labour force. At the time of this programme change, an additional \$400 million was allocated to benefits for children. As indicated by Table 5.6, with the system of income-tested child benefits, 85 percent of Canadian children receive benefits; 100 percent of poor and medium-poor children receive benefits (i.e., children living in families with less than median equivalent income), 77 percent of “medium-rich” children receive benefits, while only 24 percent of “rich” children receive benefits.<sup>17</sup> Overall, the average level of benefits received by children in two-parent families in Canada is, with the injection of the extra

\$400 million to the programme in 1993, now only slightly lower than that received by children in the United Kingdom (4.7 percent of adjusted per person standard of living for Canada versus 5.6 percent in the United Kingdom). Benefits received by children in the Netherlands and, especially, Norway are somewhat more generous (6.2 and 8.8 percent, respectively).

One important structural difference across the countries, however, is that children receive (basically) the same benefit, regardless of family income level, in the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom. The family allowance benefit is regarded as a universal entitlement; a recognition of social responsibility for the well-being of all children. In Canada, poor children actually receive about the same level of benefits as children in the Netherlands and somewhat more than children in the United Kingdom; rich children in Canada receive almost nothing. This is regarded as “efficient” targeting of benefits to those who need them most without “wasting” dollars on more affluent children.

In several countries, family allowance programmes allow extra benefits for children in lone-parent families. In Canada, lone-mother families report an average level of benefits of 6.2 percent of average per person standard of living versus a reported 4.7 percent for children in two-parent families. However, this is only because lone-mother families have lower incomes, which, given the income test employed by the Canadian child benefit programme, means they will receive larger benefits (i.e., there is no specific programme saying lone moms should get more). Lone mothers in the United Kingdom receive a supplement for their first child so that their reported benefits are somewhat higher than for children in two-parent families (6.7 percent versus 5.6 percent of average per person standard of living). Lone mothers in Norway receive a double payment for their first child (this per-child benefit would be roughly \$4,000 annually – about four times the maximum Canadian per-child benefit).

There are several other structural differences in child benefit programmes across the countries (see

Table 5.4). In Canada, per-child benefits increase very slightly for families with three or more children. In Norway and the Netherlands, benefits increase significantly as family size increases, while in the United Kingdom, per-child benefits are smaller for children beyond the first. In the Netherlands, benefits are lower for pre-school children (aged 0 to 5 – see Table 5.4). In Norway, children aged 13 to 35 months receive a supplement.

Table 5.8 reports the results of a probit model of the probability of receiving child benefits in Canada. (This equation only made sense to estimate for Canada; all children in the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom receive child benefits; no children in the United States receive child benefits.) The Canadian probit results reinforce the points made earlier. Income is an extremely important predictor of child benefit receipt in Canada. Children in poor families are much more likely to receive benefits; children in rich families are much less likely to receive them. This, of course, is the design of the programme and reflects a growing Canadian preference to “efficiently target” benefits to the children who need them most.

It is also clear (see Table 5.7) that family income level is an important predictor of level of benefits in Canada (poorer children receive more; richer children receive less), but this is not true for the other countries studied. Lone mothers receive larger benefits in Canada, Norway and the Netherlands (in Canada because lone mothers have lower incomes and in the other countries because child benefit supplements for lone mothers are available).

## Maternity/Parental Benefits

All countries studied have made some improvement in their maternity/parental benefits<sup>18</sup> programmes over the last 20 years. It is one policy area with quite consistent and significant expansion. Even the United States, which does not offer a national programme providing cash maternity benefits, now at least provides 12 weeks of unpaid leave for women who are public employees or who work

in a private firm with at least 50 employees (via the *Family and Medical Leave Act* enacted in 1993). No additional parenting benefits are available.

The basic Canadian maternity benefits programme provides women with 15 weeks at a 55 percent replacement rate, though higher-income women effectively receive a much lower replacement rate since there is a ceiling on benefits payable. This is a lower rate of compensation than was offered in the 1970s. However, an enrichment of the programme was offered in 1990 with the introduction of 10 weeks of parental benefits, which can be divided in any fashion between mother and father, though in fact 96.4 percent of parental benefits claimants are mothers (Phipps, 1998). Self-employed workers are not eligible. No additional parenting benefits are available.

In the United Kingdom, compliance with a directive from the European Community has made access to earnings-related benefits much easier (previously, only a very small fraction of women had a sufficiently continuous labour-market record to be eligible). Women in the United Kingdom are now (i.e., 1994) eligible for six weeks of maternity benefits at 90 percent replacement and an additional 12 weeks with a fixed-rate benefit (equal to about C\$125). No additional parenting benefits are available.

In the Netherlands, 16 weeks of maternity benefits are available with 100 percent wage replacement. An additional 6 months of part-time, unpaid parental leave is also available (Baker, 1995).

Maternity benefits are most generous in Norway, where a woman can choose either 42 weeks at 100 percent wage replacement or 52 weeks at 80 percent replacement. It is also possible to choose to return to work part time and to use remaining maternity benefits to “top-up salary” (for a period of up to 2 years). Self-employed workers are eligible. Parents may choose to split the period of paid leave, though the mother must take the three weeks prior to the birth and the six weeks following the birth. Four weeks of the total allotment are, in general, reserved for the father. Women who are

not eligible for regular maternity benefits receive a lump-sum maternity grant. Women who breastfeed their babies are entitled to leave (unpaid) for the time required, or at least one hour per day. Parents with one child aged less than 12 are each entitled to 10 days leave annually to care for a child who is sick (i.e., a total of 20 days for couples with one child; 30 days for couples with two children; lone parents are entitled to 20 days for one child; 30 days for two children).

## Child Support

For children living in lone-mother families, one important source of income can be child support payments. Tables 5.9a and 5.9b report on receipt of child support<sup>19</sup> by children in both lone-mother and married-couple families, since child support can continue to be received after the re-marriage of the mother. In all countries, however, it is evident that relatively few children in married-couple families do receive child support income. The first most striking point to take from Table 5.9a is that a much higher fraction of children in lone-mother families receive child support in Norway (73 percent) than in any other country studied. This is as a result of the system of advance maintenance payments employed in Norway.

The United States ranks second in terms of the percentage of children in lone-parent families receiving child support payments. While the United States has appeared a “laggard” with respect to most other benefits, it is interesting that in terms both of level and incidence of receipt (30 percent of children in lone-mother families receive child support), the United States compares quite favourably to several other countries.<sup>20</sup> One possible reason for this may be that it is in keeping with the idea that children are a private responsibility of their parents to insist that absent parents should continue to make contributions to their children’s incomes. In fact, the United States has taken some effort to collect child support payments before allowing lone mothers to receive welfare payments. (The same is true of the United Kingdom.) However, the state does not advance maintenance payments to children

should fathers default – thus the child rather than the taxpayer suffers in this case. No social responsibility for preserving the child’s standard of living is accepted.

In Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States,<sup>21</sup> “richer” children are more likely to receive child support benefits than “poorer” children (though it should be noted that very few children living with lone mothers are “rich” in any country). This is evident in Table 5.9a and is confirmed by the multivariate analysis reported in Table 5.10. This could be due both to the fact that parental incomes are often correlated, that richer fathers are more likely to be able to pay, and to the fact that receipt of child support in itself increases the income level of the child.

## Lone-parent Benefits

A special set of benefits is available to lone parents in Norway. First, a “transition benefit” is available, intended to provide subsistence if a lone parent is unable to support himself/herself as a result of child care responsibilities. The transitional benefit is sizable (about C\$12,500) and is available until the youngest child reaches the age of 10 years. The transitional benefit can be received when the lone parent is in the labour force, but at a reduced amount. It can also be collected while a lone parent attends school. Special educational benefits also help to cover expenses. As well, lone parents may receive child care benefits if they are either in the labour force or attending school. Finally, a woman on her own who gives birth to a child is entitled to a birth grant (about C\$2,000), which is in addition to other regular maternity benefits to which she may be entitled.<sup>22</sup>

No special benefits exist for lone mothers in the Netherlands, on the grounds that social assistance payments are extremely generous and should enable a mother to stay home to support her children should this be her choice.

In Canada, lone parents are granted the tax advantage of claiming the “equivalent to married” credit for a first child.

In the United Kingdom, lone parents with children less than 11 who work more than 16 hours per week are eligible for income-tested child-care benefits to a maximum of C\$134 per week.<sup>23</sup> Widowed lone mothers are entitled to the “Widowed Mothers’ Allowance,” which is not subject to a means test, leaving this category of lone mother in a relatively advantaged position.

## Social Assistance

Another form of cash transfer that can be very important for some children, especially poor children, is social assistance.<sup>24</sup> Since this benefit is typically most important for those outside the labour force (or for those unemployed who are ineligible for UI or receive inadequate UI), there is an obvious correlation between benefit receipt levels and labour-force participation levels. In the United Kingdom, 83 percent of children in lone-mother families receive social assistance; 66 percent receive social assistance in the Netherlands; 56 and 51 percent receive social assistance in Canada and the United States, respectively. On the other hand, only 31 percent of children in lone-mother families receive social assistance in Norway – the first case we have seen in which Norwegian children were less likely than children elsewhere to receive a transfer. There are two important reasons for this: 1) Norwegian lone mothers are more likely to be in the labour force; and 2) children in lone-mother families in Norway are entitled to so many other benefits that they are less likely to need social assistance.

Among poor children, social assistance receipt is very likely, especially if the child lives with a lone mother. About 90 percent of poor children in lone-mother families receive social assistance in the United Kingdom. The corresponding figures are about 80 percent in Canada and the Netherlands; 70 percent in the United States; but only 30 percent in Norway. In fact, in Norway, more children in poor married-couple families receive social assistance (about 40 percent); in the other countries under study, social assistance receipt is much less likely for children living with two parents.

For families receiving social assistance, the level of benefits is by far the highest in the Netherlands, where there is the explicit intention that social assistance should be sufficiently generous that lone mothers with children can choose to remain home to care for their children. Social assistance rates are lowest in Norway (where there are many alternative programmes), followed by the United States, where keeping social assistance payments low has been regarded as necessary to preserve work incentives. Benefit levels are very similar in Canada and the United Kingdom.

These patterns are investigated further using multivariate techniques (see Tables 5.11a and 5.11b). In all countries except Norway, living in a lone-mother family is associated with a much higher probability of receiving social assistance benefits. (Children in lone-mother families are more likely to receive social assistance, but the magnitude of the effect is much smaller in Norway.) In Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States, children with older mothers, who generally have better opportunities in the labour market, are less likely to be social assistance recipients (age of mother is not statistically significant in the Netherlands or Norway).

An additional important point to notice is that countries differ in terms of the age of child at which a lone mother is deemed “employable” (and hence ineligible for special support via the social assistance programme). For example, a lone mother may receive special benefits until her child is aged 10 years in Norway, but a lone mother with a 6-month-old baby in Alberta is deemed employable versus a lone mother with a child of 12 years in British Columbia (National Council of Welfare, 1994).

## Other Cash Transfers

In the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, the idea of “making work pay” has recently become popular. In all three countries, cash benefits are available to low-income parents who are working in the paid labour market. These benefits

are thus not purely based on need since anyone who does not have a paid job is not entitled. They are *not* for all individuals who are “working poor” because people without children are not eligible. They are *not* for all families with children who have low incomes.

In Canada, the “earned income supplement” is an “add-on” to the child tax benefit (and so was discussed in an earlier section).

In the United Kingdom, means-tested “family credit” benefits are available to parents who work more than 16 hours per week. Any receipt of family credit is counted as income when assessing eligibility for other programmes, but family credit recipients are automatically entitled to national health services such as free prescriptions, dental care, refunds for prescription glasses, hospital transportation, and dried milk for babies. Family credit differs from “Income Support,” the main UK social assistance programme, in that eligibility for family credit is restricted to families with children in which parents are labour-force participants (Ringen, 1997).

In the United States, the “Earned Income Tax Credit” (EITC), enacted in 1975 and enriched in the early 1990s, is now one of the most important means of income support for low-income families with children. Again, eligibility depends upon both parenthood and upon labour-force participation. Recipients receive higher benefits if they have two or more children (Kameraman and Kahn, 1997).

## Health

Chart 5.4 demonstrates that all countries have increased public spending on health, as a percentage of GDP per capita between 1960 and 1993. However, much of this would correspond with aging populations and thus not be of any direct benefit to children. Canadian levels of spending on health are relatively high – only Norway spends more; the United States and the United Kingdom spend considerably less. Of course, Chart 5.4 focuses on *public* spending on health. In the United States,

only some lower-income children would receive publicly-provided health care.<sup>25</sup> For most children in the United States, health care must be purchased privately by parents. Table 5.12 demonstrates that *total* spending on health care in the United States is higher than in any other country – with 56 percent of health expenditures made privately. In Canada, 28 percent of expenditures are private (for extended health coverage, prescriptions, etc.). In contrast, only 3.4 percent of health expenditures are private in Norway.

## Education

Chart 5.5 demonstrates aggregate trends in public spending on education, as a percentage of GDP per capita (this includes all levels of education). These are negative for all countries studied (again, in part, a function of an aging population). However, despite negative trends, Canadian levels of spending in this area are high by international standards.

While all countries in this study provide public education for children beyond a certain age, countries differ somewhat in the age at which compulsory schooling begins (age six for Canada, Norway and the United States; age five for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom). Also, Gornick, Meyers and Ross (1996) make the point that education systems differ significantly in how they arrange the timing of the school day/school year, which can have an important impact on employment possibilities for parents. Low weekly hours are in general harder to combine with employment than low annual weeks, particularly if, for example, children are required to go home for lunch (in parts of Canada; in parts of the Netherlands). Norway and the Netherlands have the lowest weekly hours. Table 5.13 summarizes age at which children start school and total time spent in school per year. Total annual hours are highest in Canada and the Netherlands; lowest in Norway.

Early childhood education, while not compulsory in any of these countries, is another way in which society can invest in the education of young

children and/or support the employment of parents. As discussed above, some countries (Canada, the United States, Norway, the Netherlands) provide help with child care through the tax system. Countries can also invest directly through the provision of public daycare. In none of these countries is public daycare so well developed as in, for example, Sweden or France, but Gornick, Meyers and Ross (1996) provide some data on direct investments in child care for Canada, the United States and Norway that clearly indicate that Norway invests more than either Canada or the United States (though none of the countries in this study is an especially generous provider of public child care). Finally, Gornick, Meyers and Ross (1996) and Gauthier (1996) both provide evidence on enrollments in public child care (summarized in Table 5.14). First, in the United States, very few young children are placed in publicly funded child care; child care is *not* regarded as a public responsibility in the United States. Public care is only available in special circumstances for low-income families – a charity rather than a right, despite the emphasis in the United States on the importance of labour-force participation. For 0- to 2-year-olds, public care is most common in Norway (though only 12 percent of children in this age category are in public care; elsewhere, fewer than 5 percent are in public care). For 3- to 5-year-olds, public care is most common in the Netherlands (53 percent). Note that given the low rates of labour-force participation in the Netherlands and concerns about pre-schoolers being home with their mothers, children must be placed in these programmes for educational reasons.

## Analysis of Mix

In an attempt to characterize the policy mix of each country, we return to the questions raised in the introduction.

1. *What is the overall level of support?* Of the five countries studied, Norway and the Netherlands spend the most on social programmes in general and on children in particular. The United States spends the least. This connects to basic social

values. Individuals in Norway and the Netherlands are much more concerned about reducing inequality than are individuals in Canada (though inequality is lower in these countries than in Canada). Individuals in the United Kingdom are somewhat more likely than Canadians to be concerned about reducing inequality. Canadians are more concerned about inequality than are people in the United States.

2. *Are children regarded as a public or a private responsibility?* A survey of programmes suggests that children are more likely to be regarded as a public responsibility in Norway and the Netherlands than in the United Kingdom or the North American countries. As one example, if a non-custodial parent does not pay child support in Norway, the state advances the payment to the lone parent and child. In this way, the cost of the default is shared socially rather than imposed exclusively upon the child (and his/her custodial parent) as is the case in Canada, the United Kingdom or the United States.<sup>26</sup>

3. *To what extent are people worried about work incentive effects?* The European countries are much less concerned about generating negative incentives to take paid employment. For example, very generous social assistance payments are offered in the Netherlands, with the explicit intention of enabling lone mothers to remain at home to care for their children. This reflects social values in the Netherlands favouring at-home moms – there is apparently no concern about “negative work incentives.” Extremely generous transfers are offered to lone mothers in Norway, yet rates of labour-force participation by lone moms are higher in Norway than in any of the other countries studied. Paradoxically, this may be partially a result of the universal rather than income-tested nature of many of the benefits that are not lost as a result of labour-force participation (countries concerned about work incentives typically offer smaller, income-tested cash transfers – e.g., social assistance in Canada or the United States). High labour-force participation by lone moms in Norway is also partially



a result of the other supportive policies that are in place (e.g., generous parenting leave programmes, better though not truly wonderful child care). The relative lack of concern about work incentives reflects basic social attitudes: individuals in Norway and the Netherlands are much less likely to believe that people live in need because they are “lazy” than are individuals in Canada, or especially the United States. Hence they are apparently much less concerned about offering generous programmes to those who live in need.

4. *Are programmes largely targeted or universal?*

Norway, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom all provide a universal child allowance. The level of these benefits is most generous in Norway and the Netherlands. Canada provides an income-tested child benefit. Thus poorer families receive the largest benefit; middle-income families receive smaller benefits; affluent families receive no benefits. The decision to replace the universal family allowance with an income-tested benefit reflects a Canadian concern with “spending efficiently.” Many Canadians see no reason to pay benefits to families that do not “need them.” People have argued about the waste involved in mailing cheques to all families, with little attention paid to the extra administrative costs associated with an income test. No family allowance is offered at all in the United States.

5. *Are in-kind transfers preferred to cash?*<sup>27</sup>

In all countries, children receive basic education from around six years (five years in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) – thus the United States is willing to make an in-kind transfer to *all* children in this case. It is interesting that Canadians are very generous in spending on education relative to other countries (in contrast to Canadian spending on income transfers or even via tax expenditures). Perhaps this is an indication of preference for in-kind support of children. Health care is also a right of all children in all countries except in the United States, where for most families it is the responsibility of the parents. Again, Canadian spending in this

area is generous by international standards, suggesting preferences for in-kind transfers, particularly where the in-kind good/service is viewed as meritorious.

6. *Is there a preference for delivery of benefits through the tax system?*

This would characterize the United States, which does not provide any cash child benefit, but does offer tax exemptions for dependent children (Norway offers both; Canada does not allow exemptions/credits for dependent children). Public attitudes are quite against offering public child care in the United States, but tax relief for child care expenditures is available. Canadians also devote more resources to child care via tax expenditures than via direct investment (which generates a larger benefit for higher-income families with higher marginal tax rates).

7. *Are programmes designed to support mothers working at home, to support mothers working outside the home, or to allow choice between these options?*

Here, Norway and the Netherlands diverge significantly in terms of policy. Norway offers more generous parenting leave programmes, which can be combined with paid employment in very flexible ways. It also offers cash transfers for lone moms, which can be retained while in the labour force. Thus mothers are encouraged/enabled to participate in the paid labour force. (Macroeconomic policy generating low unemployment rates also helps here.) In the Netherlands, policy instead tends to support/enable mothers to care for their children at home. For example, the main support for lone mothers is a very generous social assistance benefit, which would not be retained if moms were in the labour force.

US policies seem somewhat contradictory in this respect. On the one hand, social values seem to favour the work ethic. Yet, programmes to aid labour-force participation of parents are almost non-existent (e.g. days off for sick children, paid maternity and/or parental leaves, etc.). On the other hand, many people value the idea of mothers caring for their children at home. Yet, social assistance

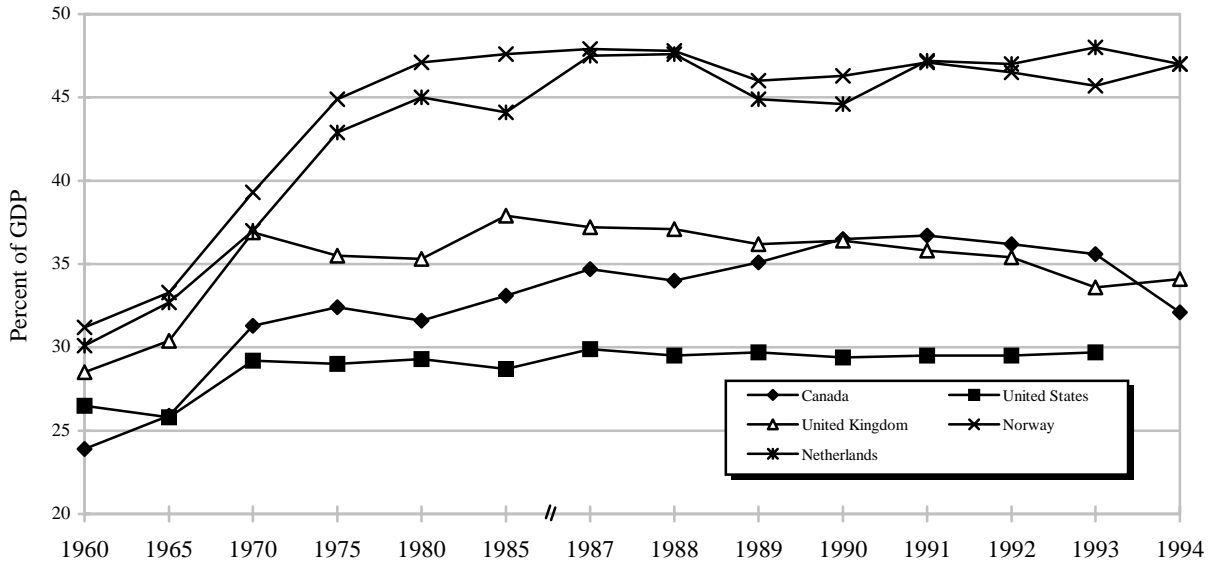
payments are not sufficiently generous to really encourage/support this option and, in fact, relying on social transfers in order to care for one's children at home is not viewed as acceptable.

Canada is somewhat better about supportive policies (e.g., in offering paid maternity leave), but the main programme for lone mothers is social assistance, which cannot be combined with paid

work and is *not* intended to support mothers who would prefer to care for their children at home. Thinking in this area seems to reflect the idea of the British Poor Laws that programmes need to be kept very miserly in order to force people to take paid work (rather than encouraging/supporting them). In both Canada and the United States, policy has a residual sense that, with the exception of widows, lone moms are not entirely deserving.

**Chart 5.1**

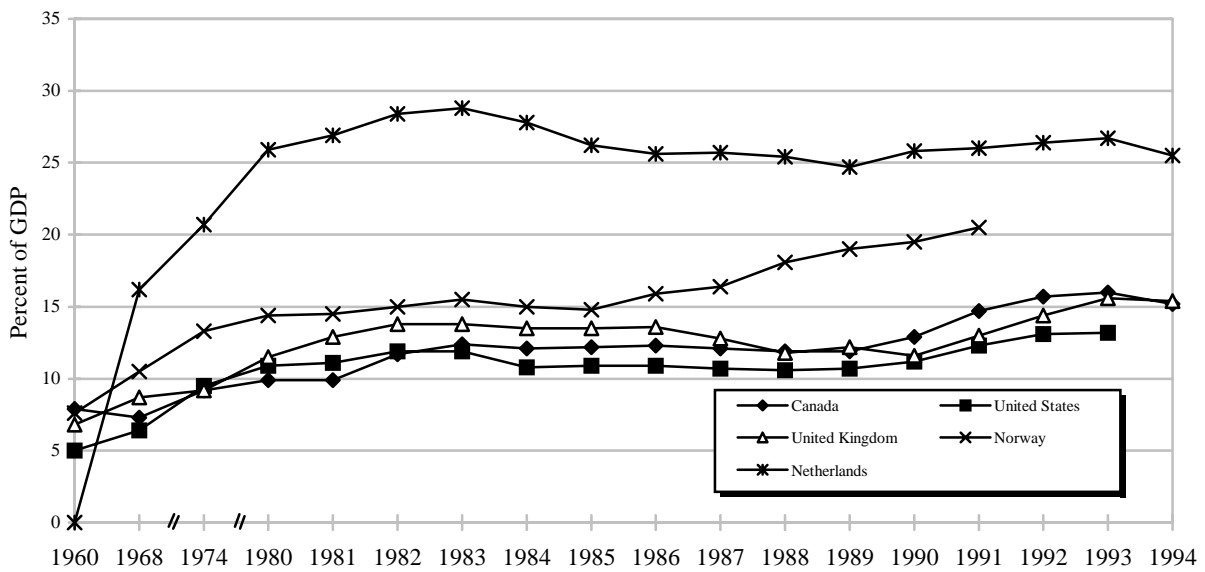
**Total Tax Revenue as a Percent of GDP**



Source: Historical statistics, OECD (1960-88/1960-94).

**Chart 5.2**

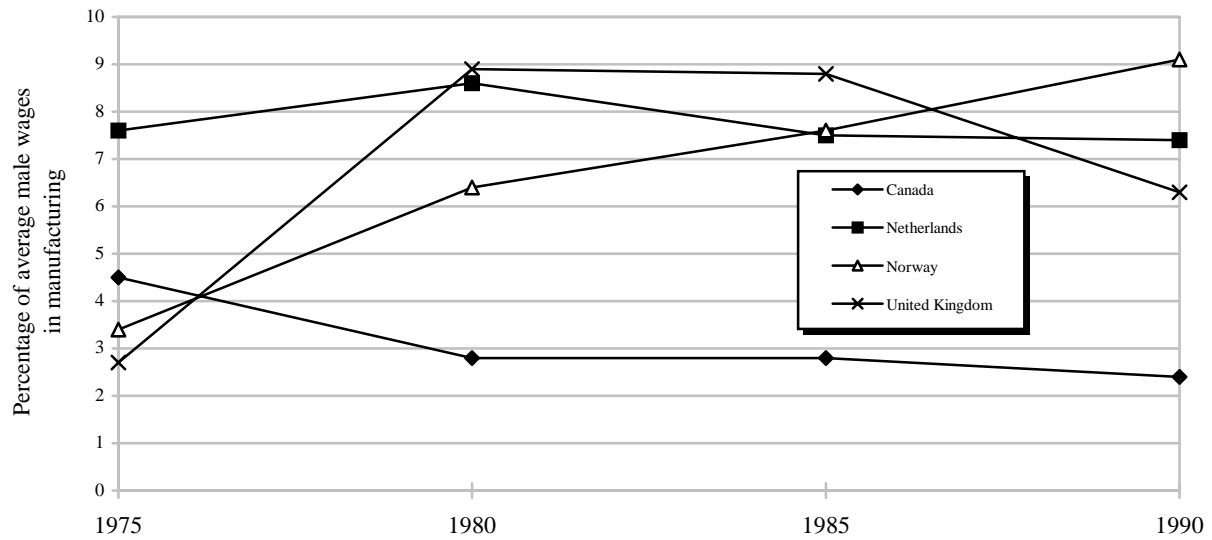
**Social Security Transfers as a Percent of GDP**



Source: Historical statistics, OECD (1960-94).

**Chart 5.3**

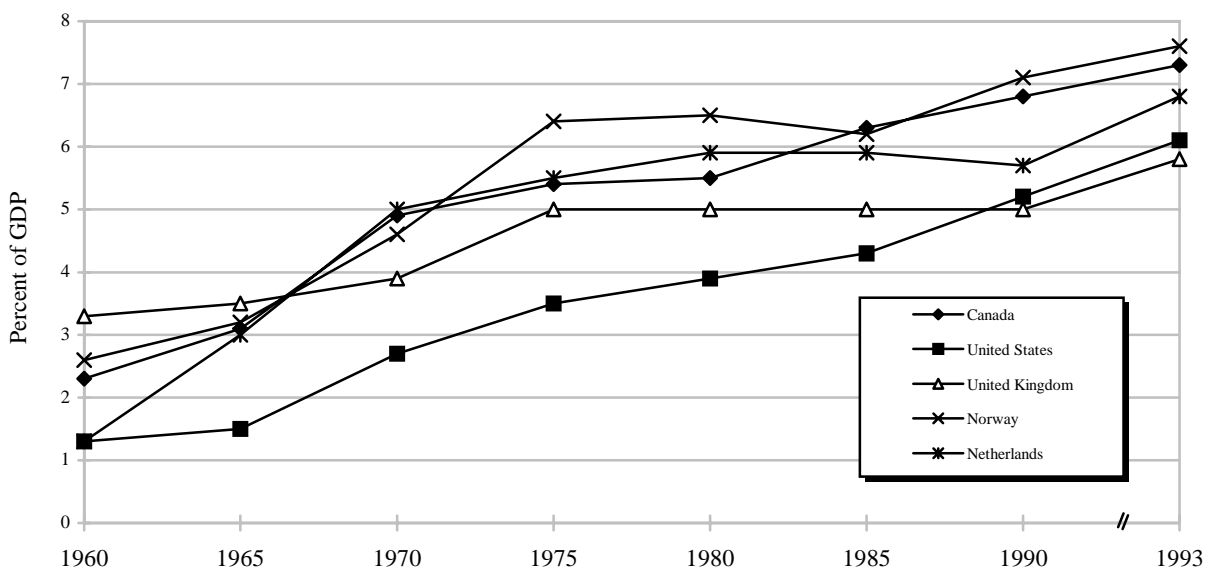
**Family Allowances for a Family with Two Children**



Note: Values for the United States were zero in all years.  
Source: Gauthier (1996).

**Chart 5.4**

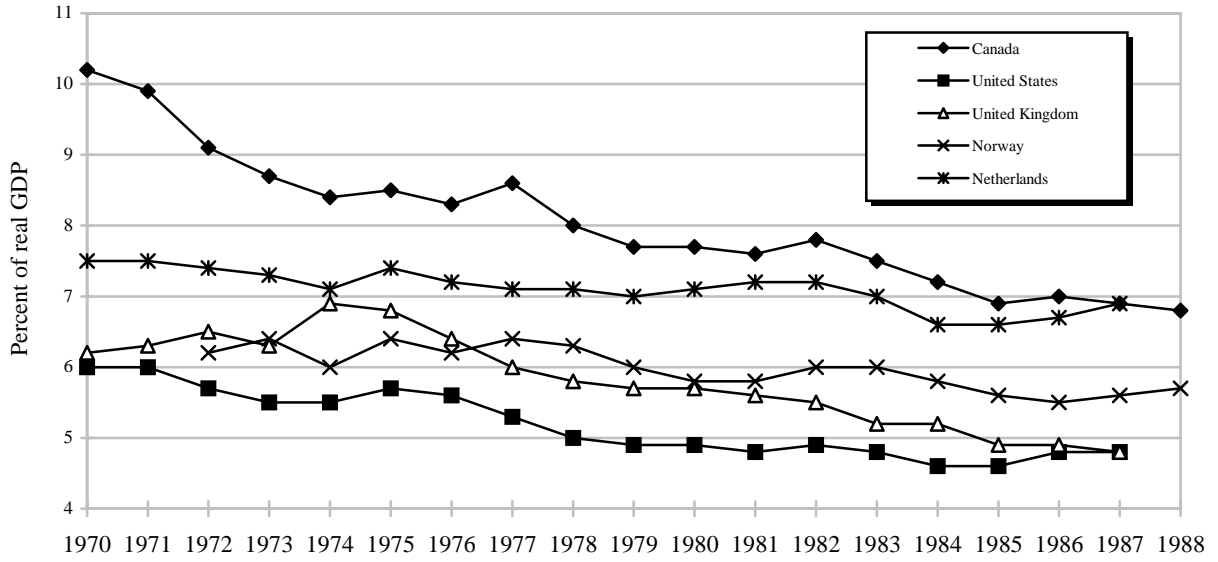
**Public Health Expenditure as a Percent of GDP**



Source: OECD (1996a).

Chart 5.5

Real Public Educational Expenditure as a Percent of Real GDP



Source: OECD, (1992a).

**Table 5.1****An Overview of Taxes and Transfers in Five Countries**

	Canada	Netherlands	Norway	United Kingdom	United States
<b>All households</b>					
Average tax rate (for those paying taxes)	0.17	0.23	0.15	0.13	0.12
Households paying positive taxes as a percent of all households	81.30	98.10	86.80	80.80	77.60
Social transfers/gross income (for house- holds receiving social transfers)	0.32	0.43	0.44	0.44	0.44
Households receiving social transfers as a percent of all households	85.70	76.00	73.50	73.00	49.00
Percent of all households with social transfers as major source of income	24.60	32.00	30.00	32.30	20.50
<b>All households where head aged &lt; 65 years</b>					
Average tax rate (for those paying taxes)	0.18	0.25	0.16	0.14	0.12
Households paying positive taxes as a percent of all households	85.70	97.80	90.00	84.60	84.70
Social transfers/gross income (for house- holds receiving social transfers)	0.22	0.32	0.26	0.33	0.32
Households receiving social transfers as a percent of all households	82.30	69.30	65.50	63.40	37.70
Percent of all households with social transfers as major source of income	18.40	23.10	17.50	20.90	11.60
<b>All households with any children</b>					
Average tax rate (for those paying taxes)	0.18	0.25	0.14	0.14	0.11
Households paying positive taxes as a percent of all households	86.20	99.00	89.40	80.60	81.10
Social transfers/gross income (for house- holds receiving social transfers)	0.21	0.20	0.17	0.25	0.28
Households receiving social transfers as a percent of all households	90.40	97.40	96.60	97.80	52.00
Percent of all households with social transfers as major source of income	18.40	17.00	14.40	22.40	13.30

Source: Author calculations, Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 5.2****Tobit Estimates of Level of Taxes for All Households (Where Tax Level > 0)**  
(All Currencies Have Been Converted to 1994 Canadian Dollars)

	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
Dummy = 1 if child < 18 years present in household	-695.199* (57.073)	-912.186* (183.697)	-2,789.659* (143.190)	-275.438 (174.652)	-2,207.709* (61.022)
Dummy = 1 if married	-2,603.673* (56.716)	549.882* (169.009)	-1,857.815* (138.022)	-773.071* (169.502)	-3,390.213* (60.031)
Gross income	0.359* (0.001)	0.237* (0.003)	0.278* (0.002)	0.230* (0.002)	0.310* (0.001)
Dummy = 1 if self- employment income is largest percentage of total income	672.550* (110.703)	-93.405 (453.881)	-1,210.384* (241.733)	-3,579.500* (293.330)	822.760* (126.880)
Dummy = 1 if cash property income is largest percentage of total income	152.678 (187.164)	-3,580.498* (880.101)	-1,056.200** (483.593)	-151.648 (401.459)	-320.083*** (182.048)
Dummy = 1 if social transfer income is largest percentage of total income	-1,773.362* (86.798)	-1,991.184* (217.283)	-537.176* (198.501)	-4,243.798* (235.753)	-4,670.883* (113.793)
Dummy = 1 if other income is largest percentage of total income	201.387*** (114.098)	-1,333.362* (297.125)	1,967.357* (436.849)	-1,844.711* (331.348)	-1,092.294* (133.169)
Dummy = 1 if head of household is aged 65 years or greater	-352.925* (87.437)	-1,845.909* (226.498)	1,077.268* (198.537)	1,462.093* (228.525)	-980.311* (100.883)
Scale	4,518.026 (17.863)	4,796.492 (52.183)	4,817.144 (40.811)	5,766.041 (54.221)	6,210.888 (18.454)
Intercept	-6,486.037* (57.241)	1,655.889* (197.944)	-3,988.377* (132.727)	-2,084.701* (184.916)	-7,289.895* (51.290)

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.  
Standard error in parentheses.

Source: Author calculations, Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 5.3****Tobit Estimates of Level of Taxes<sup>1</sup>**

(All Currencies Have Been Converted to 1994 Canadian Dollars)

	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
Dummy = 1 if wages of head > 0 and wages of spouse > 0	-1,616.335* (125.900)	290.563 (420.614)	-20.193 (391.538)	-3,113.251* (435.716)	-1,605.396* (162.472)
Interactive dummy = two-earner household × child < 6 years in household	-471.362* (136.816)	648.474 (565.974)	-1,507.373* (376.651)	1,180.373** (510.261)	-498.971* (171.981)
Gross income	0.3903* (0.0013)	0.252* (0.007)	0.2774* (0.0042)	0.348* (0.005)	0.335* (0.001)
Dummy = 1 if self-employment income is largest percentage of total income	-522.787* (200.871)	-468.016 (792.216)	-2,007.49* (485.359)	-3,804.979* (549.084)	121.883 (276.540)
Dummy = 1 if cash property income is largest percentage of total income	-2296.717** (933.454)	--	-3,0235.49* (2,738.095)	-2,810.925 (1996.386)	1,600.872 (1,032.067)
Dummy = 1 if social transfer income is largest percentage of total income	-1,790.860* (236.850)	-1,898.470* (655.776)	-1,576.327 (1,112.781)	-3,914.765* (711.660)	-5,852.563* (567.886)
Dummy = 1 if other income is largest percentage of total income	24.593 (625.280)	412.392 (2104.988)	72,200.91* (4,481.828)	-6,416.348* (1,712.948)	-7,376.520* (946.247)
Age of the head	63.798 (51.517)	22.891 (198.466)	-252.392*** (153.217)	-151.579 (160.248)	-426.353* (59.892)
Age of the head squared	-2.580* (0.627)	0.814 (2.397)	3.070*** (1.846)	0.8413 (1.989)	3.616* (0.728)
Scale	4,773.043 (34.252)	5,295.153 (111.921)	5,585.29 (96.122)	6,546.251 (116.951)	7,527.584 (44.956)
Intercept	-8,583.761* (1,035.725)	-1,919.818 (4,029.476)	-2,595.44 (3,105.47)	-2,991.957 (3,102.22)	-2,308.878*** (1,191.665)

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.

Standard error in parentheses.

<sup>1</sup> Where taxes > = 0, children over 18 are present, head of household is < 65 years old, married couple household.

Source: Author calculations, Luxembourg Income Study.



**Table 5.4****Child Benefit Structure by Number of Children: Ratio of Per-child Benefit to That Received by the First Child in a Married-couple Family (C\$)**

	Canada <sup>1</sup> (taxable)		United Kingdom (not taxable)	Norway (not taxable)	Netherlands <sup>2</sup> (not taxable)	
	Income < \$25,921 full benefit	No benefit			Age 0 to 5	Age 6 to 11
1st child	\$1,020	Income > \$66,721	\$1,282.59	\$2,326.63	\$947.77	\$1,353.95
2nd child	100.0%	Income > \$46,321	81%	104.64%	115%	115%
3rd child	107.3%	Income > \$46,321	81%	117.82%	120%	120%
4th child	107.3%	Income > \$46,321	81%	123.65%	130%	130%
1st child in lone- parent family	100.0%	Income > \$66,721	1.54%	200.00%	100%	100%

1 Benefits are reduced at 5 percent of net family income over C\$25,921 for families with two or more children. Lone-child families have a reduction of 2.5 percent.

2 The Netherlands family allowance is based on the age and number of children.

Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services (1997); OECD (1992b).

**Table 5.5****Family Allowances for a Family with Two Children, 1975-90**

	Allowances as a percentage of the average male wages in manufacturing			
	1975	1980	1985	1990
Canada	4.5	2.8	2.8	2.4
United Kingdom	2.7	8.9	8.8	6.3
Norway	3.4	6.4	7.6	9.1
Netherlands	7.6	8.6	7.5	7.4

Source: Gauthier (1996), p. 166.

**Table 5.6**

**Children Receiving Family Allowance (FA) Benefits in Married-couple vs Lone-mother Households (hh), by Income Level**

Family allowance by income level	Canada (1994)		Netherlands (1991)		Norway (1991)		United Kingdom (1991)	
	Married-couple hh	Lone-mother hh	Married-couple hh	Lone-mother hh	Married-couple hh	Lone-mother hh	Married-couple hh	Lone-mother hh
Weighted percent of children receiving FA								
	Poor <sup>1</sup>	98.5	95.1	97.5	95.8	85.8	98.2	99.5
	Med-poor	100.0	99.3	92.5	99.6	100.0	98.8	99.5
	Med-rich	77.1	97.7	~	99.6	100.0	99.0	100.0
	Rich	23.9	85.9	~	98.6	~	95.6	~
	All	85.5	98.9	94.9	99.4	97.8	98.3	99.5
FA benefits per child as a percentage of DPIEQ								
	Poor <sup>1</sup>	6.7	6.2	6.7	8.0	10.7	5.5	6.2
	Med-poor	5.2	6.5	6.2	8.9	13.7	5.6	7.2
	Med-rich	2.9	5.4	~	8.9	15.5	5.6	7.4
	Rich	0.2	3.7	~	9.2	~	5.6	~
	All	4.7	6.2	6.8	8.8	13.6	5.6	6.7

(Percent)

DPIEQ = disposable personal equivalent income.

<sup>1</sup> For these calculations, it is assumed that the child shares equally the parents' standard of living. "Poor" means family equivalent income is less than 50 percent of the median country equivalent income; "med-poor" means family equivalent income is greater than 50 percent of the country equivalent income and less than the median country equivalent income; "med-rich" means family equivalent income is greater than or equal to the median equivalent income and less than 1.5 times greater than the country equivalent income; "rich" means family income is greater than or equal to 1.5 times the country equivalent income. "Equivalent income" adjusts for family size using the OECD equivalence scale.

**Table 5.7****OLS Estimates of the Level of Benefits Received, for Children in Families Receiving Family Allowance**

Variable	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
Intercept	0.047* (0.002)	0.005 (0.010)	0.132* (0.009)	0.055* (0.003)	-
Dummy = 1 if one child	0.010* (0.0005)	-0.010* (0.0009)	0.009* (0.001)	0.007* (0.0005)	-
Dummy = 1 if three or more children	0.007* (0.0004)	0.005* (0.0006)	0.003* (0.0009)	-0.002* (0.0004)	-
Dummy = 1 if lone mother	0.008* (0.0005)	0.002 (0.001)	0.044* (0.001)	0.011* (0.0005)	-
Dummy = 1 if poor	0.031* (0.0005)	0.002 (0.001)	-0.021* (0.002)	-0.0009 (0.0006)	-
Dummy = 1 if med-poor	0.022* (0.0004)	0.002* (0.0006)	-0.003* (0.0009)	0.0009*** (0.0005)	-
Dummy = 1 if rich	-0.011* (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	0.002 (0.002)	-0.0001 (0.0006)	-
Child's age	-0.0006* (0.00005)	0.003* (0.00009)	0.0002 (0.0001)	0.0001** (0.00006)	-
Age of mother	-0.0008* (0.0001)	0.001** (0.0006)	-0.002* (0.0005)	-0.00005 (0.0001)	-
Age of mother squared	0.00001* (0.000002)	-0.000004 (0.000008)	0.00001** (0.000007)	0.0000004 (0.000002)	-

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.

For all countries, benefits are expressed relative to average standard of living for that country (disposable income adjusted for family size using the OECD equivalence scale).

**Table 5.8****Probit Analysis of the Probability of Receiving Family Allowance Benefits (Canada Only)**

Variable	Canada (1994)
Intercept	2.947* (0.366)
Dummy = 1 if one child	0.263* (0.045)
Dummy = 1 if three or more children	0.686* (0.048)
Dummy = 1 if lone mother	0.747* (0.095)
Dummy = 1 if poor	1.271* (0.080)
Dummy = 1 if med-poor	1.734* (0.060)
Dummy = 1 if rich	-1.450* (0.043)
Child's age	-0.026* (0.006)
Age of mother	-0.099* (0.019)
Age of mother squared	0.001* (0.0002)

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.

**Table 5.9a**

**Children Receiving Child Support (CS) Benefits, by Income Level**

Child support	Canada (1994)		Netherlands (1991)		Norway (1991)		United Kingdom (1991)		United States (1994)	
	Married-couple hh	Lone-mother hh	Married-couple hh	Lone-mother hh	Married-couple hh	Lone-mother hh	Married-couple hh	Lone-mother hh	Married-couple hh	Lone-mother hh
Weighted percent of children receiving CS										
Poor <sup>1</sup>	n/a	~	~	~	1.4	38.8	1.6	15.2	6.2	21.6
Med-poor	n/a	~	~	~	7.2	75.2	4.3	24.7	7.1	37.4
Med-rich	n/a	~	~	~	5.3	94.7	2.5	32.7	6.3	50.5
Rich	n/a	~	~	~	5.1	~	~	83.2	4.1	49.8
All	16.0	20.3	0.8	20.3	6.2	72.6	3.0	21.8	6.2	29.2
CS benefits per child as a percent of DPIEQ										
Poor <sup>1</sup>	n/a	~	~	~	6.1	4.7	~	9.7	4.8	5.1
Med-poor	n/a	~	~	12.2	6.2	9.2	7.0	13.9	7.2	12.0
Med-rich	n/a	~	~	~	6.7	13.0	12.6	24.8	11.4	20.0
Rich	n/a	~	~	~	11.3	~	~	~	14.1	48.9
All	11.7	13.1	4.4	13.1	6.6	9.6	7.8	14.9	8.7	12.1

hh = household; DPIEQ = disposable personal equivalent income.

Note: The figures for Canada are based on Galarneau (1992) and reflect reported benefit receipt by household rather than by child for the year 1988. Hence they are obviously not directly comparable.

1 For these calculations, it is assumed that the child shares equally the parents' standard of living. "Poor" means family equivalent income is less than 50 percent of the median country equivalent income; "med-poor" means family equivalent income is greater than 50 percent of the country equivalent income and less than the median country equivalent income; "med-rich" means family equivalent income is greater than or equal to the median equivalent income and less than 1.5 times greater than the country equivalent income; "rich" means family income is greater than or equal to 1.5 times the country equivalent income. "Equivalent income" adjusts for family size using the OECD equivalence scale.

**Table 5.9b**

**Children Receiving Child Support (CS) Benefits in Married-couple vs Lone-mom Households (hh), by Child Age Group**

Child support by child age	Canada (1994)		Netherlands (1991)		Norway (1991)		United Kingdom (1991)		United States (1994)	
	Married- couple hh	Lone- mother hh	Married- couple hh	Lone- mother hh	Married- couple hh	Lone- mother hh	Married- couple hh	Lone- mother hh	Married- couple hh	Lone- mother hh
Weighted percent of children receiving CS										
< 1	n/a	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	3.6	19.6
1	n/a	~	~	~	13.7	54.7	~	~	5.5	20.6
2-3	n/a	~	~	~	5.3	75.0	2.1	15.8	5.6	21.4
4-5	n/a	~	~	~	5.4	70.8	2.5	22.8	5.9	29.4
6-11	n/a	22.0	1.0	22.0	6.1	83.2	3.9	27.3	7.0	34.5
<b>All</b>	16.0	20.3	0.8	20.3	6.2	72.6	3.0	21.8	6.2	29.2
CS benefits per child as a percent of DPIEQ										
< 1	n/a	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	9.3	7.3
1	n/a	~	~	~	7.0	7.9	~	~	7.5	7.5
2-3	n/a	~	~	~	5.5	9.0	5.9	14.1	8.1	9.5
4-5	n/a	~	~	~	6.2	11.4	10.7	13.7	7.5	10.6
6-11	n/a	13.2	4.0	13.2	7.0	10.0	7.7	15.1	9.3	13.9
<b>All</b>	11.7	13.1	4.4	13.1	6.6	9.6	7.8	14.9	8.7	12.1

DPIEQ = disposable personal equivalent income.

Note: The figures for Canada are based on Galarmeu (1992) and reflect reported benefit receipt by household rather than by child for the year 1988. Hence they are obviously not directly comparable.

**Table 5.10****Probit Analysis of the Probability of Receiving Child Support for Children in Lone-mother Families**

Variable	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
Intercept	n/a	n/a	3.495* (0.947)	-1.835** (0.726)	-0.669* (0.180)
Dummy = 1 if one child	n/a	n/a	-0.175 (0.144)	-0.405** (0.175)	-0.285* (0.043)
Dummy = 1 if three or more children	n/a	n/a	2.000* (0.381)	-0.5249* (0.166)	-0.109* (0.037)
Dummy = 1 if poor	n/a	n/a	-2.407* (0.312)	-0.501*** (0.257)	-0.848* (0.062)
Dummy = 1 if med-poor	n/a	n/a	-1.142* (0.247)	-0.192 (0.242)	-0.365* (0.061)
Dummy = 1 if rich	n/a	n/a	-1.242 (1.053)	1.118*** (0.628)	-0.009 (0.095)
Child's age	n/a	n/a	0.077* (0.024)	0.033 (0.022)	0.031* (0.005)
Age of mother	n/a	n/a	-0.106** (0.052)	0.069*** (0.035)	0.043* (0.009)
Age of mother squared	n/a	n/a	0.001 (0.0007)	-0.0007*** (0.0004)	-0.0006* (0.0001)

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.

**Table 5.11a****Probit Analysis of the Probability of Receiving Social Assistance Benefits**

Variable	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
Intercept	0.401** (0.189)	0.091 (2.103)	-1.272** (0.644)	0.236 (0.460)	-1.352* (0.120)
Dummy = 1 if one child	0.040 (0.038)	0.602* (0.199)	0.210** (0.078)	0.186** (0.089)	-0.089* (0.032)
Dummy = 1 if three or more children	-0.060*** (0.032)	-0.040 (0.163)	0.162** (0.066)	0.239* (0.071)	0.184* (0.024)
Dummy = 1 if lone mother	1.126* (0.033)	2.377* (0.182)	0.569* (0.075)	1.553* (0.088)	1.032* (0.022)
Dummy = 1 if poor	1.510* (0.046)	2.07* (0.323)	0.945* (0.117)	2.269* (0.119)	1.513* (0.042)
Dummy = 1 if med-poor	0.500* (0.042)	0.804* (0.295)	0.516* (0.073)	0.936* (0.109)	0.649* (0.042)
Dummy = 1 if rich	-0.337* (0.094)	-9.381 (1.383)	-0.999* (0.309)	-0.296 (0.204)	-0.307* (0.074)
Child's age	-0.00005 (0.005)	0.058** (0.026)	0.007 (0.009)	0.013** (0.010)	-0.012* (0.003)
Age of mother	-0.112* (0.010)	-0.139 (0.127)	-0.060 (0.037)	-0.123* (0.024)	-0.040* (0.006)
Age of mother squared	0.001* (0.0001)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001* (0.0005)	0.002 (0.0003)	0.0005* (0.00007)

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.



**Table 5.11b****OLS Estimates of the Level of Benefits Received, for the Children in Families Receiving Social Assistance**

Variable	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
Intercept	0.090* (0.026)	-0.270 (0.431)	0.116 (0.086)	0.288* (0.054)	0.048* (0.014)
Dummy = 1 if one child	0.031* (0.006)	0.171* (0.043)	0.026** (0.011)	0.065* (0.013)	-0.0005 (0.004)
Dummy = 1 if three or more children	-0.021* (0.005)	0.034 (0.038)	0.017 (0.011)	-0.038* (0.010)	-0.009* (0.003)
Dummy = 1 if lone mother	0.095* (0.004)	0.057 (0.036)	0.015 (0.010)	0.118* (0.009)	0.034* (0.003)
Dummy = 1 if poor	0.033* (0.009)	0.232** (0.100)	-0.061* (0.018)	-0.030 (0.026)	0.009 (0.008)
Dummy = 1 if med-poor	0.052* (0.009)	0.313* (0.093)	-0.065* (0.013)	-0.062** (0.026)	0.010 (0.008)
Dummy = 1 if rich	-0.043*** (0.026)	-	-0.073 (0.078)	-0.186* (0.063)	0.070* (0.016)
Child's age	0.001*** (0.0007)	-0.0002 (0.006)	-0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.0002 (0.0004)
Age of mother	0.003 (0.001)	0.017 (0.027)	0.001 (0.005)	-0.003 (0.003)	0.001 (0.0006)
Age of mother squared	-0.00007* (0.00002)	-0.0002 (0.0004)	-0.00005 (0.00007)	0.000005 (0.00003)	-0.000009 (0.000007)

Note: \* indicates statistical significance at 99 percent; \*\* indicates statistical significance at 95 percent; and \*\*\* indicates statistical significance at 90 percent.

**Table 5.12****Total and Private Expenditures on Health**

	Total (as a percent of GDP, 1991)	Private (as a percent of total health expenditure, 1989-91)
Canada	9.9	27.8
Netherlands	8.7	26.9
Norway	8.4	3.4
United Kingdom	6.6	16.7
United States	13.3	56.1

Source: United Nations Development Programme (1997).

**Table 5.13****School Policies**

	Age of compulsory school	School hours per week	Days per school year	Total annual school hours
Canada	6	35	180	6,300
Netherlands	5	29	220	6,380
Norway	6	30	190	5,700
United Kingdom	5	33	190	6,270
United States	6	33	185	6,105

Source: Gornick, Meyers and Ross (1996).

**Table 5.14****Public Provision of Child Care**

(Percent of Children in Public Child Care by Age Group)

	Gornick: children 0 to 2 years	Gauthier: children 0 to 2 years	Gornick: children 3 to school age	Gauthier: children 3 to school age
Canada	5	< 5	35	15
Netherlands	2	< 5	53	50
Norway	12	10	40	50
United Kingdom	2	< 5	38	35
United States	1	-	14	-

Source: Gornick, Meyers and Ross (1996) and Gauthier (1996).

# VI

## A Brief Word on Macroeconomic Performance

It is clear that Norway, in particular, offers very extensive programming, by Canadian standards, for families with children. Fiscal conservatives in Canada are likely to argue that such a course of action may seem very “nice,” but that it is naive since it is likely to be extremely bad for the overall economic performance of the country. The argument is that generous transfers and high rates of taxation will *both* reduce incentives to work. However, Charts 6.1a through 6.4 indicate that this is definitely not true – Norway’s macroeconomic performance compares very favourably with that of the other countries studied. First, in terms of economic growth (of GDP per capita), Norway is sometimes ahead and sometimes behind Canada and the United States, but there is certainly no case to be made that Norway performs consistently worse than either country despite its much more generous social programmes (see Charts 6.1a and 6.1b).

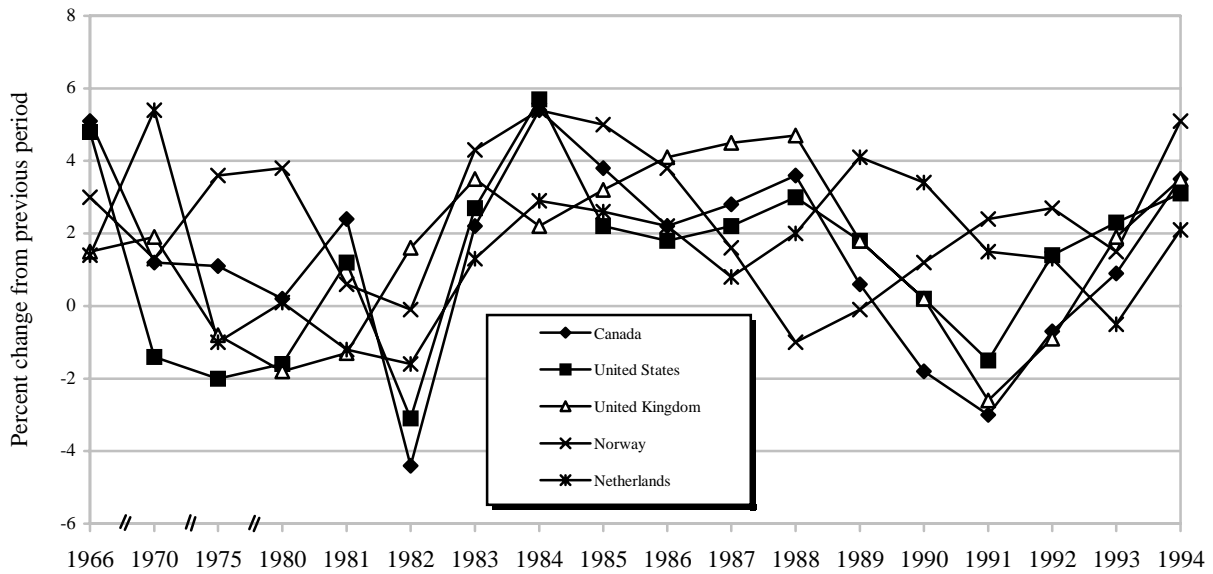
In terms of inflation, it is slightly easier to be critical of Norway. Inflation rates were higher in Norway during the 1980s, though this is no longer true in the 1990s (see Chart 6.2). In terms of unemployment, Norway has been a star. Throughout the

1980s, Norwegian unemployment rates were dramatically lower than in any of the other countries studied. By 1994, the Norwegian rate had increased to nearly the US level, but it was still the lowest of the five countries (see Chart 6.3). Finally, in terms of government debt, Norway’s position is also much better than the other countries studied – Norway continues to enjoy a surplus, presumably largely due to North Sea oil (Chart 6.4).

The other argument that immediately comes to mind is – “well, perhaps Norway can afford generous programmes because it is so rich.” However, it is important to keep in mind that these programmes were instituted at a time when Norway was much poorer than Canada or the United States. For example, OECD statistics indicate that in 1960, GNP per capita in Norway was 1,260 versus 2,100 in Canada and 2,830 in the United States (all figures are in US dollars). Again, in 1966, Norwegian GNP per capita was 2,020 versus 2,670 in Canada and 3,840 in the United States. The creation of the Norwegian welfare state was thus a *choice* about how to allocate resources; not just a luxury of a state with more resources to spend.

**Chart 6.1a**

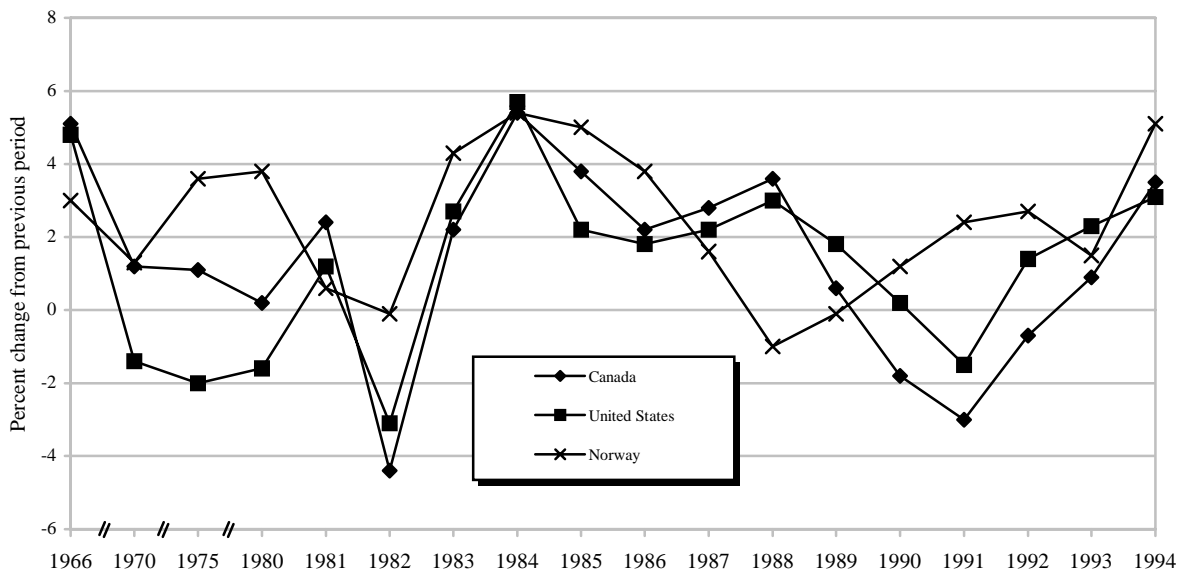
**Percentage Changes in Real GDP per Capita, Five Countries**



Source: Historical statistics, OECD (1960-88/1960-94).

**Chart 6.1b**

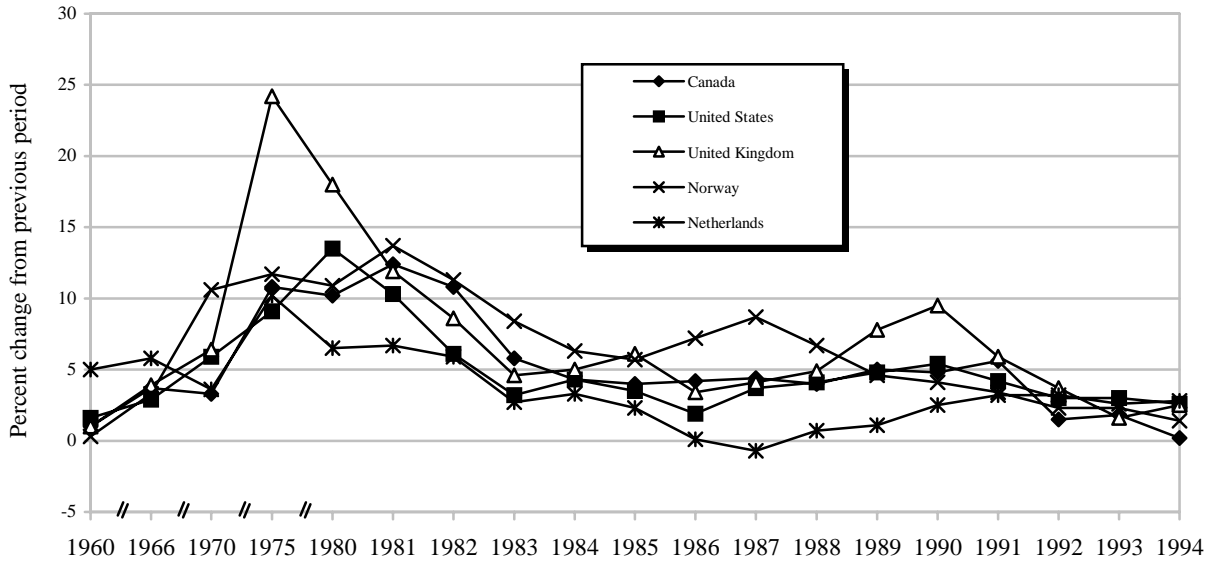
**Percentage Changes in Real GDP per Capita, Canada, United States and Norway**



Source: Historical statistics, OECD (1960-88/1960-94).

Chart 6.2

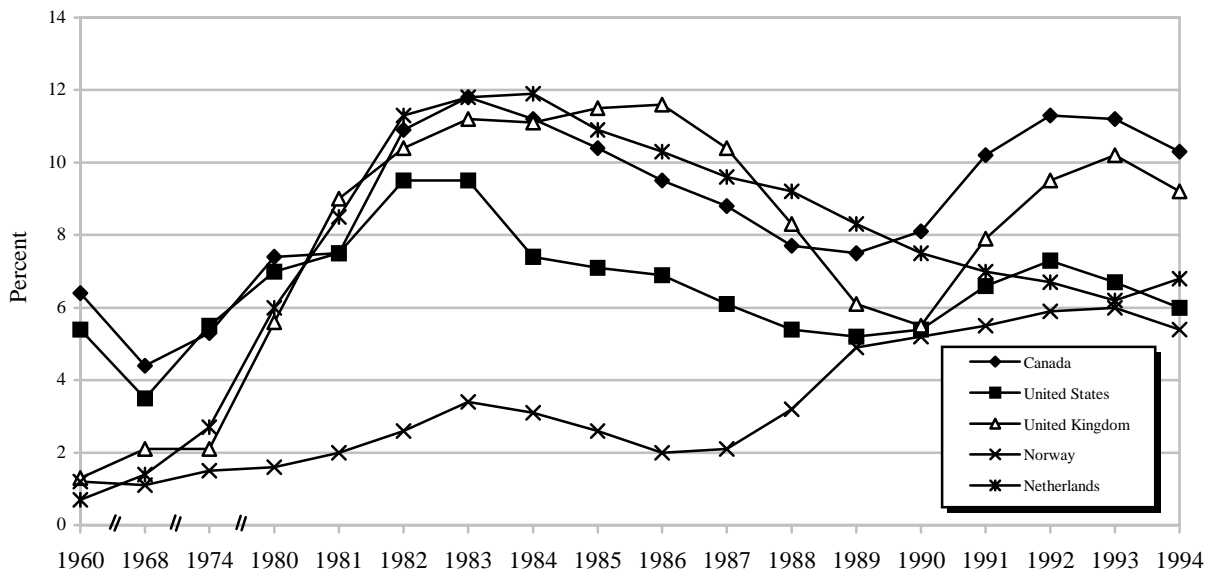
Consumer Price Indices (All Items)



Source: Historical statistics, OECD (1960-93).

Chart 6.3

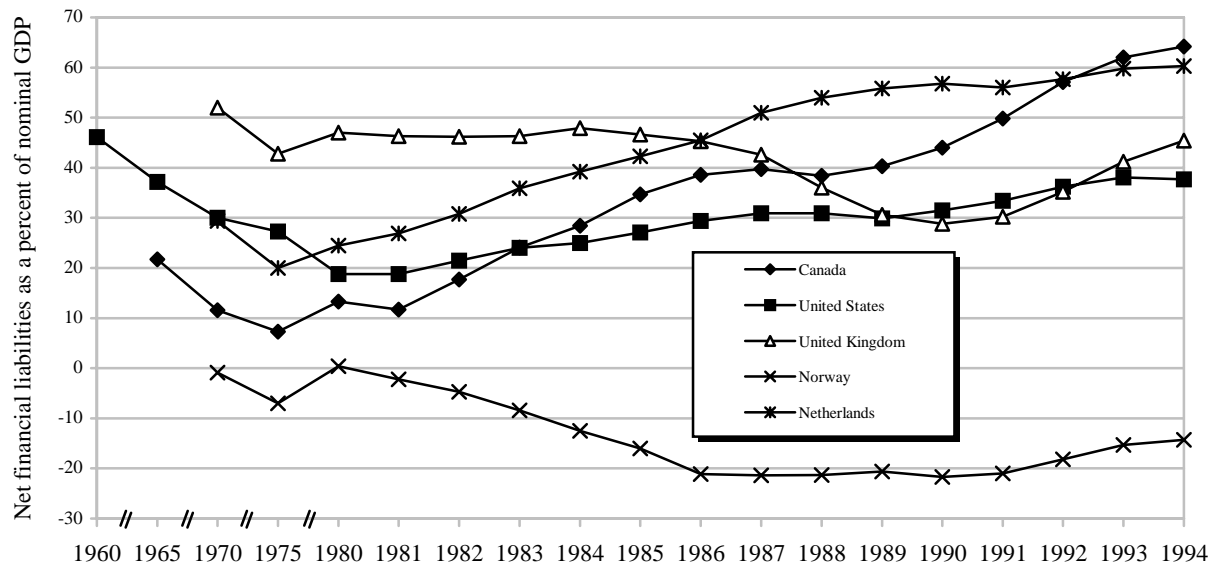
Unemployment as a Percent of Total Labour Force



Source: Historical statistics, OECD (1960-93/1960-94).

Chart 6.4

General Government Net Financial Liabilities



Source: OECD (1995, 1996a).

# VII

## Outcomes: The Well-being of Children

Before we can compare the “well-being” of children in different countries, we need to be clear just what we mean by this term.<sup>28</sup> While at the level of theory, economists have typically equated well-being with “utility” – a subjective experience of well-being resulting from having a particular income<sup>29</sup>; in practice, well-being is most often measured in terms of access to income (and assets, where suitable data are available, which is rare).

### Financial Well-being

We first compare the financial well-being of children across the five countries. Table 7.1 presents median and mean family income levels in 1994 Canadian dollars.<sup>30</sup> (It is extremely difficult to separate child financial well-being from the financial well-being of the child’s family.) First, in terms of mean after-tax and transfer incomes, children living in the United States are slightly better off than children living in Canada (\$46,474 in the United States versus \$45,216 in Canada) and noticeably better off than Norwegian children (\$39,854). Average family income levels are lowest in the United Kingdom (\$36,258) and the Netherlands (\$35,812). The same relative patterns hold for income per adult equivalent (i.e., income adjusted for family size, taking account of the economies of scale available to people who live together).<sup>31</sup>

The countries with the lowest financial resources have the lowest rates of labour-force participation

for women. To the extent that there is positive value associated with having a parent at home (daycare costs are saved, domestic work can get done), straight comparisons of income across countries are probably not entirely valid (see Kilfoil, 1998).

Notice that median<sup>32</sup> and mean income are much closer for Norway and the Netherlands, indicating that there is much less inequality in the distribution of family incomes in these countries than in the United States, in particular. Most experts agree that median is a better summary measure than mean, since it cannot be influenced by a few extreme values. Using median income, the financial resources available to young children in Canada are highest of all, though the financial resources available to the median child in Canada, the United States and Norway are very similar, particularly when adjusted for family size and economies of scale (i.e., using the per adult equivalent measure).

Table 7.1 also reports mean and median income levels for gross family income (giving back taxes) and for market income (taking away social transfers). These calculations are intended to give some idea of the role played by the state in affecting incomes for families with young children in each country. Notice, first, that giving back taxes improves Norway’s ranking relative to the United States (i.e., Norwegians pay more taxes). Taking away transfers also has a larger impact on Norway than the United States (i.e., Norwegians also receive

more transfers). Nonetheless, it is striking that median equivalent incomes for the countries studied are reasonably similar, regardless of the income measure used. It is also clear that there is more inequality in market earnings in the United States than in the other countries (given the consistently large difference between mean and median incomes).

Tables 7.2 and 7.3 present the same information for children living with two parents and for children with lone mothers, respectively. Since the pattern of results for children living with two parents is very similar to that reported for all children, we will focus on the results for lone mothers. To compare disposable incomes, the most meaningful number to consider is median disposable income per adult equivalent, which adjusts for family size and economies of scale. If we compare children living with lone mothers to all children, children living with lone mothers have incomes that are 52 percent of all children in the United States, about 66 percent of all children in Canada, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom and 81 percent in Norway. Thus, within countries, there is least disparity in the living standards of children with lone moms in Norway; most disparity in the United States. If we compare absolute disposable incomes of children with lone moms across the countries (using PPP conversions to obtain 994 Canadian dollars), disposable incomes for children living with lone mothers are lowest in the United Kingdom, the United States and the Netherlands. In the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, labour-force participation rates of moms are very low, so that to the extent there is positive value to the mother's time at home, straight dollar comparisons are not entirely meaningful. This is not true of the United States, where labour-force participation rates are high. Incomes are highest in Norway – about 1.6 times that available to children in lone-mother families living in the United States.

However, it is important to realize that mean (and even median) income levels mask major differences across these countries in the experience of poverty, defined in terms of after-tax income.<sup>33</sup> Consider, first, children living with two parents.

Poverty rates are very high in the United Kingdom and the United States (18.7 and 17.9 percent of children are poor, respectively; see Table 7.4 and Chart 7.1). Poverty rates are dramatically lower in Norway and the Netherlands (4.6 and 5.5 percent, respectively). Canada is on “middle ground” in this case, with a poverty rate of 12.6 percent for children living with two parents. However, it is also true that children are more likely to be “rich” (have family incomes greater than 150 percent of median income for the country) in the United Kingdom and the United States. In fact, almost the same number of children are rich (19 percent) as are poor (17.9 percent) in the United States, reflecting the very high level of income inequality that exists in that country; if a country with much poverty also has much richness, then average levels of income balance the extremes. Thus the United States has the second-highest average income level, though the worst record in terms of poverty.

If we turn to an analysis of the financial resources available to children in lone-mother families (see Table 7.5), the first striking point to notice is that children are much more likely to be poor in all countries if they live with a lone mother than if they live with two parents. However, there are also very big differences across countries in the likelihood of children of lone mothers being poor. Children of lone mothers fare much the worst in the United States (60 percent are poor), followed by the United Kingdom (46 percent) and Canada (43 percent). In contrast, only 16 percent of children living in lone-mother households are poor in Norway (lower than the incidence of poverty for children in two-parent families in the United Kingdom and the United States). In no country do children living in lone-mother families have much chance of being “rich” (3.5 percent in the United States, less than 2 percent elsewhere; see Table 7.5 and Chart 7.2).

Tables 7.6 through 7.8 illustrate the impact of the state on children's place in the income distribution (for all children, children living with two parents, and children living with a lone mother, respectively). First, consider the impact of giving families back their taxes. In all countries, the number of rich



and medium-rich children would increase dramatically; this is particularly marked for the Netherlands and Norway. The number of poor children would fall, but not by very much in any country (i.e., paying taxes does not drive many people into poverty anywhere). Consider, next, the effect of taking away social transfers. This reduces the number of rich children, but not by much. What is very striking is how poverty rates climb, though less dramatically in the United States than elsewhere (because social transfers in the United States are less generous in the United States). Note that the United Kingdom does very well at removing children from poverty via social transfers. Note also that Norway and the Netherlands have lower rates of poverty among all children even before social transfers. Charts 7.3 and 7.4 illustrate the overall effect of the state on the incidence of poverty for all children and for children with lone mothers, respectively.

Table 7.8 focuses on children currently living with lone mothers. Again, giving back taxes paid does not in general move many children into poverty (with the interesting exception of the Netherlands). Taking away social transfers makes a major difference, in all countries but the United States, but especially in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands where rates of labour-force participation are so low. Transfers matter in the United States, but not very much. This is presumably because the major transfer programme for lone mothers in the United States is a social assistance programme that guarantees they will continue to live in poverty. Overall, it is clear that taxes and transfers can make an extremely important difference in the financial vulnerability of families with children.

## Happiness (Subjective Well-being)

A second approach to measuring “utility/happiness” employed by economists (though much less frequently) is to make use of self-evaluations. That is, individuals are simply asked “Are you happy?” This has become a relatively common approach to measuring poverty in Europe (see Hagenaars, 1986,

for example). In the context of measuring the well-being of children, it would be difficult to ask infants or very young children to answer this question themselves, but it is possible to ask parents to make this assessment about their children. Table 7.9 summarizes parental reports of children’s “general happiness” levels for 4- to 11-year-old children. Fortunately, it is clear that nearly all parents regard their children as generally happy. Of course, it is also true that few parents would want to admit that their child “was so unhappy that life is not worthwhile,” (a category of responses provided by the Canadian questionnaire). Parents will clearly not be entirely objective assessors. However, it is similarly true with adult self-assessments of general happiness that very few people do not claim to be happy (94.4 percent of adult respondents to the Statistics Canada 1990 General Social Survey claim to be very or somewhat happy).

Unfortunately, it is not straightforward to compare answers to a question of this type across countries. Language/translation issues aside, the questions are not asked in quite the same way, nor are the allowable categories of response quite the same. First, Norway asks about how much of the time the child is happy. The United States and the United Kingdom ask about how much of the time the child is unhappy. Canada includes the happiness and unhappiness words in the answer categories. Canada allows five categories, Norway allows four while the United States and the United Kingdom allow only three categories of response. If we calculate the percentage of the time that *no unhappiness* is mentioned for each country, it appears that children are better-off in Canada and Norway (98.8 percent of Canadian children are reported to be happy or somewhat happy; 97.1 percent of Norwegian children). On the other hand, only 80 percent of children in the United States and the United Kingdom are “not unhappy” at all. Given that the countries that phrase the question in the negative both report more unhappiness, there could be an association between the way the question is asked and the answers that are given. On the other hand, neither country is particularly generous in programmes for children,

so it is possible these numbers reflect a true difference in well-being.

Both conceptualizations of well-being discussed thus far (income; happiness) have been criticized. The income approach, which can be interpreted as focussing on an “input” to well-being, does not take account of differences in individual needs – some children require wheel-chairs or interpreters while others do not, so the same income will not leave them equally well-off (unless wheel-chairs and sign-language interpreters are state provided, which still says nothing about the need for access ramps or TTYs for the deaf). The self or parental report on happiness suffers from the problem that people may adjust expectations to circumstances – a chronically deprived parent/child may come to accept/learn to be happier than we might expect through observation of external circumstances (Sen, 1993), which does not say that we should accept chronic deprivation.

## Functionings

An alternative approach advocated by Sen (1993) focuses on economic well-being as a set of “functionings” or “beings and doings.” Examples of basic “functionings” are: “being adequately nourished”; “being in good health”; “avoiding escapable morbidity/premature mortality.” Examples of more complex “functionings” are: “having self-respect”; “being happy”; “taking part in the life of the community” (Sen, 1993). We find this an extremely reasonable approach to understanding the well-being of children, and use it to motivate the choice of variables in the remainder of this section. Unfortunately, data comparability/availability issues have severely constrained the “functionings” that we can examine, so what follows is very far from ideal or complete.

## Health

We focus first on the very basic idea of “escaping premature mortality” for infants. Table 7.10 reports infant mortality rates for the five countries of this

study from 1960 to 1994. In all cases, infant mortality rates have declined significantly (e.g., from 2.73 percent of live births to 0.68 percent in Canada). Currently, infant mortality is lowest in Norway (0.51 percent) and the Netherlands (0.56 percent); highest in the United States (0.85 percent).

Table 7.11 records perinatal mortality (mortality at or around the time of birth). The United States again has the worst record currently (0.96 percent of live and stillbirths), though in this case, the Netherlands also performs poorly (also 0.96 percent). Canada and Norway have the best records (0.79 and 0.76 percent, respectively, in 1989). An important point to keep in mind is that children who die as infants are, of course, missing from subsequent data sets such as the NLSCY. To the extent that high-risk babies who survive are likely to be less healthy (e.g., have lower birth weights), this will have a negative effect on subsequent health statistics, but would presumably still be viewed as a positive outcome.

Low birth weight is a newborn characteristic often taken as a predictor of future negative outcomes for the child. Table 7.12 reports OECD statistics indicating that in 1989 the incidence of low-weight births was lowest in Norway (4.6 percent) and highest in the United States (7.05 percent). Table 7.13 reports slightly more contemporary results using our principal microdata sources for Canada, the Netherlands and the United States (this information was not available in the Norwegian or UK data). The United States and Netherlands report a higher incidence of low birth-weight babies (7.0 and 6.4 percent, respectively) than does Canada (5.4 percent).

In the development economics literature, weight for height/height for weight are often used as basic indicators of “being adequately nourished.” We might not expect much variation in such measures for affluent developed countries such as the ones studied here, and Table 7.14 indicates an amazing correspondence in height by age across the countries. However, Table 7.15 reveals an interesting pattern: while the United States starts off with more

low birth-weight babies, by age eight or nine, children in the United States are much heavier than their counterparts elsewhere. In the context of very poor countries, more is taken to be better. But, for affluent countries, it is not clear that this is appropriate. Being heavier may be an indication of obesity in the United States, presumably a negative outcome for US children.

Tables 7.16 through 7.23 report on general health outcomes for children in the countries studied. (In cases where the country data set did not include the relevant information, that country is excluded from the relevant table and discussion.) First, Table 7.16 reports on “general health indicators.” For example, Canadian parents were asked “In general, would you say (your child’s) health is: Excellent, Very good, Good, Fair, Poor?” Norwegian parents were asked “how would you describe his/her general health? Would you say it is: Very good, Good, Neither good nor bad, Poor, Very poor.” Each country phrased this question in a slightly different way (to say nothing of the fact that the questions and responses for Norway and the Netherlands have been translated into English). This illustrates a basic problem with comparative research of this type. While the questions seem very similar, it is not always entirely obvious how we compare responses. Does a “good” mean the same thing in Canada and Norway, for example, when Canada has two categories that would be deemed “better” than “good” while Norway has only one? Taking this approach, 98.4 percent of Canadian children have health that is labelled by their parents as “good or better,” while 99.3 percent of Norwegian children have a health status that is “good or better.” On the other hand, since both countries use five categories, perhaps we should just compare the top categories, regardless of label? In this case, 61.0 percent of Canadian children are placed in the “best” health category; 73.3 percent of Norwegian children are in the “best” category. But, there is then the problem of how we should compare results for the United States, which uses four rather than five categories to describe health.

As a general conclusion about all children aged 0 to 11 living in Canada or Norway, it is clear that

parents find their children to be basically healthy. In comparing the two countries, we can say that the health of Norwegian children overall is at least as good as that of Canadian children, perhaps significantly better, depending upon how we wish to interpret the information.

Since the general health question was only asked about 10- and 11-year-old children in the Netherlands and the United States, Table 7.16 also provides this more restricted information about Canada and Norway. For the United States, 97.1 percent of 10- and 11-year-old children are deemed to have “good to excellent” health; 98.7 percent of Canadian 10- and 11-year-olds have “good to excellent” health; 96.9 percent of Norwegian children have health status “good or better;” 99.8 percent of 10- and 11-year-olds from the Netherlands have “average or better” health. Again, it seems clear that parents regard their children as basically healthy in all countries.

This is not to say that children do not experience some health difficulties. Table 7.17 records percentages of children (aged 0 to 11) who have ever had asthma in Canada, Norway and the United Kingdom.<sup>34</sup> This is a more objective question, and one which has been asked in a very comparable way across the three countries. Eleven percent of Canadian children have had/have asthma; 10.1 percent of British children have had/have asthma; 6.9 percent of Norwegian children have had/have asthma.

Tables 7.18 and 7.19 focus on heart trouble and epilepsy. The information was only available for Canada and the United Kingdom; in both countries, these health problems are extremely rare.

Table 7.20 indicates percentage of children aged 6 to 11 in Canada, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States who have any long-term condition/health problem that limits their normal activities (at home or school). Again, relatively few children have such problems: only 3.6 percent in Norway, 4.8 percent in Canada; 5.0 percent in the United States and 10.2 percent in the United Kingdom (noticeably the largest percentage).

Table 7.21 indicates whether 4- to 11-year-old children in Canada and Norway were “usually free of pain/discomfort.” Only 3.4 percent of children in Canada usually experience pain; only 4.3 percent usually experience pain in Norway.

Tables 7.22 and 7.23 focus on the incidence and frequency of accidents for all children (0 to 11 years) in Canada, Norway and the United States. In the past 12 months, 10.6 percent of children in the United States have experienced an accident (requiring medical attention); 10.2 percent of Canadian children have been injured; and 7.9 percent of Norwegian children have had an accident/injury requiring medical attention. Of those experiencing an injury, the modal frequency was one in all countries. However, children in Canada and the United States are more likely to experience two or more accidents (15.2 percent of children in Canada; 11.8 percent in the United States<sup>35</sup>) than in Norway (8.1 percent). Thus Norwegian children are both less likely to have any accidents, and to have fewer accidents.

## Emotional Well-being

Table 7.24 begins a new set of outcome measures – those related to what we will term emotional health rather than physical health (which is not to suggest that the two are not inextricably linked).

Tables 7.24 through 7.32 focus on problem behaviours that may signal lower levels of emotional health, usually always for Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom (though occasionally the United Kingdom is missing). These behaviours include both “acting out” and “withdrawing” sorts of behaviours. In general, their incidence is remarkably similar across the three countries. A first striking exception, however, is that children (aged 4 to 11) in the United States are much more likely to be cruel or to bully others than are children in Canada or the United Kingdom. Over one-quarter of children in the United States engage in such behaviour while only about 10 percent of children in Canada or the United Kingdom do.

Children in the United Kingdom are perceived as more likely to be disobedient at school (35 versus 20 percent in Canada or the United States). Of course, standards of obedience/disobedience could differ across the countries. Recall from the World Values Survey data that parents in the United Kingdom were particularly concerned about the importance of obedience. Standards could conceivably be more rigid in the United Kingdom.<sup>36</sup>

Children in Canada and the United Kingdom are somewhat more likely to be “worriers” (48.8 percent in Canada; 45.8 in the United Kingdom) than are children in the United States (35.8 percent) – see Table 7.28. Children aged 4 to 11 in Canada are more likely to “cry a lot” than children in the United States (38.5 versus 22.7 percent in the United States (see Table 7.29). Of course, as with the information above, parental responses will be mediated by social norms. On the one hand, if, for example, all children in the United States “cry a lot,” then a parent might not feel that his/her child is out of the ordinary. On the other hand, if “toughness” or “independence” are particularly valued in the United States (recall from the World Values Survey that people in the United States are more likely to emphasize independence than people in Canada), then parents may not wish to admit that their child “cries a lot,” especially if the child is male.

There is relatively little difference between children in Canada and the United States in their propensity to be high-strung, tense or nervous (27.1 in Canada versus 30.7 in the United States; see Table 7.30).

Children in Canada are more likely to be restless/overly active than those in the United States (see Table 7.31). Only 42.2 percent of Canadian children are “never” restless/overly active; 58.7 percent of children in the United States are “never” restless/overly active.

Finally, we find that Norwegian children are much less likely to be anxious/frightened than are children in the other countries under study. For 4- to

11-year-old children, 35.9 percent of Canadian children are sometimes or often anxious/frightened; 31.8 percent of US children are sometime/often anxious/frightened; 46.0 percent of children in the United Kingdom are anxious/frightened; but only 11.3 percent of Norwegian children are anxious/frightened (see Table 7.32).

Since the outcomes' microdata sets did not provide sufficiently comparable information on other desirable "functionings," we provide evidence from other sources about education and the general safety of the environment. Table 7.33 records average achievements in mathematics and science by students in Grade 8 in 1994 (only slightly older than our samples). In both cases, outcomes appear best for the Netherlands. In terms of general safety of the environment as proxied by murder rates and drug crimes (United Nations Development Programme, 1997), the Netherlands again looks best; the United States looks dramatically worst (especially with respect to murders). See Table 7.34.

## Outcomes for Lone-mother Families

As noted at the beginning of this section, lone-mother families are more likely to be poor in all countries, but much more likely to be poor in the United States and Canada, for example, than in Norway. An interesting question is thus: How do outcomes for this particular vulnerable group compare across the countries?<sup>37</sup>

First, it is clear that within each country, children in lone-mother families have worse outcomes than children in two-parent families in terms of almost any outcome we can measure. (This is presumably

not only due to lack of financial resources.) For example, more children living with lone mothers were low-birth-weight children in Canada and the United States (9.2 percent of all children with lone mothers have low birth weight in the United States; 7.1 percent in Canada – see Table 7.35).

More children (aged 0 to 11 years) with lone mothers have asthma in both Canada and Norway, though the increase is smaller for Norwegian children (6.9 percent of all children versus 7.8 percent of children with lone moms; for Canada, 11.0 versus 14.6 percent – see Tables 7.17 and 7.36).

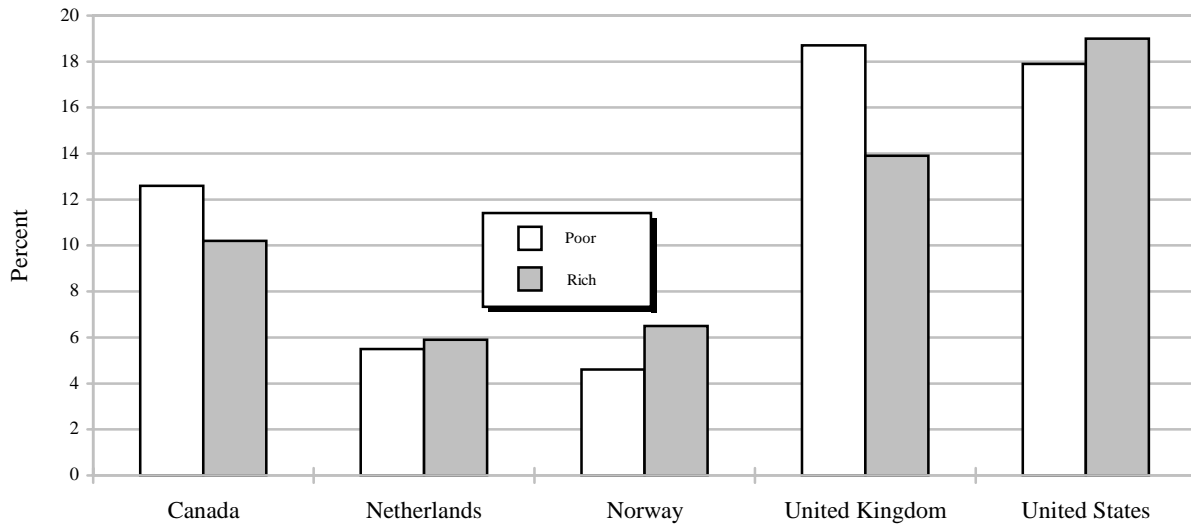
Children (aged 0 to 11 years) with lone mothers are more likely than average to have accidents in Canada, Norway and the United States. However, children with lone moms are more likely to have accidents if they live in Canada or the United States (11.5 and 11.9 percent, respectively) than if they live in Norway (8.1 percent). In addition, for children who do have accidents, the frequency is greater in Canada and the United States than in Norway (Table 7.37).

For Canada and the United States, there is consistently more evidence of behaviour problems for children living with lone moms.

Finally, Table 7.38 compares the experience of fear/anxiety by children living with lone mothers in Canada, Norway and the United States. In Canada, only 53.7 percent of children are reported never to be fearful/anxious; in the United States, 64.9 percent are never fearful/anxious; in Norway, 85.3 percent are never fearful/anxious. Notice that while this is worse than the record for all children in Norway (88.8 percent are never fearful/anxious), it is better than the performance for all Canadian children (64.1 are never fearful/anxious).

**Chart 7.1**

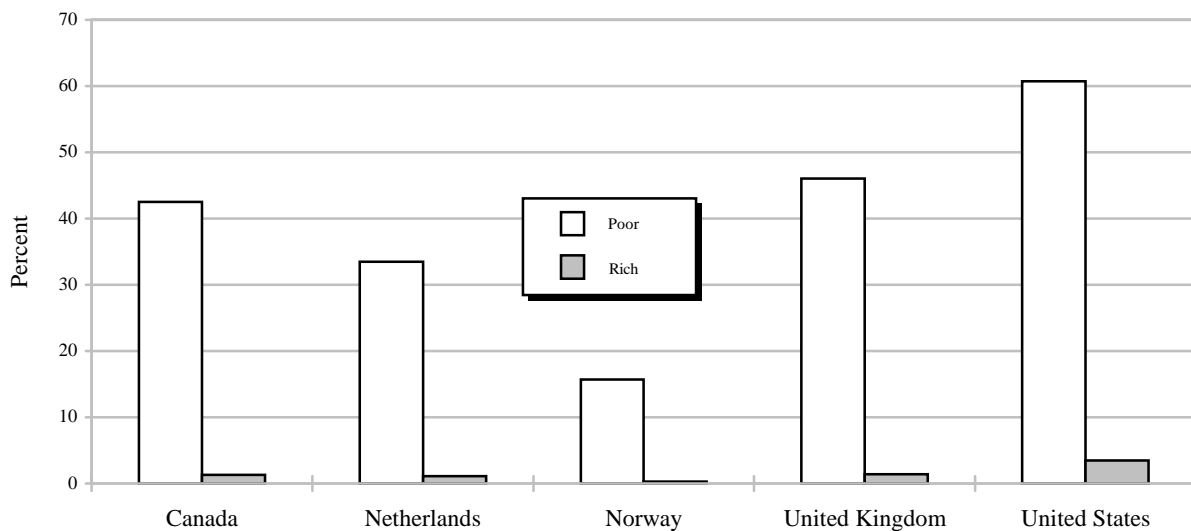
**Children's Place in the Population Income Distribution, Children in Married-couple Households**



Note: Canada and US data are 1994, other data are 1991.  
Source: Author calculations, Luxembourg Income Study.

**Chart 7.2**

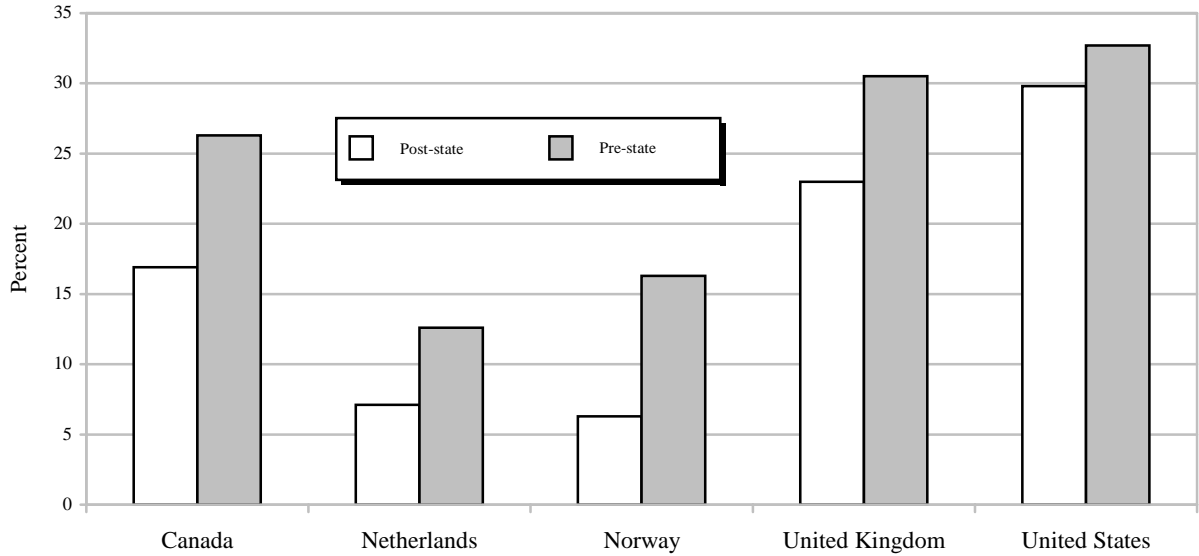
**Children's Place in the Population Income Distribution, Children in Single-mother Households**



Note: Canada and US data are 1994, other data are 1991.  
Source: Author calculations, Luxembourg Income Study.

**Chart 7.3**

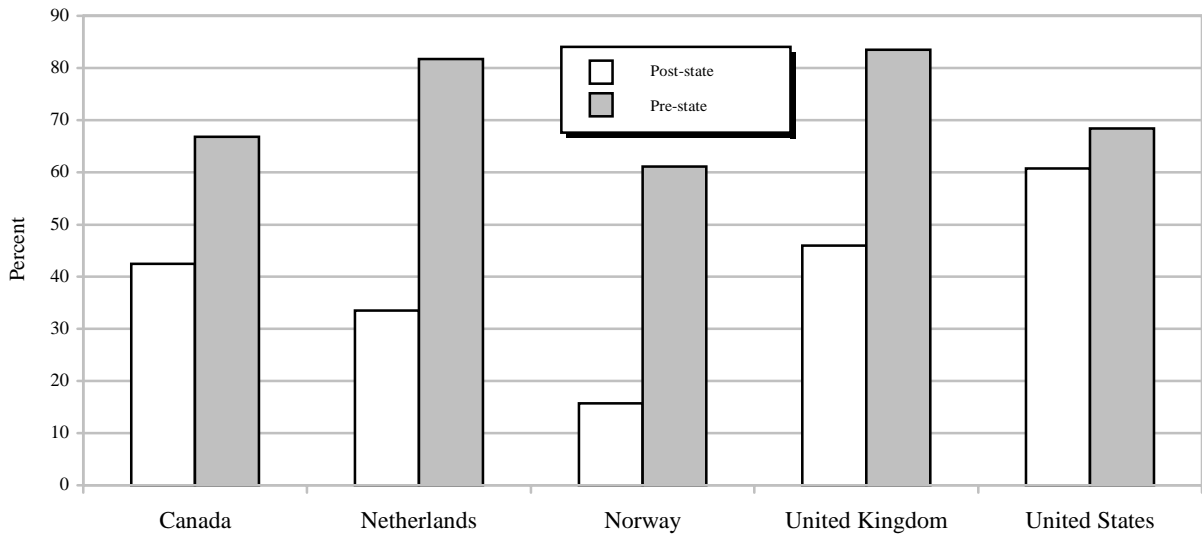
**Children's Experience of Poverty, Pre-state Intervention versus Post-state Intervention (All Households)**



Source: Author calculations, Luxembourg Income Study.

**Chart 7.4**

**Children's Experience of Poverty, Pre-state Intervention versus Post-state Intervention (Single-mother Households)**



Source: Author calculations, Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 7.1****Median and Mean Family Income Levels for Children 0 to 11, in 1994 Canadian Dollars<sup>1</sup> After Tax, Before Tax and Before Tax minus Social Transfers**

		Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
Disposable family income	Median	41,689	33,731	37,471	31,520	39,374
	Mean	45,216	35,812	39,854	36,258	46,474
Disposable family income per adult equivalent	Median	13,755	11,322	12,556	10,447	12,326
	Mean	14,895	12,201	13,715	12,443	15,115
Gross family income	Median	50,600	44,250	46,014	39,651	45,651
	Mean	56,351	48,085	49,945	47,226	58,152
Gross family income per adult equivalent	Median	16,562	14,675	15,447	13,311	14,368
	Mean	18,601	16,380	17,170	16,249	18,978
Gross family income minus social transfers	Median	45,494	39,725	41,762	35,895	43,656
	Mean	49,685	42,376	44,371	40,474	53,994
Gross family income minus social transfers per equivalent adult	Median	14,817	13,447	13,988	12,084	13,745
	Mean	16,450	14,414	15,200	14,024	17,724

<sup>1</sup> Using the purchasing power parity (household consumption) rate.  
Source: Author calculations, Luxembourg Income Study.



**Table 7.2****Median and Mean Family Income Levels for Married-couple Households with Children 0 to 11, in 1994 Canadian Dollars<sup>1</sup> After Tax, Before Tax and Before Tax minus Social Transfers**

		Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
Disposable family income	Median	43,510	34,180	38,856	33,778	46,188
	Mean	47,707	36,760	42,015	38,771	53,607
Disposable family income per adult equivalent	Median	14,270	11,515	12,868	11,296	14,684
	Mean	15,480	12,412	14,059	13,123	17,308
Gross family income	Median	53,633	44,917	48,216	43,652	55,212
	Mean	59,919	49,453	53,097	51,185	68,195
Gross family income per adult equivalent	Median	17,393	14,909	16,228	14,524	17,655
	Mean	19,525	16,706	17,819	17,412	22,114
Gross family income minus social transfers	Median	49,200	40,576	43,714	39,806	53,928
	Mean	53,845	44,259	48,022	45,436	65,533
Gross family income minus social transfers per equivalent adult	Median	15,846	13,619	14,820	13,377	17,120
	Mean	17,688	15,015	16,204	15,671	21,358

<sup>1</sup> Using the purchasing power parity (household consumption) rate.  
Source: Author calculations, Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 7.3****Median and Mean Family Income Levels for Lone-mother Households with Children 0 to 11, in 1994 Canadian Dollars<sup>1</sup> After Tax, Before Tax and Before Tax minus Social Transfers**

		Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
Disposable family income	Median	20,825	16,228	20,073	16,341	19,114
	Mean	25,208	17,764	22,286	19,700	24,666
Disposable family income per adult equivalent	Median	8,948	7,477	10,165	6,929	6,388
	Mean	10,202	8,193	10,913	7,960	8,408
Gross family income	Median	21,261	19,724	23,529	17,044	19,897
	Mean	27,682	22,075	24,317	21,144	27,443
Gross family income per adult equivalent	Median	9,097	9,413	11,610	7,165	6,753
	Mean	11,173	10,180	11,895	8,593	9,390
Gross family income minus social transfers	Median	7,347	0	12,248	1,416	10,240
	Mean	16,272	6,556	14,687	7,788	18,710
Gross family income minus social transfers per equivalent adult	Median	3,000	0	4,964	566	3,365
	Mean	6,501	2,998	7,040	3,169	6,614

<sup>1</sup> Using the purchasing power parity (household consumption) rate.  
Source: Author calculations, Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 7.4****Children's Place in the Population Income Distribution, Children in Married-couple Households**

Age of child	Income level <sup>1</sup>	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
(Percent)						
< 1	Poor	11.4	9.2	9.7	17.3	19.8
	Med-poor	47.4	53.0	48.3	46.8	37.2
	Med-rich	28.9	27.2	36.9	20.5	22.8
	Rich	12.5	10.6	5.2	14.9	20.2
1	Poor	11.7	5.0	4.2	20.1	19.0
	Med-poor	44.5	59.5	58.7	42.4	39.0
	Med-rich	31.6	30.3	28.9	21.7	24.1
	Rich	12.3	5.2	8.2	15.9	17.9
2-3	Poor	12.7	3.8	4.5	19.6	19.8
	Med-poor	49.0	69.4	57.8	44.3	36.7
	Med-rich	28.0	20.5	32.6	23.2	24.3
	Rich	10.3	6.3	5.1	12.9	19.2
4-5	Poor	13.4	5.8	4.1	19.7	18.1
	Med-poor	49.8	69.9	66.0	46.1	39.5
	Med-rich	26.6	20.5	25.5	23.0	23.3
	Rich	10.3	3.8	4.4	11.2	19.2
6-11	Poor	12.6	5.3	4.2	17.7	16.7
	Med-poor	50.6	62.2	60.0	46.3	38.4
	Med-rich	27.3	26.8	28.4	21.2	26.0
	Rich	9.5	5.7	7.5	14.7	18.9
All children (0-11)	Poor	12.6	5.5	4.6	18.7	17.9
	Med-poor	49.3	63.7	59.6	45.6	38.3
	Med-rich	27.8	25.0	29.4	21.9	24.9
	Rich	10.2	5.9	6.5	13.9	19.0

1 For these calculations, it is assumed that the child shares equally the parents' standard of living. "Poor" means family equivalent income is less than 50 percent of the median country equivalent income; "med-poor" means family equivalent income is greater than 50 percent of the country equivalent income and less than the median country equivalent income; "med-rich" means family equivalent income is greater than or equal to the median equivalent income and less than 1.5 times greater than the country equivalent income; "rich" means family income is greater than or equal to 1.5 times the country equivalent income. "Equivalent income" adjusts for family size using the OECD equivalence scale.

Source: Author calculations, Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 7.5****Children's Place in the Population Income Distribution, Children in Lone-mother Households**

Age of child	Income level <sup>1</sup>	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
(Percent)						
All children (0-11)	Poor	42.5	33.5	15.7	46.0	60.7
	Med-poor	45.5	57.1	67.8	44.8	28.4
	Med-rich	10.7	8.3	16.2	7.8	7.4
	Rich	1.3	1.1	0.3	1.4	3.5

1 For these calculations, it is assumed that the child shares equally the parents' standard of living. "Poor" means family equivalent income is less than 50 percent of the country equivalent income; "med-poor" means family equivalent income is greater than 50 percent of the country equivalent income and less than the median country equivalent income; "med-rich" means family equivalent income is greater than or equal to the median equivalent income and less than 1.5 times greater than the country equivalent income; "rich" means family income is greater than or equal to 1.5 times the country equivalent income. "Equivalent income" adjusts for family size using the OECD equivalence scale.

Source: Author calculations, Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 7.6****Children's Place in the Population Income Distribution using After Tax Income, Before Tax Income and Before Tax Income minus Social Transfers, All Children 0 to 11**

Age of child	Income level <sup>1</sup>	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
(Percent)						
After tax income	Poor	16.9	7.1	6.3	23.0	29.8
	Med-poor	48.7	62.6	59.9	45.7	36.0
	Med-rich	25.3	24.5	28.2	19.5	19.8
	Rich	9.0	5.9	5.6	11.9	14.4
Before tax income	Poor	15.4	3.6	4.7	17.7	26.9
	Med-poor	33.9	33.3	39.0	33.3	29.3
	Med-rich	28.6	40.7	36.5	24.6	19.6
	Rich	22.1	22.4	19.8	24.4	24.2
Before tax income minus social transfers	Poor	26.3	12.6	16.3	30.5	32.7
	Med-poor	29.6	37.4	36.9	25.1	25.1
	Med-rich	24.3	32.2	31.5	22.6	18.5
	Rich	19.9	17.8	15.3	21.8	23.7

1 For these calculations, it is assumed that the child shares equally the parents' standard of living. "Poor" means family equivalent income is less than 50 percent of the country equivalent income; "med-poor" means family equivalent income is greater than 50 percent of the country equivalent income and less than the median country equivalent income; "med-rich" means family equivalent income is greater than or equal to the median equivalent income and less than 1.5 times greater than the country equivalent income; "rich" means family income is greater than or equal to 1.5 times the country equivalent income. "Equivalent income" adjusts for family size using the OECD equivalence scale.

The after tax measure is used to calculate the poverty line in all three cases.

Source: Author calculations, Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 7.7****Children's Place in the Population Income Distribution Using After Tax Income, Before Tax Income and Before Tax Income minus Social Transfers, Married-couple Households with Children 0 to 11**

Age of child	Income level <sup>1</sup>	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
(Percent)						
After tax income	Poor	12.6	5.5	4.6	18.7	17.9
	Med-poor	49.4	63.7	59.6	45.6	38.3
	Med-rich	27.8	25.0	29.4	21.8	24.9
	Rich	10.2	5.9	6.5	13.9	19.0
Before tax income	Poor	10.9	2.9	2.7	13.7	15.2
	Med-poor	33.0	31.7	35.0	30.0	29.4
	Med-rich	31.0	42.8	39.8	27.7	23.8
	Rich	25.1	22.6	22.5	28.6	31.7
Before tax income minus social transfers	Poor	19.3	8.5	8.3	20.0	19.0
	Med-poor	31.2	39.3	38.3	28.5	27.1
	Med-rich	26.8	34.3	35.8	26.0	22.9
	Rich	22.7	18.0	17.6	25.6	31.1

1 For these calculations, it is assumed that the child shares equally the parents' standard of living. "Poor" means family equivalent income is less than 50 percent of the country equivalent income; "med-poor" means family equivalent income is greater than 50 percent of the country equivalent income and less than the median country equivalent income; "med-rich" means family equivalent income is greater than or equal to the median equivalent income and less than 1.5 times greater than the country equivalent income; "rich" means family income is greater than or equal to 1.5 times the country equivalent income. "Equivalent income" adjusts for family size using the OECD equivalence scale. The after tax measure is used to calculate the poverty line in all three cases.

Source: Author calculations, Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 7.8****Children's Place in the Population Income Distribution Using After Tax Income, Before Tax Income and Before Tax Income minus Social Transfers, Lone-mother Households with Children 0 to 11**

Age of child	Income level <sup>1</sup>	Canada (1994)	Netherlands (1991)	Norway (1991)	United Kingdom (1991)	United States (1994)
(Percent)						
After tax income	Poor	42.5	33.5	15.7	46.0	60.7
	Med-poor	45.5	57.1	67.8	44.8	28.4
	Med-rich	10.7	8.3	16.2	7.8	7.4
	Rich	1.3	1.1	0.3	1.4	3.5
Before tax income	Poor	41.6	17.0	14.8	39.0	57.9
	Med-poor	39.2	63.6	60.0	48.3	26.7
	Med-rich	14.9	16.3	22.1	8.8	9.3
	Rich	4.3	3.1	3.1	3.9	6.2
Before tax income minus social transfers	Poor	66.8	81.7	61.1	83.5	68.4
	Med-poor	20.4	10.7	25.3	7.5	18.1
	Med-rich	9.1	6.5	11.1	5.6	7.9
	Rich	3.8	1.1	2.6	3.4	5.6

1 For these calculations, it is assumed that the child shares equally the parents' standard of living. "Poor" means family equivalent income is less than 50 percent of the country equivalent income; "med-poor" means family equivalent income is greater than 50 percent of the country equivalent income and less than the median country equivalent income; "med-rich" means family equivalent income is greater than or equal to the median equivalent income and less than 1.5 times greater than the country equivalent income; "rich" means family income is greater than or equal to 1.5 times the country equivalent income. "Equivalent income" adjusts for family size using the OECD equivalence scale.

The after tax measure is used to calculate the poverty line in all three cases.

Source: Author calculations, Luxembourg Income Study.

**Table 7.9****General Happiness Indicators (All Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	Would you describe (your child) as being usually: Note: Ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. Happy and interested in life?	89.8
		2. Somewhat happy?	9.0
		3. Somewhat unhappy?	1.1
		4. Unhappy with little interest in life?	0.1
		5. So unhappy that life is not worthwhile?	0.0
Norway (1995)	How much of the time during the past 14 days has s/he been happy and satisfied? Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. All the time.	48.4
		2. Most of the time/a large part of the time.	48.7
		3. Some of the time/a little of the time.	2.8
		4. None of the time.	0.1
	How much of the time during the past 14 days has s/he been happy and satisfied? Note: Ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. All the time.	46.8
		2. Most of the time/a large part of the time.	50.7
United Kingdom (1991)	He/she is unhappy, sad or depressed? Note: Ages 4 to 6 inclusive.	1. Not true.	89.3
		2. Sometimes true.	10.3
		3. Often true.	0.4
	He/she often appears miserable, unhappy, tearful or distressed? Note: Ages 7 to 11 inclusive.	1. Does not apply.	72.7
		2. Applies somewhat.	24.4
		3. Certainly applies.	2.9
	Note: These data are from the above two rows combined; ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. See above.	80.2
2. See above.		18.0	
3. See above.		1.8	
United States (1994)	He/she is unhappy, sad or depressed? Note: Ages 4 to 14 inclusive (ages 4 to 11 only for this study).	1. Not true.	81.3
		2. Sometimes true.	17.7
		3. Often true.	1.0

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.10****Infant Mortality (As a Percent of Live Births)**

Year	Canada	Netherlands	Norway	United Kingdom	United States
1960	2.73	1.79	1.89	2.25	2.60
1965	2.36	1.44	1.68	2.47	2.47
1970	1.88	1.27	1.27	2.00	2.00
1975	1.43	1.06	1.11	1.61	1.61
1980	1.04	0.86	0.81	1.21	1.26
1981	0.96	0.83	0.75	1.12	1.19
1982	0.91	0.83	0.81	1.10	1.15
1983	0.85	0.84	0.79	1.01	1.12
1984	0.81	0.84	0.83	0.96	1.08
1985	0.80	0.80	0.85	0.94	1.06
1986	0.79	0.78	0.79	0.95	1.04
1987	0.73	0.76	0.84	0.91	1.01
1988	0.72	0.68	0.83	0.90	1.00
1989	0.71	0.68	0.79	0.84	0.98
1990	0.68	0.71	0.70	0.79	0.91
1991	0.68	0.65	0.70	0.74	0.89
1992	0.68	0.63	0.50	0.66	0.85
1993	0.68	0.63	0.50	0.66	0.85
1994	0.68	0.56	0.51	0.62	0.85

Source: OECD (1993).



**Table 7.11****Perinatal Mortality by Country for Selected Years**  
(In Percent of Live and Stillbirths)

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Canada	0.95	0.87	0.87	0.84	0.80	0.76	0.79	0.77
Netherlands	1.01	1.00	0.98	0.97	0.94	0.91	0.96	0.96
Norway	0.99	0.89	0.91	0.80	0.79	0.79	0.76	0.75
United Kingdom	1.05	1.02	1.01	0.96	0.9	0.88	0.83	0.81
United States	1.16	1.11	1.06	1.04	1.00	0.97	0.96	-

Note: - indicates no data available.  
Source: OECD (1993).

**Table 7.12****Low-weight Births by Country for Selected Years**  
(Percent of Neonates Weighing Less than 5.5 Pounds)

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Canada	5.80	5.70	5.70	5.60	5.50	5.60	5.50	5.40
Norway	4.20	-	-	-	4.54	4.49	4.60	4.62
United Kingdom	6.83	6.84	6.65	7.01	6.64	6.51	6.41	6.40
United States	6.82	6.72	6.75	6.81	6.90	6.93	7.05	-

Note: - indicates no data available.  
Source: OECD (1993).

**Table 7.13****Average and Low Birth Weight (All Families)**

	Average birth weight (pounds)	Percentage with low-birth-weight <sup>1</sup> children
Canada <sup>2</sup> (1994-95)	7.5	5.4
Netherlands (1992)	7.4	6.4
United States <sup>2</sup> (1994)	7.5	7.0

1 Low birth weight refers to children who were less than 5.5 pounds at birth.

2 Canadian and American numbers only refer to children 0 to 3 years old.

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.14****Average Height in Feet by Age (All Families)**

Age	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Canada (1994-95)	2.1	2.5	2.9	3.2	3.4	3.6	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.4	4.6	4.8
Netherlands (1992)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.8	4.9
Norway (1995)	-	2.6	3.0	3.3	3.5	3.7	3.9	4.1	4.4	4.5	4.7	4.9
United Kingdom (1991)	-	-	-	-	3.5	3.7	3.9	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.6	4.7
United States (1994)	2.0	2.6	2.9	3.2	3.5	3.7	3.9	4.1	4.3	4.5	4.7	4.9

Note: - indicates no data available.

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.15****Average Weight in Pounds by Age (All Families)**

Age	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Canada (1994-95)	17.4	26.3	31.5	35.5	39.8	43.8	49.6	56.7	63.6	71.8	81.0	90.0
Netherlands (1992)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	83.7	89.0
Norway (1995)	-	24.7	30.4	35.4	39.2	44.5	49.9	56.6	63.5	68.5	76.6	89.8
United Kingdom (1991)	-	-	-	-	41.2	45.1	49.1	55.0	63.0	68.6	77.2	88.2
United States (1994)	16.2	25.3	29.2	32.5	37.8	42.7	49.1	55.2	65.1	73.6	83.6	97.7

Note: - indicates no data available.

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.16****General Health Indicators (All Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	In general, would you say (your child's) health is: Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. Excellent? 2. Very good? 3. Good? 4. Fair? 5. Poor?	61.0 27.4 10.0 2.0 0.0
	In general, would you say (your child's) health is: Note: Ages 10 to 11 only.	1. Excellent? 2. Very good? 3. Good? 4. Fair? 5. Poor?	60.2 27.4 11.1 1.1 0.0
Netherlands (1992)	General subjective health status. Note: Ages 10 to 11 only.	1. Very healthy. 2. Healthy. 3. Average. 4. Unhealthy. 5. Very unhealthy.	30.8 57.4 11.6 0.2 0.0
Norway (1995)	How would you describe his/her general health? Would you say it is: Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. Very good. 2. Good. 3. Neither good nor bad. 4. Poor. 5. Very poor.	73.3 24.1 1.9 0.8 0.0
	How would you describe his/her general health? Would you say it is: Note: Ages 10 to 11 only.	1. Very good. 2. Good. 3. Neither good nor bad. 4. Poor. 5. Very poor.	69.3 27.6 2.6 0.4 0.0
United States (1994)	Think about how things are going in general in your child's life. Please rate each of the following parts of your child's life as either excellent, good, only fair, or poor. His/Her health (is): Note: Ages 10 to 14 inclusive (ages 10 to 11 only for this study).	1. Excellent. 2. Good. 3. Fair. 4. Poor.	70.4 26.7 2.5 0.4

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.17****Asthma (All Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	Has (your child) ever had asthma that was diagnosed by a health professional? Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. No. 2. Yes.	89.0 11.0
Norway (1995)	Is s/he, or has s/he ever been, bothered by asthma? Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. No. 2. Yes.	93.1 6.9
United Kingdom (1991)	Has (your child) <i>ever</i> had attacks of asthma? Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. No. 2. Yes.	89.9 10.1

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.18****Heart Trouble (All Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	Does (your child have a heart condition or disease as) diagnosed by a health professional? Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. No. 2. Yes.	99.1 0.9
United Kingdom (1991)	Has (your child) any congenital heart condition? Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. No. 2. Yes.	98.0 2.0

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.19****Epilepsy (All Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	Does (your child have epilepsy as) diagnosed by a health professional? Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. No. 2. Yes.	99.8 0.2
United Kingdom (1991)	Has (your child) a mixed form of epilepsy? Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. No. 2. Yes.	99.8 0.2

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.20****Limited in Normal Activity (All Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	Does (your child) have any long-term conditions or health problems which prevent or limit his/her participation in school, at play, or in any other activity for a child of his/her age? Note: Ages 6 to 11 inclusive.	1. No.	95.2
		2. Yes.	4.8
Norway (1995)	Does s/he suffer from any illness or disorder of a more long-term nature, and congenital disease or the effect of an injury [which cause] difficulties getting through the day (school/homework) or taking part in games and activities? Note: Ages 6 to 11 inclusive.	1. No.	96.4
		2. Yes.	3.6
United Kingdom (1991)	Does (your child) have any physical, emotional or mental difficulties that limit his/her ability to: a) attend school on a regular basis?	1. No.	92.5
		2. Yes.	7.2
		3. Doesn't go to school.	0.3
	b) or to do normal schoolwork?	1. No.	96.8
		2. Yes.	3.2
	c) do usual childhood activities such as play, or sport or games?	1. No.	97.0
		2. Yes.	2.6
3. Too young.		0.4	
Note: These data are from the above three rows combined. All groups are ages 6 to 11 inclusive.		1. No.	89.8
		2. Yes.	10.2
United States (1994)	Does (your child) have any physical, emotional or mental difficulties that limit his/her ability to: a) attend school on a regular basis?	1. No.	98.4
		2. Yes.	1.6
	b) do regular schoolwork?	1. No.	97.3
		2. Yes.	2.7
	c) do usual childhood activities such as play, or sport or games?	1. No.	96.9
		2. Yes.	3.1
	Note: These data are from the above three rows combined. All groups are ages 6 to 11 inclusive.		1. No.
		2. Yes.	5.0

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.21****Free of Pain/Discomfort (All Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	Is (your child) usually free of pain or discomfort? Note: Ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. No. 2. Yes.	3.4 96.6
Norway (1995)	Does s/he suffer from any illness or disorder of a more long-term nature, and congenital disease or the effect of an injury [which cause] pain? Note: Ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. No. 2. Yes.	95.7 4.3

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.22****Accident/Injuries Indicators (All Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	The following questions refer to injuries, such as a broken bone, bad cut or burn, head injury, poisoning or sprained ankle, which occurred in the past 12 months, and were serious enough to require medical attention by a doctor, nurse, or dentist. Was the child injured in the past 12 months? Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. No. 2. Yes.	89.8 10.2
Norway (1995)	(Has your child had medical attention) due to treatment for an injury or accident that occurred during the past 12 months? Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. No. 2. Yes.	92.1 7.9
United States (1994)	During the past 12 months, has your child had any accidents or injuries that required medical attention?	1. No. 2. Yes.	89.4 10.6

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.23****Number of Injuries Reported (All Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	Number of times injured (in the last 12 months)? Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. One. 2. Two. 3. Three. 4. Four.	85.0 11.4 2.8 1.0
Norway (1995)	Number of times injured (in the last 12 months)? Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. One. 2. Two. 3. Three. 4. Four.	92.2 5.8 1.3 1.0
United States (1994)	How many such accidents or injuries (requiring medical attention) has the child had during the last 12 months?	1. One. 2. Two. 3. Three. 4. Four. 5. Five. 6. Six.	88.2 9.6 0.8 1.1 0.0 0.3

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.24****Destroys Own and/or Other's Things Indicators (All Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	How often would you say that your child destroys his/her own things? Note: Ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. Never or not true. 2. Sometimes or somewhat true. 3. Often or very true.	81.0 16.7 2.3
	How often would you say that your child destroys things belonging to his/her family, or other children? Note: Ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. Never or not true. 2. Sometimes or somewhat true. 3. Often or very true.	88.8 10.5 1.0
United Kingdom (1991)	He/She breaks things on purpose or deliberately destroys his/her or other's things? Note: Ages 4 to 6 inclusive.	1. Not true. 2. Sometimes true. 3. Often true.	87.1 11.3 1.6
	He/She often destroys own or others' property? Note: Ages 7 to 11 inclusive.	1. Does not apply. 2. Applies somewhat. 3. Certainly applies.	87.7 10.4 1.8
	Note: These data are from the above two rows combined; ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. See above. 2. See above. 3. See above.	87.5 10.8 1.7
United States (1994)	He/She breaks things on purpose or deliberately destroys his/her own or another's things? Note: Ages 4 to 14 inclusive (ages 4 to 11 only for this study).	1. Not true. 2. Sometimes true. 3. Often true.	87.2 11.7 1.2

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.



**Table 7.25****Lies/Cheats Indicators (All Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	How often would you say that your child tells lies or cheats? Note: Ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. Never or not true.	62.9
		2. Sometimes or somewhat true.	35.0
		3. Often or very true.	2.1
United Kingdom (1991)	He/She cheats or tells lies? Note: Ages 4 to 6 inclusive.	1. Not true.	56.0
		2. Sometimes true.	41.3
		3. Often true.	2.7
	He/She often tells lies? Note: Ages 7 to 11 inclusive.	1. Does not apply.	63.0
		2. Applies somewhat.	34.2
		3. Certainly applies.	2.8
Note: These data are from the above two rows combined; ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. See above.	59.9	
	2. See above.	37.3	
	3. See above.	2.8	
United States (1994)	He/She cheats or tells lies? Note: Ages 4 to 14 inclusive (ages 4 to 11 only for this study).	1. Not true.	59.6
		2. Sometimes true.	38.2
		3. Often true.	2.3

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.26****Cruel/Bullies Indicators (All Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	How often would you say that your child is cruel, bullies or is mean to others? Note: Ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. Never or not true. 2. Sometimes or somewhat true. 3. Often or very true.	89.0 10.4 0.7
United Kingdom (1991)	He/She bullies or is cruel to others? Note: Ages 4 to 6 inclusive.	1. Not true. 2. Sometimes true. 3. Often true.	78.0 21.0 1.0
	He/She bullies other children? Note: Ages 7 to 11 inclusive.	1. Does not apply. 2. Applies somewhat. 3. Certainly applies.	89.1 9.6 1.2
	Note: These data are from the above two rows combined; ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. See above. 2. See above. 3. See above.	84.2 14.7 1.1
United States (1994)	He/She bullies or is cruel to others? Note: Ages 4 to 14 inclusive (ages 4 to 11 only for this study).	1. Not true. 2. Sometimes true. 3. Often true.	73.6 24.7 1.7

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.27****Disobedient Indicators (All Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	How often would you say that your child is disobedient at school? Note: Ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. Never or not true.	78.2
		2. Sometimes or somewhat true.	20.5
		3. Often or very true.	1.1
		4. Always.	0.3
United Kingdom (1991)	He/She is disobedient at school? Note: Ages 4 to 6 inclusive.	1. Not true.	89.4
		2. Sometimes true.	9.5
		3. Often true.	1.2
	He/She is often disobedient? Note: Ages 7 to 11 inclusive.	1. Does not apply.	45.2
		2. Applies somewhat.	49.3
		3. Certainly applies.	5.6
Note: These data are from the above two rows combined; ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. See above.	64.6	
	2. See above.	31.8	
	3. See above.	3.6	
United States (1994)	He/She is disobedient at school? Note: Ages 4 to 14 inclusive (ages 4 to 11 only for this study).	1. Not true.	80.4
		2. Sometimes true.	17.7
		3. Often true.	1.9

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.28****Worried Indicators (All Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	How often would you say that your child is worried? Note: Ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. Never or not true.	51.3
		2. Sometimes or somewhat true.	43.5
		3. Often or very true.	5.3
United Kingdom (1991)	He/She worries too much? Note: Ages 4 to 6 inclusive.	1. Not true.	69.7
		2. Sometimes true.	27.6
		3. Often true.	2.7
	He/She is often worried, he/she worries about many things? Note: Ages 7 to 11 inclusive.	1. Does not apply.	41.8
		2. Applies somewhat.	47.4
3. Certainly applies.		10.8	
Note: These data are from the above two rows combined; ages 4 to 11 inclusive.		1. See above.	54.2
		2. See above.	38.6
		3. See above.	7.2
United States (1994)	He/She worries too much? Note: Ages 4 to 14 inclusive (ages 4 to 11 only for this study).	1. Not true.	64.2
		2. Sometimes true.	31.5
		3. Often true.	4.3

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.29****Cries a Lot Indicators (All Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	How often would you say that your child cries a lot? Note: Ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. Never or not true.	61.4
		2. Sometimes or somewhat true.	32.9
		3. Often or very true.	5.6
United States (1994)	He/She cries too much? Note: Ages 4 to 14 inclusive (ages 4 to 11 only for this study).	1. Not true.	77.3
		2. Sometimes true.	20.1
		3. Often true.	2.6

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.30****High Strung/Tense/Nervous Indicators (All Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	How often would you say that your child is nervous, high-strung or tense? Note: Ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. Never or not true. 2. Sometimes or somewhat true. 3. Often or very true.	72.9 23.5 3.6
United States (1994)	He/She is rather high strung, tense and nervous? Note: Ages 4 to 14 inclusive (ages 4 to 11 only for this study).	1. Not true. 2. Sometimes true. 3. Often true.	69.2 26.4 4.3

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.31****Restless/Overly Active Indicators (All Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	How often would you say that your child can't sit still, is restless, or hyperactive? Note: Ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. Never or not true. 2. Sometimes or somewhat true. 3. Often or very true.	42.2 38.2 19.6
United Kingdom (1991)	He/She is restless or overly active, cannot sit still? Note: Ages 4 to 6 inclusive.	1. Not true. 2. Sometimes true. 3. Often true.	47.6 37.0 15.4
	He/She is very restless? He/She has difficulty staying seated for long? Note: Ages 7 to 11 inclusive.	1. Does not apply. 2. Applies somewhat. 3. Certainly applies.	47.7 37.3 14.9
	Note: These data are from the above two rows combined; ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. See above. 2. See above. 3. See above.	47.6 37.3 15.1
United States (1994)	He/She is restless or overly active, cannot sit still? Note: Ages 4 to 14 inclusive (ages 4 to 11 only for this study).	1. Not true. 2. Sometimes true. 3. Often true.	58.7 33.1 8.3

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.32****Anxious/Frightened Indicators (All Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	How often would you say that your child is too fearful or anxious? Note: Ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. Never or not true.	64.1
		2. Sometimes or somewhat true.	31.6
		3. Often or very true.	4.3
Norway (1995)	Has s/he been constantly frightened or anxious? Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. Not at all.	90.5
		2. A little troubled.	8.1
		3. Quite troubled.	1.2
		4. Extremely troubled.	0.2
	Has s/he been constantly frightened or anxious? Note: Ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. Not at all.	88.8
		2. A little troubled.	9.5
United Kingdom (1991)	He/she is too fearful/anxious? Note: Ages 4 to 6 inclusive.	1. Not true.	69.6
		2. Sometimes true.	27.3
		3. Often true.	3.2
	He/she is often worried, he/she worries about many things? Note: Ages 7 to 11 inclusive.	1. Does not apply.	41.9
		2. Applies somewhat.	47.3
		3. Certainly applies.	10.8
	Note: These data are from the above two rows combined; ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. See above.	54.0
		2. See above.	38.6
		3. See above.	7.4
United States (1994)	He/she is too fearful/anxious? Note: Ages 4 to 14 inclusive (ages 4 to 11 only for this study).	1. Not true.	68.2
		2. Sometimes true.	28.9
		3. Often true.	2.9

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.33****Average Achievement in Mathematics and Science, Eighth Grade, 1994**

	Mathematics			Science		
	Mean	25th percentile	75th percentile	Mean	25th percentile	75th percentile
Canada	527	468	587	531	472	594
Netherlands	541	477	604	560	505	619
Norway	503	445	560	527	470	588
United Kingdom						
England	506	443	570	552	485	625
Scotland	499	436	559	517	451	584
United States	500	435	563	534	465	608

Source: OECD (1996b).

**Table 7.34****Criminal Activity**

	Intentional homicides by men (per 100,000 people, 1985-90)	Drug crimes (per 100,000 people, 1980-86)
Canada	2.7	225
Netherlands	1.2	38
Norway	1.6	116
United Kingdom	1.6	-
United States	12.4	234

Source: United Nations Development Programme (1997).

**Table 7.35****Average and Low Birth Weight (Lone-mother Families)**

	Average birth weight (pounds)	Percentage with low-birth-weight <sup>1</sup> children
Canada (1994-95)	7.2	7.1
United States (1994)	7.2	9.2

<sup>1</sup> Low birth weight refers to children who were less than 5.5 pounds at birth.

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.36****Asthma (Lone-mother Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	Has (your child) ever had asthma that was diagnosed by a health professional? Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. No. 2. Yes.	85.4 14.6
Norway (1995)	Is s/he, or has s/he ever been, bothered by asthma? Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. No. 2. Yes.	92.2 7.8

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.

**Table 7.37****Accident/Injuries Indicators (Lone-mother Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	Was the child injured in the past 12 months? Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. No. 2. Yes.	88.5 11.5
Norway (1995)	(Has your child had medical attention) due to treatment for an injury or accident that occurred during the past 12 months? Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. No. 2. Yes.	91.9 8.1
United States (1994)	During the past 12 months, has your child had any accidents or injuries that required medical attention?	1. No. 2. Yes.	88.1 11.9

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.



**Table 7.38****Anxious/Frightened Indicators (Lone-mother Families)**

	Actual question asked	Possible responses	Response frequency (percent)
Canada (1994-95)	How often would you say that your child is too fearful or anxious? Note: Ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. Never or not true.	53.7
		2. Sometimes or somewhat true.	39.3
		3. Often or very true.	7.0
Norway (1995)	Has s/he been constantly frightened or anxious? Note: Ages 0 to 11 inclusive.	1. Not at all.	88.6
		2. A little troubled.	8.8
		3. Quite troubled.	2.1
		4. Extremely troubled.	0.5
	Has s/he been constantly frightened or anxious? Note: Ages 4 to 11 inclusive.	1. Not at all.	85.3
		2. A little troubled.	10.5
United States (1994)	He/she is too fearful/anxious? Note: Ages 4 to 14 inclusive (ages 4 to 11 only for this study).	3. Quite troubled.	3.4
		4. Extremely troubled.	0.8
		1. Not true.	64.9
		2. Sometimes true.	31.4
		3. Often true.	3.7

Source: See Appendix Table A-2.



# VIII

## Conclusions

Surveys of the sociodemographic contexts of the five countries in this study revealed much that is similar: fertility rates have generally declined, parents are more likely to divorce, mothers are more likely to be in the labour force than was true 20 or 30 years ago. An interesting contradiction apparent to some degree in all countries studied is that despite the growing labour-force participation of mothers, significant proportions of the population (male and female) believe that a child is better off if cared for at home with his or her mother (World Values Survey).

However, while many broad sociodemographic trends are similar, there are also important differences to keep in mind. First, divorce rates are higher in the United States; lower in the Netherlands. Labour-force participation by mothers is much lower in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom than in the other countries studied; Norway has the highest rates of participation, followed by the United States. Thus, despite very similar trends to increased divorce rates and increased labour-force participation of mothers, a child growing up in the Netherlands, for example, is much more likely to live with both parents and much less likely to have both parents in the labour force than would be true for a child growing up in the United States.

Another very important difference across the countries is general attitude toward income inequality and those who live in need. Evidence from the

World Values Survey indicates that Europeans are much more concerned about reducing overall inequality (especially in Norway and the Netherlands); North Americans do not see this as a priority, though levels of inequality are much higher in North America. North Americans (especially those who live in the United States) are more likely to perceive that individuals live in need because they are lazy rather than as a result of, for example, social injustice. This attitude permeates thinking about policy in both Canada and the United States; it is not evident for either Norway or the Netherlands.

In thinking about the possible connections between policy mix and the well-being of children, two large questions need to be considered: a) How do the goals of policies for children differ across the countries?; b) How do countries set about achieving goals (particularly goals they have in common)?

For Norway, one very broad objective of policy appears to be the goal of achieving social solidarity; of providing at least some support for all children in acknowledgement of shared social and private responsibility for the well-being of children. In the United States, by way of contrast (though Canada shares this goal in large measure), one broad policy objective appears to be to help children in serious need, but otherwise to leave families to themselves. We could summarize the general US approach to programmes for children in terms of “charity” rather than “inclusion.”

Another goal of policies for children, which seems to be shared by Canada and the United States, is the desire to increase labour-force participation of their parents. (Perhaps it would be better to phrase this as a key constraint that is placed on any policy choices made – i.e., that policies should not impede incentives to take paid employment.) It might also be said that Norwegian policy has the goal of increasing labour-force participation by mothers, however, for reasons of gender equity rather than as a result of concern about incentive effects. In this case, it might be more accurate to say that Norwegian policy aims to support/facilitate labour-force participation of parents.

In contrast, policy in the Netherlands takes quite a different direction. There is no concern about encouraging labour-force participation. Rather, policy in the Netherlands encourages/supports mothers to care for their children at home, particularly while the children are young.

All countries appear to have the goal of ensuring that *all* children are well educated. (It is curious why education is regarded with such unanimous favour in comparison with other apparent necessities of life – perhaps the associated social benefits are high enough?) All countries except the United States share the goal of ensuring that *all* children are as healthy as possible. The United States again uses a needs-based approach and provides health care only for some poor children.

So, how do countries set about achieving their various goals? In the apparent interests of social solidarity and with a view to supporting the well-being of all children, Norway tends to choose programmes with a universal flavour (e.g., family allowance), or at least available to all individuals within a particular category (e.g., lone mothers) as opposed to targeting benefits according to income level. Canada and the United States choose just the opposite strategy of income-testing most benefits because of a wish to focus dollars spent “efficiently” on those who need them most and to avoid “wasting” benefits on the more well-to-do.

Canada and the United States attempt to encourage greater participation in the paid labour force using a “stick” strategy – i.e., by making fewer people eligible for benefits; by making benefit levels so low as to be extremely unattractive. In contrast, Norway encourages labour-force participation via some supportive policies (e.g., days off for sick children, very generous maternity/parenting leaves, which can be combined with paid employment).

It seems clear, then, that policy strategies differ across the countries studied. As outlined in Section VII, outcomes for children also differ. Outcomes for children in Norway are consistently at least as good and in almost all cases better than for children elsewhere. For example, Norwegian children have less asthma, they are less likely to have accidents, they are less likely to be anxious or frightened. Children in the United States have consistently worse outcomes than children in the other four countries studied. For example, infant mortality rates are higher, the incidence of low-weight births is higher, children are more likely to be aggressive and obese.

In all countries studied, children in lone-mother families fare worse. More children are born with low birth weights. They are more likely to have asthma, to have accidents, to be anxious and frightened. However, children living with lone mothers in Norway fare much better than children elsewhere.

A first observation to make about this evidence is that how much you spend seems to matter. Norway offers very extensive programmes for children and has consistently better outcomes for children.

A second observation, however, is that just spending more is not always associated with better outcomes. Sometimes, it appears to matter *how* the dollars are spent rather than just that they are spent. The United States, for example, spends more than any other country on health care, but has worse health outcomes (for example, in terms of infant mortality rates, low birth weights) than any other country.<sup>38</sup> One reason for this may be that much of

the total expenditure on health is private (and may dissipate, for example, via profits to health insurance companies). A vital characteristic of a successful health care programme appears to be that it provide access for all – including those who may be especially vulnerable.

Mean disposable income in the United States is second-highest of the five countries studied. On the other hand, the United States has the worst record in terms of poverty. If it is average income that matters for average outcome measures in a country, we should expect to see better outcomes in the United States than in any other country. If it is the extent of deprivation or the level of inequality that matters most, the United States should look worst. Results reported in Section VII indicate that the well-being of children is consistently worst in the United States, suggesting that it is deprivation that has serious negative outcomes for children rather than a low average standard of living. Further research to investigate this hypothesis would be worthwhile.

Of course, this will persuade many people in Canada and the United States of the need to target funds at low-income families. Yet, the record shows that those countries which have chosen to target spending on the poor actually have the worst records in terms of alleviating poverty (see Phipps, 1993). Those countries pursuing a more universal approach to policy have vastly superior records. This is at least in part due to the fact that the targeting approach is often viewed as a way of saving money; countries pursuing a universal strategy have been willing to spend more, which pays off. It is also true that universal policies are more likely to be defended when times are difficult than are programmes perceived as benefiting only “those others,” who typically lack much lobbying power.

Is it better to allocate resources through a cash transfer or through a tax expenditure? Data presented in this paper suggest that outcomes are generally better in the United Kingdom than in the United States. The United Kingdom provides a universal

family allowance (cash transfer) while the United States provides a tax exemption for all dependent children, which will be of most benefit to highest-income individuals and of no benefit to low-income individuals who do not pay tax. Of course, there are many other differences, policy and other, between the countries. Still, more research on this point, perhaps focussing on a US/UK comparison would be interesting to pursue. An interesting study by Lundberg, Pollak and Wales (1997) notes that when the United Kingdom switched from a tax exemption, in general affecting the income of the father, to a family allowance, in general paid to the mother, expenditures on children’s clothing increased. More attention should be given to the ways in which different sorts of programmes affect the allocation of resources within the family (in particular between husbands and wives) and how this affects outcomes for children.

Increased labour-force participation of mothers is a goal in several countries. What is the best way to achieve this goal? Data indicate that both “carrot” and “stick” work if all we care about is getting mothers into the labour force. Labour-force participation rates are very high in both Norway and the United States, for example. Note that high rates of labour-force participation in Norway mean that generous transfers will not necessarily discourage labour-force participation, particularly if the transfers are universal.

However, while both strategies may work to increase labour-force participation, it may well be that the consequences for the well-being of both children and parents are rather different. More research on this issue would be interesting. It is presumably quite different to have mom in the labour force when you regularly attend a good quality daycare, but mom can stay home if you are sick and was able to stay home longer when you were first born (as in Norway). Available evidence on higher levels of stress/anxiety for children in the United States than Norway may be associated with these different strategies (it would also be interesting to study stress levels of parents in the labour force across the countries).

Lower levels of anxiety for Norwegian children could also be the result of higher levels of security for families (in terms of income and in terms of

safety). The value of an excellent safety net is not just for those who are actually using it, but for those who know they can use it should need be.

# Appendix

**Table A-1**

**Original Sources for the LIS Data**

Country	Dataset	Sample size (child dataset)
Canada (1994)	Survey of Consumer Finance, 1995 (Income 1994) Statistics Canada	21,960
Netherlands (1991)	Additional Enquiry on the Use of (Public) Services, 1991 Social and Cultural Planning Office	2,515
Norway (1991)	Income and Property Distribution Survey, 1991 Central Bureau of Statistics	4,665
United Kingdom (1991)	Family Expenditure Survey, 1991 United Kingdom Department of Employment	3,533
United States, 1994	The March Current Population Survey Demographic Surveys Division	37,325

**Table A-2****Sources of Data Used for Analysis of Child Outcomes**

Country	Source	Sample size (children)	Population represented
Canada	Statistics Canada., <i>National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth</i> , Cycle 1, Release 2, 1994-95	22,831	All children aged 0 to 11
Netherlands	Steimetz Archive, <i>Social Inequality and the Health of Children</i> , NL Star Publication, P1248 1992.	822	Children aged 10 to 11
Norway	Statistics Norway, <i>Health Survey</i> , 1995	1,646	All children aged 0 to 11
United Kingdom	City University Social Statistics Research Unit, <i>National Child Development Study</i> , 1991	3,770	Children of individuals born March 3-9, 1958
United States	Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor, <i>The National Survey of Children</i> , 1994	3,961	Children of women who were 29-36 on January 1, 1994



# Notes

- 1 This choice in no way suggests that services, for example, are less important than cash transfers for child well-being. But, a cross-country comparison of services must be the topic of another study.
- 2 However, it is surely not the case that countries with “tough” problems should not be interested in solving them.
- 3 Men in the Netherlands also have lower rates of labour-force participation than men in the other countries.
- 4 The World Values Survey is a set of microdata sets in which respondents in each included country were asked the same questions concerning their values.
- 5 This is clearly very far from what we would like to know, but is offered as at least some information.
- 6 Explanatory variables for this analysis include age, income level, gender and an indicator of whether or not the respondent has children. We include age on the grounds that there may be either cohort or “maturing” effects on values; we include income because individuals at different income levels may have different perspectives on tax/transfer programmes, for example, and because income may proxy for education level, which is not available in the World Values Survey; we include gender to test whether or not men and women answer values questions differently; and, finally, we include the indicator of parenthood on the grounds that individuals with children may have different values surrounding children than those without.
- 7 The inflection point for the quadratic in age is at 45 years.
- 8 The Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) is a collection of microdata sets, housed in Luxembourg but accessible to remote users via e-mail. Individual countries have contributed their own data sets, but LIS staff have made every effort to ensure, where possible, comparability of variable definitions. See Caroline de Tombeur et al. (1993) for a detailed discussion of this resource.
- 9 A limitation of the LIS microdata sets, shared by most microdata surveys, is that it is very hard to identify teenaged lone parents residing with their own parents.
- 10 We focus on younger children (i.e., 0 to 11 years) to correspond with the outcomes data.
- 11 In all data sets, the male is identified as the “head” if present.
- 12 Disaggregations by age of child were not possible for children living in lone-mother families as a result of insufficient data for some countries.
- 13 To be more specific, LIS contains estimates of total personal income taxes and payroll taxes. Sales taxes, for example, are not included.
- 14 These estimates use the LIS data, which report taxes paid by households rather than by individuals, though several of the countries use largely separate systems of taxation for husbands and wives. In such cases, the dependent variable for the analysis is taxes

- paid by the husband plus taxes paid by the wife (plus taxes paid by anyone else in the household – e.g., a teenager with earnings).
- 15 While the Netherlands apparently allows tax relief for child care expenditures, no statistically significant effect is observed in the data.
  - 16 Baker and Phipps (1997) provide an historical overview of family policy in Canada. Phipps (1995*a, b*) focus specifically on child benefits, with international comparisons.
  - 17 “Poor” children are those living in families with disposable equivalent income (i.e., income after taxes and transfers adjusted for the economies of scale available to individuals who live together) of less than 50 percent of median equivalent income; “medium-poor” children live in families with incomes between 50 and 100 percent of median; “medium-rich” children live in families with incomes between median income and 1.5 times median income; “rich” children live in families with income greater than 1.5 times median equivalent disposable income. To put this in perspective, family after-tax income for a “poor” child living with one sibling and two parents would be less than \$18,569; family after-tax income for a “rich” child (also with one sibling and two parents) would be greater than \$55,708 (1994).
  - 18 See also Phipps (1994).
  - 19 The child support variable in LIS includes any private interfamily transfers (such as gifts from a grandparent, for example).
  - 20 While LIS data do not report child support payments separately, Galarneau (1992) reports that in 1988, 16 percent of lone mothers in Canada received child support or alimony. The median level of benefits received per child (adjusted to 1994 dollars) was 11.7 percent of mean disposable equivalent income. While these figures reflect an earlier time period and a household-level analysis rather than a child-level analysis, they suggest that the Canadian record in terms of payment of child support is poor in an international comparative context.
  - 21 Child support is not reported independently for Canada; insufficient data limited analysis for the Netherlands.
  - 22 Family allowance supplements and advance maintenance of child support payments are also available, but are discussed in the relevant portions of the text.
  - 23 As noted above, lone parents are also entitled to a family allowance supplement for their first child.
  - 24 Social assistance is known to be under-reported in the US and Canadian data sets included in LIS.
  - 25 The elderly also receive Medicare, but this is not relevant to the current discussion.
  - 26 Baker (1995) reports that the Netherlands also operates such a programme, though empirical evidence using the LIS data suggest this programme is much less effective than the Norwegian advance maintenance system.
  - 27 Smeeding et al. (1993) note that, in general, countries spending more on cash benefits all spend more on in-kind benefits. Thus it is not an “either/or” choice.
  - 28 See Phipps (1995*c*).
  - 29 Alternatively, “utility” is often defined over consumption of goods and leisure time, though in the case of children, the income-based definition seems more appropriate. It is also important to note that many economic models use the concept of utility simply in the context of explaining individual choice. No normative significance is attached to “utility” in such cases.
  - 30 Conversions to Canadian dollars are made using purchasing power parity (PPP) for final household consumption (OECD, 1992 and 1998). See also Rainwater and Smeeding (1995).
  - 31 All of the following analysis assumes equal sharing of resources within the family. This is the norm in the literature. It would, however, be interesting to relax this assumption via some simulations that assumed that mother’s resources are more important to child well-being than father’s.
  - 32 Median income is the income received by the family at the very middle of the income distribution.
  - 33 Poverty is defined as having access to equivalent income less than 50 percent of median equivalent disposable income.

- 34 The data for the United States are not comparable for most health indicators, since parents were only asked about particular health problems if they had first indicated that their children experienced limitations in going to school, playing, etc. In this case, they were asked the source of the problem.
- 35 Since the question for the United States stipulates that the accident required “medical attention,” this might cause a bias in cross-country reporting. To the extent that some lower-income families would not have adequate health coverage in the United States, it is possible that only the most serious accidents receive medical attention. In Canada and Norway, parents might be more likely to have things looked at “just to be safe.”
- 36 There is also something slightly strange about the way this question was asked in the United Kingdom. The question for pre-school children clearly specifies obedience at school while the question asked of school-aged children does not mention school.
- 37 We do not have income information for all countries. Thus focussing on lone mothers seemed a reasonable choice, given the very high rates of poverty for this group. Sample sizes for the Netherlands were too small to allow us to study lone mothers separately; we could not identify lone mothers in the UK data. Hence this section focuses on comparisons for Canada, Norway and the United States.
- 38 Of course, health outcomes will not just depend upon health expenditures.



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