

Hilary

FATHERLESS FAMILIES ON NATIONAL ASSISTANCE

(A progress report on a pilot study of 116 fatherless
families in Northborough and Seaston)

Dennis Marsden

Joseph Rowntree Research Officer
University of Essex

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STUDY DESIGN AND AIMS

This pilot study was one of three carried out as preliminaries to a national survey of poverty. The aim of these pilots was to explore the living standards and related social situation of groups particularly likely to be in poverty. The studies would develop methods for measuring incomes and assessing resources, while at the same time information would be gathered about groups in need concerning whom little was known.

Fatherless families are such a group. Numbering approximately half a million unmarried, separated and divorced, and widowed mothers with three quarters of a million dependent children, they all face problems of income and one fifth of them are dependent on national assistance (now called supplementary benefit). Absence of the father is the most common reason for the dependence of children on assistance.

For the present study, groups of fatherless families were contacted from the lists of the national assistance recipients in Northborough and Seaston. This enabled the survey to fulfil aims additional to those described above:

- (1) The National Assistance Board (NAB) was responsible for maintaining the living standards of a large proportion of the poor, and the present survey opened up the possibility of co-operation between the University of Essex and the NAB in poverty research.
- (2) There was the opportunity to study the administrative procedures of the NAB from the recipient's point of view.
- (3) These families, all with low incomes, were dependent on state support, so that the survey could discover features and causes of this dependence.
- (4) By setting the survey in two districts, a greater variety of situations would be encountered, and the value of the findings increased.

Finally, so little empirical research has been done on the situation of the separated and divorced mother that it was felt the opportunity presented by this pilot should not be lost. Accordingly, the interviews were broadened to include details of social problems involved in the process of separation and recourse to law.

Progress

To preserve the confidentiality of mothers' relationship with the NAB, letters were sent out from the NAB and return to the University by those mothers who wished to co-operate. 100 letters were sent to Northborough mothers in March 1965, and in view of the relatively low response (37 replies) the NAB sent one set of reminders to all the mothers in July. The final response from Northborough was 45 per cent. Batches of letters and reminders were then sent to 120 Seaston mothers in September 1965, producing a slightly better response rate of 52 per cent. This is reasonable for a postal sample. Also some mothers who had not replied to our letters were contacted via friends and the final response for Seaston was brought up to 61 per cent.

For Northborough and Seastons combined 55 per cent of mothers in the effective sample were eventually interviewed (the effective sample was made up of 212 mothers who remained when we excluded from the study prisoners' wives who had not replied, and mothers with no dependent children to whom letters had been sent in error).

To supplement the statistical data from this group, and also to enable us to assess how representative it was, the NAB provided overall statistical data for the mothers to whom the letters were sent originally. Among other findings this demonstrated that mothers who replied had larger families than those who had not replied. They appeared less likely to return to their husbands or to work. Widows and divorcees replied more readily. So it appeared that mothers who replied probably had a more settled social status. From other evidence it also appeared likely that respondents were those more favourably disposed to the National Assistance Board.

Interviewing was started in March 1965, and was completed in February 1966. Interviews ranged in length from forty minutes to five and a quarter hours, the average being two and a quarter hours. As far as possible, mothers' situations were reported in their own words, some of the final reports running to twenty pages. The final draft of the full survey report will include much material in this form.

Of 116 mothers interviewed, 27 were unmarried, 42 separated, 36 divorced, and 15 widowed. The survey was thus principally concerned with the divorced and separated, although some comparisons could be attempted with the widowed and unmarried.

The findings of the pilot survey offer descriptions, explanations, or hypotheses to be tested in the national survey, to answer four questions: (1) Who are the fatherless? (2) Of the fatherless, who are dependent? (3) Of the dependent, which mothers are worse off and which better off? (4) How do economic and social influences shape mothers' feelings of poverty?

AN OUTLINE OF THE FINDINGS

(1) Patterns of fatherlessness

The four groups of mothers, defined by marital status, showed differences in median age, family and household composition, and social status. However borderlines between the groups were to some extent arbitrary, for during their lives mothers had moved or would move from one marital status to another. We had caught mothers following the same life pattern at different moments in time. Fatherlessness describes not one, but a set of overlapping social situations, as well as a shared economic predicament.

(2) Patterns of dependence

Dependence on national assistance was linked with previous and present relationships with the father, and his work record. Other factors were family size, low work skills, health, rent and national assistance scale rates, and the mother's relationships with the extended family.

A major cause of dependence of separated and divorced mothers was their lack of support from their husbands. In support payments they received less than one quarter of the maintenance or alimony to which they were entitled by law.

(3) Income levels of dependent families

A quarter of the incomes fell above and a quarter below the range 110 to 140 per cent of national assistance scale rates. Seven families had less than 100 per cent of scale rates from all sources. Our findings stressed the links between income level and family and social position. Mothers with the highest incomes were widows. Those with the lowest were mothers of illegitimate children, and in particular those separated and divorced mothers who had illegitimate children only. Differences in living standard between these two groups appeared not only in income but in capital resources such as housing and furniture.

(4) Feelings of poverty

Mothers' subjective feelings of deprivation and our objective measures of low income and lack of assets were not closely related. For example, widows, who were better off on the whole, had sometimes suffered desolation and greater falls of income and felt poor on that account. Separated and divorced mothers, who had been unhappily married to men who would not or could not support them, were receiving on assistance a more secure and even a higher income than they had ever known in marriage. Other women related their feelings of poverty to a wide variety of reference groups.

A corollary of this finding is that greater poverty than that revealed by this survey may exist in marriages on the point of breaking up.

(5) National assistance procedures

While there was considerable gratitude for assistance, there was also resentment of certain aspects of national assistance procedures. It should be stressed that in this study we could obtain only the mothers' side of any particular episode.

Because mothers had difficulty in finding out about assistance, and they ^{was} felt the manner of officers at the first encounter in the NAB office/inhibiting, it seems likely that a number of mothers who are eligible for assistance never receive an allowance.

The discretionary element which is considered an essential part of the NAB officers' role in fact sometimes appeared to work against certain mothers. The unpredictability of the principles upon which discretionary grants were made almost inevitably bred dissatisfaction among assistance recipients.

The undefined relationships of the NAB with the courts, the local education authorities, and charities led to some confusion for the officials concerned, and this occasionally resulted in hardship for the mothers.

(6) The law

Even with legal aid recourse to law was still difficult, partly because of fear but also through ignorance of legal provisions. The law, with its insistence on guilt and the marital offence, was ill-fitted to resolve these marriages justly. Lawyers and couples had to resort to legal charades or collusion, and it appeared likely that the resolution of the marriage was often achieved at the expense of truth.

MORE DETAILED FINDINGS

Patterns of fatherlessness

Mothers' ages ranged from sixteen to fifty-six, and some had as many as six or seven children by a number of different fathers. From the unmarried, through the other groups of separated and divorced and widowed mothers, the median age of the mothers rose from 25 to 45. The age of their dependent children, and the proportion of independent children living at home also rose, while the number of families living with the mother's parents fell, to zero for the widows.

Over a period of time there had been, and would be further, interchange between the different marriage groups. Some of the unmarried would marry, and a high proportion of the separated would divorce. On the other hand some of the widowed, divorced and separated had once been unmarried mothers. Mothers of particular interest were those who remained unmarried or separated for many years.

A third of the widowed, divorced and separated mothers had had an illegitimate child either before or after marriage. Half the unmarried mothers had a number of children by different fathers. Over half the separated and divorced women had experienced one or more separations before the present spell of fatherlessness.

Patterns of dependence

Mothers lacked adequate incomes of their own. Had they received the maximum Magistrates' court orders to which they were entitled the total weekly amount due to all mothers would have been £1,057 10s., and 59 of the separated and divorced mothers would not have been dependent on assistance. In fact some cases never came to court, while in others the husbands were judged unable to pay: they had new commitments or insufficient income. Over 90 per cent of the husbands were working-class, often with poor records of employment, and they had frequently been unable or unwilling to support their wives even during marriage. Final total awards for all the mothers by the Magistrates' Courts were £217 weekly. Some of these orders were signed over to the NAB, but Northborough's Clerk was against this. Final payments direct to the mothers were below £88, and even these ^{were} irregular. Only one fifth of the mothers with illegitimate children had obtained any court order for their child, the sum never exceeding £1.

Widows' pensions were near, but below, assistance rates. And three widows had not the full pension because their husbands - like the husbands of the separated - had a poor work record.

Without adequate pensions and with insecure small court payments mothers were not able to achieve a level of living equal to national assistance by working. On economic grounds alone, dependence on assistance was preferable to work for half to three-quarters of the families.

These mothers, more than women with a husband, needed to go out to work. But because their children were deprived of a father (and, possibly as a consequence, more disturbed or even delinquent) mothers were reluctant

to leave them. Even where there were adequate facilities for child-minding, mothers with more than two children were likely to be dependent because they had insufficient education and work skills to achieve a high wage. Small families, where work might have produced enough money, were of several types, dependent for different reasons. First there were young mothers living at home on assistance temporarily: pressures and opportunities to work were such that they would probably begin work again with a relative looking after their child, and they had a reasonable chance of marrying soon. Second, there were mothers who lived alone with no relatives to mind their children while they worked, and who in any case needed to earn large amounts to pay the high rent. And third, there were older mothers, with a teenage child, who needed to earn comparatively little when they had a pension or court order but their health was failing and they had not worked for a number of years.

Income levels of dependent families

Data covered many forms of income both in cash and kind. Examples are, help with television payments, children's pocket money, and free holidays. Sources of help were grandparents or siblings, charities, and friends. Our findings stressed the links between income level and family and social position.

Widows were best off because of their pensions (which were in part disregarded by the NAB) and their incomes from part-time work and independent children in their household. However they received comparatively little income from other sources, and appeared to lack parents and other relatives who could help them.

Assistance allowances were lowered where mothers were adjudged by the NAB to be cohabiting with a man, (even if the man did not pay more than his own board). The mothers of illegitimate children were likely to be in such a situation and to suffer from this kind of assessment. Also they had young children and could not work, they had no independent children at home who could help them, and they appeared to be more socially isolated in that they received no income from relatives nearby.

By contrast a small number of the other younger separated and divorced mothers had been re-adopted by their families and received considerable help, particularly from parents or unmarried brothers.

Most mothers lived in council houses, either because they came from families of tenants, or they had been rehoused from adverse conditions. Among the divorced and widowed only there were some owner occupiers with their furniture in good condition and paid for. By contrast mothers of illegitimate children were frequently in furnished rooms, bed-sitters and caravans.

So here relative poverty of income and assets worked together to increase the gap between the widows and mothers of illegitimate children, who in other ways represented the opposite ends of the social spectrum of fatherless families.

The roots of fatherlessness

Our study supported suggestions that unmarried motherhood and separation are multi-cause phenomena, with the stress sometimes on relationships within the family and sometimes in the mothers'

relationships in the wider society. We could say nothing about the relative emphasis of these causes: the dependence for which mothers had been selected was itself linked with poor family relationships, which have been suggested both as possible causes of fatherlessness and as influences in mothers' decisions to keep illegitimate children rather than place them for adoption. Mothers with dependent children were tied both physically and economically to the home, and it was perhaps partly for this reason that fathers more often took the overt initiative in ending the relationship, by violence, desertion, non-support, adultery or promiscuity. Thus, if what mothers said is accepted, responsibility for breakdown in relationships appeared more often to lie with the father.

Nevertheless there were families repeatedly fatherless, or where fatherlessness recurred in successive generations of the mother's family, where responsibility probably rested also with her side of the relationship. Recurrent fatherlessness was associated with broken homes in childhood, but more striking were defects of relationship which were difficult to identify. Some mothers had married in haste to get away from home; others appeared vulnerable to a show of affection or protectiveness in that they became pregnant by a number of men, all unsuitable as fathers. These mothers had brutal fathers, or dominating mothers; as children they had suffered as scapegoats, or through illegitimacy, poverty or the death of a parent they had been sent to institutions. A small number of the women with dominating mothers, who had a succession of illegitimate children, may have been mentally retarded for they had backward children, but whether this caused or resulted from the mother-daughter relationship could not be established.

Hasty or ill-advised marriages and unmarried pregnancies were also traceable to wider social influences in mothers' lives, such as war or refugee movements, or greater sexual permissiveness. Divorced and separated mothers who had illegitimate children after their marriages ended attributed their pregnancy to their eagerness for affection in the loneliness and economic hardship of their new status.

West Indian mothers had set up consensual unions with men, as they might in the West Indies, hoping to marry eventually when children came along. But when the union broke up there was no extended family to look after the illegitimate child while the mother made a fresh start; and as illegitimate children accumulated the mother's economic position worsened and her chances of marriage declined. Several admitted frankly that they could not afford to marry, and they were settling down to a kind of visiting relationship with the fathers: the fathers paid a small voluntary sum, but lived elsewhere, the mothers and children being mainly supported by national assistance.

A high proportion of the fathers were service personnel, or itinerant labourers. Several fathers with many children by different women were described as classic "affectionless characters" from

broken or rejecting homes.

Marriage and separation

Upon separation some women were destitute, having left behind even the clothing and furniture which they had bought with their own earnings. After separation most mothers received little help from the fathers. In considering this destitution and non-support both before and after marriage, two situations were of the greatest interest. Many of the husbands could be described as deserters or dominators. More detailed histories and analyses might lead to further classification.

By their wives' descriptions the deserters behaved as if they were looking for a mother-figure. Charming men for whom their wives had a lingering affection, they would not take on any responsibilities. Thus they either would not work or support their wives, or they handed over all their wage (and all the worry of budgetting) but insisted on enough spending money for their needs even if the rest of the family went short. Personable and friendly outside the home, to their families they appeared affectionless. Marriages to such men involved frequent desertions and affairs with other women. But sometimes when divorce or separation came the husbands were surprisingly unwilling to leave home finally. Wives of deserters more often had grounds for divorce, but were less willing to go to court.

Dominating husbands, on the other hand, were brutally violent in marriage, assaulting their wives with blows and sexually. Occasionally promiscuous, these men were more likely to be sexually jealous to a pathological degree, their jealousy extending to cover their own children and any other attachments the wife might form. The wives were already frigid at marriage, or rapidly became so. Dominating husbands' primary characteristic was an inability to share. They used money, like pregnancy, as a means of controlling their wives. Brutal marriages continued because of the woman's economic dependence, her lack of anywhere to go and fear of losing the children, fear of losing her furniture and possessions, the prospect of physical violence should she try to leave, and lack of knowledge of and the difficulty of access to the law. Cruelty was difficult to establish as grounds for divorce, and wives of dominating men sometimes had to desert, only to find themselves without grounds for divorce.

In these marriages, sexual difficulties appeared initially as a symptom of the disturbance in the relationship, but when the wife was frigid or the husband promiscuous sex became an issue in itself. A few of the wives and more of the husbands had been diagnosed as mentally ill, but sometimes what appeared to be more dangerous mental illness among the men had remained undiscovered.

A reluctance to divorce even the worst husband was not confined to the religious, and older mothers in particular had found divorce very shocking. Lingering affection and a regard for the father as the father of their children influenced this reluctance as much as the conventionally portrayed jealousy. The NAB sometimes pressed these mothers to take their husbands to court to recoup maintenance,

feeling also that possession of a court order was valuable to the mother as a step towards independence.

The law was not appropriate for resolving these tangles. Some wives or husbands remained separated, although wishing for divorce, until their partners were willing; or the partners might later commit a marital offence quite unrelated to the original marriage and present them with grounds. In other instances the marriages were ended by charades establishing constructive desertion or by collusion. Because the wives had little money and their mobility was also restricted by their children the chances of one partner establishing that the other was guilty of misconduct, even by the use of a private inquiry agent, seemed all in favour of the husband.

Comparatively little could be said about the effects of fatherlessness on the children. If anything the most severely disturbed children came from widows' families. A basic difficulty was to match the incidence of possible disturbance such as school phobia, enuresis, delinquency, unmarried pregnancy and under-achievement at school, with the general population, when many of the children were not yet old enough to develop such symptoms. The children's school achievement was low, but they came from the stratum of society where children are seldom successful at school.

National Assistance

Mothers had difficulties initially in finding out about assistance and obtaining allowances, and as a result they suffered hardship. During this time some of them were partly or wholly maintained by relatives. Their problems were increased by homelessness, for the unmarried and the fugitives, and ill-health for many more. A high proportion were on tranquillisers, and some had attempted suicide. Not many of the children had been taken into care, although mothers had tried this as a temporary solution to their difficulties.

Mothers almost never contacted the NAB through the official mechanism of a form from the post office. As a result they made their first contact with the NAB at the office. There they gained an impression that this was the Welfare State's front-line defence against scroungers, among whom they might very easily find themselves classed. They deplored the lack of privacy for personal matters. Later experiences mellowed mothers' views of assistance so that they came to speak warmly of some of the home visitors, but some friction or dissatisfaction arose from NAB procedures and practices.

It appeared to be almost inevitable, with many individual instances where officers were called upon to exercise their discretion, that there should be variations in weekly allowances for different mothers in the same situation. Deductions for lodgers varied from officer to officer, and discretion was not exercised where the mother's income was lowest: for instance a widow with considerable income from her son was stopped less than his share of the rent, while another woman whose sons were virtually living off her was stopped the full rent share. The problem became acute where a mother was adjudged to be cohabiting with a man. The criterion used was apparently not proof that the man was maintaining the mother and her children but the obligation that if the man had intercourse with the mother he should maintain her

family. The mothers in greatest poverty were those whose money had been cut down in such a doubtful situation "in lieu of earnings as housekeeper". The possibilities of deception were great, but so was the possibility of error. Establishing cohabitation involved the use of information from anonymous letters, and a sort of private detective work for which the NAB officers might not be authorised, as well as a good deal of personal questioning which was bound to be unsavoury to both the officers and the mothers. The whole situation would appear to require re-examination, for the benefit of the mothers and the NAB.

Other families living below the scale rates were young mothers who were paid at the children's rate and given no rent allowances, (although they might receive a discretionary addition), and house-owners whose mortgages were not paid in full.

The discretionary grants system, which gave extra grants or weekly allowances to a small proportion of mothers for what were judged as exceptional needs, unfortunately produced an almost classic situation of dis-satisfaction through relative deprivation. Some isolated mothers never learned that there were such grants. Other women, however, learned from friends' experiences that grants were available, but could not find how to get one and would not humble their pride and ask. As a result the workings of the system came to appear as "favouritism" to mothers who did not get grants. There were, in fact, extremely wide variations in grants, some mothers regularly obtaining money for clothing, shoes and so on, while others had never received anything over as much as twelve year periods. It was unfortunate, too, that separated wives could claim maternity benefit even for an illegitimate child from their husbands' insurance, but others must rely on the possibility of a grant from the NAB. In total, fewer grants were given to fatherless families than to the aged.

There was considerable pressure on mothers to work part-time and in some instances full-time. The pressure was very strongly exercised on unmarried mothers and also some of the separated and divorced. There were reasons for this, such as the value to the mother of an independent income (or even the suspicion that she was a prostitute). However the effect upon those pressed to work could be to render their position uncomfortable. Older mothers who had no court order to keep them found it very difficult to begin work again after the long break on assistance.

Other bodies (education authority, charities, courts, Ministry of Health.

Northborough and Seaston presented a considerable contrast in the relationship between the NAB and other bodies. In Northborough there was lack of definition as to whose responsibility it was to supply school children's needs. As a result mothers could be referred backwards and forwards several times between the NAB and the local education office until some gave up. Seaston, on the other hand, had agreed that responsibility for school children should belong to the local authority. This simplified the number of sources of help, but it meant that some mothers failed to get grants because they were reluctant to apply to the school and others never learned about this alternative help with clothing.

The Northborough situation was further complicated by the NAB's use of the WVS for some grants of clothing. Mothers could also reach the WVS via other channels, so that to distribute WVS help evenly it was necessary for the officials of the NAB, the local authority and the WVS all to check up on some families.

Through no fault of the NAB, the mothers in Northborough suffered considerable hardship and inconvenience owing to the refusal of the Magistrates' Clerk to allow them to assign collection of their court orders to the NAB. Because orders were paid irregularly or late, this involved mothers who often had small children or who were ill in two journeys to town, when instead they might have collected their money from the local post-office on an assistance order book. There are deeper reasons why mothers might be encouraged to retain an interest in their former husbands, but the reason given by the Magistrates' Clerk also included the suggestion that mothers were often not a little to blame and should not go scot-free. Mothers found out about assistance from the Northborough court only accidentally.

The question of education maintenance allowances for children very seldom arose. Mothers would often have been better off had their children stayed at school on a maintenance allowance, which was not deductible from assistance, but the child's decision to leave was made without this knowledge. It appeared to be nobody's job to tell mothers about such allowances.

The agency function which the NAB performed for the Ministry of Health, in supplying tokens for free orange juice, appeared in danger of falling into abeyance.

Standards of Living

Income was our indicator of standard of living, because information about expenditure, diet, and consumption of other goods is difficult to collect and interpret. However certain items of consumption and expenditure were chosen for investigation as possible measures of poverty.

The temporary nature of the housing of mothers of illegitimate children was partly a result of choice on the mothers' part, but it was also an expression of the new situation into which they had been plunged. They had too recently become mothers to have gained a place on the housing list. Some fugitive wives also had lost all their belongings and had only the clothes they wore when they left their husbands. All these mothers faced the difficult task of building up a home from scratch without a man's wage.

Other families lived in material comfort but considerable overcrowding with relatives.

Using consumer durables as a measure of poverty, it was found that these families on national assistance fell below the national average in a number of respects. None of the mothers had a car, only one had a telephone, and few had refrigerators. The numbers of mothers

with washing machines and even TV sets were also relatively low, although TV in particular was considered an essential rather than a luxury. Among those who had sets many had no licence.

Other forms of expenditure were more difficult to measure and assess. There were large variations in expenditure between these families all on the same official minimum income, and such variations could not be accounted for by differences in income around the scale rates. At these low income levels very slight differences in spending patterns or budgeting skills had greater visible consequences for the family's welfare. Mothers reacted differently to economic stringency, some taking a certain grim delight in managing, a few spending desperately until they got into difficulties. Very few mothers could avoid resorting to clubs or extended payment facilities which usually gave them a restricted choice of goods at a relatively higher price.

Free school meals played an important part in maintaining the children's diet in the larger families. During school holidays - and also at weekends, because allowances were not paid until Monday - the children's diet was scrappy. However, only two thirds of those eligible for free meals actually claimed them. Some mothers said that their children were embarrassed, or they themselves did not want the children to feel different. But also the mothers sometimes wanted to make sure that the children ate enough, and they felt they ate better themselves if the children came home to the mid-day meal. In poorer families children found the unfamiliar diet or social situation of school dinners difficult to cope with.

It appeared more likely that the mothers' diet would suffer. With the constant demands of the children, and without the incentive of the husband's meal to cook, there were a few women who lived on tea and cigarettes, or a diet almost exclusively of carbohydrates. Two special allowances from the NAB for the mothers' diet were spent on the children.

Per capita consumption of fresh meat was used as an indicator of poverty, but variations in spending appeared to be connected with economies of scale in larger families and the cultural position of meat, as much as financial stringency. All the families got adequate milk, but this was probably due to free welfare or school milk provisions. Very few mothers used free orange juice, they said because their children disliked it.

Gifts of clothing provided one of the largest sources of income from relatives, but only the value of new clothing could be assessed. All the large families had to be helped with shoes for the children, but help for smaller families was less evenly spread. Recurrent difficulties with shoes emphasized mothers' problems in finding even fairly small lump sums.

For holidays these families relied almost exclusively on charities or help from relatives. The same applied to social outings of other kinds.

Feelings of poverty

Mothers did not become members of a culture of poverty because they were poor. Fatherlessness brought them some new links with one another, but such links stemmed mainly from sexual rivalries in associating with West Indians or soldiers. Mothers referred their standards of living to their own lives as they used to be or might have been. The neighbourhoods in which they lived sometimes embodied previous standards and styles of life and so did friends or relatives. The neighbours' children were a very powerful reference group for feelings of poverty.

However feelings of poverty were much more complex than simple reference to one or two conspicuous groups would suggest. Those who had been on assistance a long time appeared scarcely able to think of their situation in relative terms for their horizons had narrowed. Others spoke of constraint rather than poverty. Those who described themselves as comfortable on assistance appeared to be applying yet other standards in expressing satisfaction at the way they measured up to the task in hand.

Generalized feelings of deprivation were most apparent at festival times such as Christmas and Whitsuntide, when mothers complained they got no extra. The practice of paying mothers on a Monday curiously accentuated mothers' feelings of hardship because they were without money at the weekend when everyone else got paid (and when they needed the money for shopping, clubmen, food and treats for the children) but were rich on Monday when the money seemed less useful. At this time of the week they might be considerably better off than their neighbours, whom they could even help. But the overlap in living standards also promoted jealousy from families where the head was working, and this contributed considerably to mothers' feelings of constraint and unworthiness.