

**Title:** Dimensions of poverty  
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**Abstract:**

This dissertation examines the measurement of poverty and its distribution across families and areas. The submission includes seven publications drawn from a wide portfolio with a commentary outlining the significant and original contributions that these have made within social policy. The research makes an important contribution in a number of ways; the methods used, the substantive empirical findings, conceptualisation and effect on theoretical discussion, and role in policy development. The publications represent analyses of changes in family incomes and wellbeing over the 1990s and the 2000s, tracking panels of families with children. In the first part I discuss the inadequacies of 'consensual deprivation indicators' as a scientific measure of poverty, pointing to the weak bases of consensus and how difference in spending patterns compromise the usefulness of the measure. I also demonstrate the power of a range of measures of wellbeing (taken together) in demonstrating the effects that major policy changes may have on families with children. In the second part I apply longitudinal analysis tools to considering the causes of the growth of lone motherhood and discuss the problematic nature of treating a diverse range of families ('lone mothers') as a single group. The substantive analysis shows how material conditions, including family background, are powerful causes of family change. The third part provides evidence for the importance of using locality information in the analysis of various social phenomena. Social policy is generally sceptical about the importance of 'place', but my analysis showed that area-based influences could not be reduced to individual-level characteristics. Specific analysis of the London labour market illustrated how analysis at a regional level could illuminate discussion of lone parent employment rates.