

Social policy, gender inequality and poverty ^[1]

Author: Davies, Lorraine; McMullin, Julie Ann; Avison, William & Cassidy, Gale

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AVAILABILITY

- Full report in pdf ^[2]

Excerpts from abstract and executive summary: The authors use quantitative and qualitative data to examine the factors and processes that influence poverty among a nationally representative sample of Canadian women, a community-based sample of married mothers and a convenience sample of 60 mothers of various marital and employment statuses. The purpose of this study is to identify ways in which income security policies affect mothers differently and to outline life-course trajectories that are most likely to lead to poverty among women. The findings from this study point to a variety of policy recommendations. To highlight, social policy changes are needed that target individuals during childhood, young adulthood and adulthood. Barriers to educational attainment would be reduced with: - greater visibility and access to family support organizations with a non-punitive mandate; - a greater emphasis within elementary and high school curriculums on family violence issues, sex education, birth control, and drug and alcohol abuse; and - increased government funding to shelters and second stage housing for abused women and children and improved awareness of these options. Furthermore, to enhance access to education and employment among mothers, regardless of their age and marital status, there is an indisputable need for a national child-care system. More generally, social policies must take into consideration and value all of women's contributions to child care and family life. They conclude that until social policies address systemic gender inequality, neither marriage nor employment (alone or in combination) will be enough to reduce significantly women's economic insecurity.

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: economics ^[4]

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