



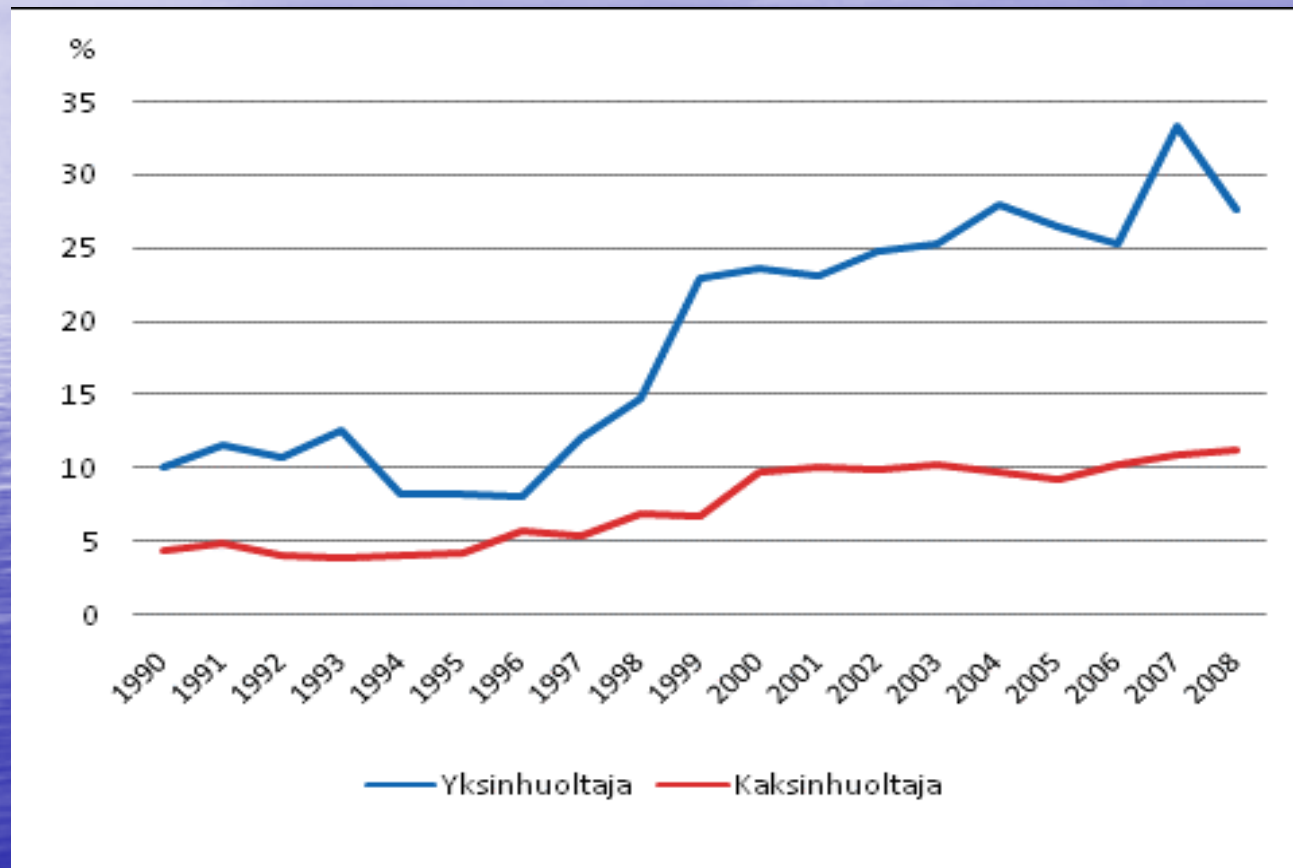
# Living in poverty

Everyday life of children living  
in poor lone parent families

# Background of the study

- Rise in child poverty in Finland, children in lone parent families are at the greatest risk of poverty (Statistics Finland 2008)
- Persistent and severe income poverty and multidimensional poverty are more likely to occur for children in households with only one parent (Moisio 2004; Ritakallio & Bradshaw 2006; Tomlinson & Walker 2009)
- Also other indicators display the weak economic position of lone parents; social assistance clients, economic help of the social work from the church (Juntunen et al. 2006)

# Child poverty in Finland in different family types, 1990-2008



Source: Statistics Finland 2008

# Consequences of child poverty

- Poor health (physical, emotional and psychological)
- Poor cognitive development
- Low self-esteem
- Poor educational achievement
- Poor housing conditions, homelessness
- Poor environment
- Poor parenting -> child wellbeing

(see Bradshaw 2001, 2002; Ermisch et al. 2001; Duncan & Brooks-Gunn 1997, 2002)

- There have been always poor homes which have been able to bring up good enough citizens successful in their life.
- The poverty does not directly lead to social exclusion and to other problems but poverty increases the possibility of social exclusion
- And possibility that children and young people do not have equal possibilities to grow up, to study or to find their place in working life and in the society

# Why to study consequences and experience of poverty?

- People experience poverty in different ways and poverty has different impact on parent's and children's everyday lives
- Child centered poverty research; research with children or for children, rather than on them (Ridge 2002)

# This study

- Aim is to extend the research focus on poverty and to bring out the experience of poverty
- Main questions to answer are: How will poverty appear in the everyday life of children living on lone parent families? What are the impacts of poverty on children's everyday lives and social relationships?
- Focus is on lone parent families only

# Data and analysis

- Arkipäivän kokemuksia köyhyydestä – kirjoituskilpailu (ks. Isola, Larivaara, Mikkonen 2007)
- *Everyday Experiences of Poverty* writing contest (2006)
- 83 writings from lone parents or young adults who have lived their childhood in lone parent family
- Analysis of the data was carried out using the thematic indexing
- Main themes were material deprivation, social relationships and home environment

## Lack of basic necessities: food, clothes, childhood possessions

- *There was no food for every day, plain pasta and bread or tuna were eaten. (P024)*
- *We ate the whole spring the porridge, the potatoes and carrots so it come out from the ears, but it was cheap. (P271).*
- *We ate porridge as a breakfast, porridge for dinner and porridge as an evening meal. (P367)*
- *My son was --- a growing adolescent --- and one had to live on the bread of the breadline often even a week. (P363)*

- *Our clothes were always others old, from the discount basket or from the flea market. I never bought full costing shoes for the child so he always went in shoes of wrong sizes of the previous seasonal sale. (P063)*
- *We collect all our clothes from the full UFF boxes (P170)*
- *I went out in the old and used clothes and I knew that I was somehow different from others and I was ashamed of it (P013)*

- *I changed the school because of the teasing. The physical teasing ended, then came a worse one. I was left as alone. I was wearing my sister's old clothes that had been inherited – have probably been a partial reason for the teasing? (P367)*

- *To the poor family children's school is a bottomless black hole. One must have skates, skis, indoor shoes, floorball racquets, bicycle helmets, and money for the school trips. All time three. [3 Children.] (P493)*

# Poor children in the peer group and their social relationships

- *He did not have friends and the friends did not come to our home as we had nothing to do. (S080)*
- *I hoped it be would possible to children to invite their friends for a dinner without the concern about tomorrow's meal. (P127)*
- *The children's social environment narrowed: they were not able to go any more to their friend's birthday party because we do not have money for presents (S129).*

- The Internet connection operates when I go to the library. (P516)
- We had no hobbies. We did not really go to the theatre, movies and entertainer parks. The newspapers did not come either. (P367)
- The children had to give up the school trips (P255)
- In Christmas we had nothing (P170)

# Key message

- Poverty in childhood is almost always overwhelmingly negative and can have many effects on children's lives
- More research of child poverty on child's perspective is needed, both quantitative and longitudinal and qualitative
- Listen up children!

# More information:

Bradshaw J (2001) Poverty: the Outcomes for Children. Family Policy Studies Centre/National Children's Bureau: London .

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Ermisch y,. (2009). Outcomes for children of poverty. Department of Work and Pension 2001.

Duncan, Greg & Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne (1997) Consequences of growing up poor. New York: Sage.

Moisio, Pasi (2004) Köyhyyden pitkittäinen rakenne. Tilapäis-, toistuvais- ja pitkäaikaisköyhyys Suomessa. *Yhteiskuntapolitiikka* 69:4, 341-358.

Ridge, Tess (2002) Childhood poverty and social exclusion: From a child's perspective. Bristol: Policy Press.

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Ritakallio, Veli-Matti & Bradshaw, Jonathan (2006) Child poverty in the European Union. Tokeeseen Bradshaw