



Director's Column

Tim Smeeding

As you can see, times are changing at LIS. Janet Gornick takes over the reins September 2006. The Luxembourg Wealth Study project is about to debut and a major revision of variables to improve estimates of pensions, working hours, and wages is planned for early 2006. This will effect Wave 5 as well as new Wave 6, which begins early this year! Stay tuned for more.

Greece 30th Nation to Join LIS

In June 2005, Greece became the 30th nation to join LIS. Data for 1995 and 2000, based on the European Household Panel (ECHP) are now available. Teresa Munzi, LIS Documentation Expert and Research Associate, presented the first results using the Greek data at the *Poverty, Exclusion and Social Inequalities* conference organized by the National Centre for Social Research held in Athens (22-23 September 2005).

Work and Social Cohesion

Luxembourg Minister of Economy Jeannot Krecké participated in a press conference held at the LIS offices in Luxembourg on August 30, 2005 where a report prepared jointly by STATEC and LIS on "Work and Social Cohesion in Luxembourg" was presented. This report shows the importance of employment in the process of social cohesion as well as the redistributive role of the Welfare state. The first part reports the rates of employment and unemployment according to gender, age, nationality and type of employment. The second part examines the socio-demographic aspects of poverty and the link between professional status and poverty. Full text of the report (in French) is available from the STATEC website at <http://www.statistiques.public.lu/fr/communiqués/population/population/2005/08/20050830/index.html>.

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LIS Names New Director

On 18 July 2005, the board of the Luxembourg Income Study named Janet Gornick as the next Overall Director of LIS. She will succeed Tim Smeeding, when he retires as Overall Director of LIS, after 23 years, in September 2006. Janet will oversee LIS for the next several years, in partnership with LIS Research Director Markus Jäntti. She looks forward to working with LIS's many wonderful friends and colleagues in Luxembourg and in all of our member countries. After he retires as Director, Tim will continue to work actively on research projects connected to LIS.

Best Dataset Award

Janet Gornick accepted the Organized Section in Comparative Politics *Best Data Set Award* on behalf of Tim Smeeding and Rainwater for LIS at the Annual Conference of the American Political Science Association held in Washington, DC September 12, 2005.

2006 Summer Workshop

The LIS Summer Workshop is a one-week pre- and post-doctoral workshop designed to introduce young scholars in the social sciences to comparative research in income distribution and social policy using the LIS database. The Luxembourg Income Study has made comparable over 130 large microdata sets which contain comprehensive measures of income and economic well-being for a set of 30 modern industrialized welfare states. The LIS databank currently covers countries including: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Chinese Taipei (Taiwan), the United Kingdom and the United States. We are also negotiating with Japan, Korea, Portugal, and New Zealand.

The 2006 Introductory Workshop will be held in Luxembourg with arrival the evening of Sunday, June 25 and departure Saturday, July 1. The language of instruction will be English. The course of study will include a mixture of lectures and assistance and direction using the LIS database to explore a research issue chosen by the participant. Workshop faculty will include the entire LIS staff (including Timothy Smeeding, Project Director; Janet Gornick, Associate Project Director; Markus Jäntti, Research Director; and John Coder, Technical Director) and other experienced LIS users.

Tuition of €1,200 single occupancy will cover instructional materials, accommodations, and full board. Transportation to and from Luxembourg is the responsibility of the student. Applications are available at <http://www.lisproject.org/workshop.htm> and due no later than **April 1, 2006.**

Meeting of Country Representatives

Due to space constraints, the following is a brief summary of the actions taken during the July 2005 Meeting of Country Representatives. Complete minutes of the meeting are available from either LIS office.

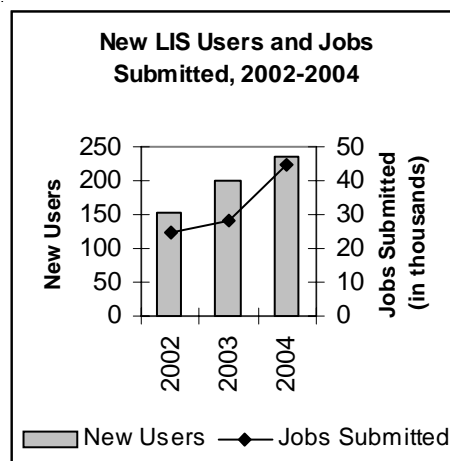
New members of A.S.B.L. approved, including: STATEC (Luxembourg Statistical Office) as an organizational member with Serge Allegrezza as representative; Brit Baarli, individual member representing Switzerland; Koen Vleminckx, individual member representing Belgium; and Veli-Matti Ritakallio, individual member representing Finland. In addition, resignations were accepted from the following: Michael Sheridan as the representative of Canada, who has accepted a position in the private sector; and Leif Nordberg as the representative from Finland. Hans Hansen submitted his resignation from the ASBL Executive Committee, but not from the ASBL. See http://www.lisproject.org/introduction/asbl_countryrep.pdf for a full list of representatives.

Appointment of President, Secretary General and Executive Committee: Robert Erikson was appointed to a second term as President of the ASBL with the term ending 31 August 2008. Tim Smeeding was appointed Secretary General/Project Director for the period 18 July 2005 through 31 August 2006. Janet Gornick was appointed Secretary General/Project Director for a four-year term of 1 September 2006 through 31 August 2010. Serge Allegrezza, Andrea Brandolini and Paul van der Laan be appointed to the Executive Committee, with Robert Erikson and Tim Smeeding as ex officio members.

Data Issues: The preparation of Wave V data is almost complete. During the past year, for the first time, datasets with quality issues (Denmark) were removed from the LIS databank. Negotiations are underway with the Ministry of Finance for a new full-series to replace these datasets. Preparation is underway for Wave VI. New data from Greece has been received and LISified. Janet Gornick continues to negotiate for the Portuguese data. The number of variables for Wave VI will increase and include redefining some variables. The LIS staff continues to focus on quality improvements for the future, including pension variables, wages (several

countries only supply net wages, the staff is trying to find a way to have gross wages), adding more detail at the personal level, and standardization of variables when possible. The Wave V data introduced the integrated LIS/LES files, however there were problems in LISifying labor variables, with this being possible with only half of the datasets. The process is very time consuming and there is some duplication of efforts. Wave VI will not include integrated LIS/LES files, but will add LES variables to the LIS file at the personal level (no. of persons, distinction of full-time/part-time, etc.)

Office Operations: Since 2004, the IT infrastructure at rue de Pommiers has been upgraded and includes all new network cabling in the building. A full audit of the IT system has been completed, guaranteeing the security of the LIS data. As a note to members, during the last two years, the LIS remote access system has been down for a total of six hours – due to the failure of a line outside the control of LIS. The LIS Visiting Scholar program continues with an average of one visitor every three months. Papers completed by Visiting Scholars are included in the LIS Working Paper Series.



Local Advisory Board (LAB): Serge Allegrezza, president of the LAB, explained the purpose of the LAB is to promote LIS to scholars, researchers, and members of the press within Luxembourg, as well as collaborating with STATEC (Luxembourg statistical agency). The group is comprised of local scholars and researchers and meets at least twice per year. Past sessions have included a workshop demonstrating the WebTabulator to local scholars and members

of the press. Development of the University of Luxembourg continues to move forward, albeit at a slow pace.

Workshops and Other Activities: The 2005 workshop was comprised of 23 students. Two students have indicated they will apply for visitor's grants to study family leave issues. A wireless network, separate from the LIS network, will be installed at 17, rue des Pommiers. A Luxembourg Wealth Study conference is being planned for Fall 2006. The manuscript for the Immigration Conference volume has been accepted by Cambridge University Press (UK) and is in press for publication in 2006. Local Workshops (1-3 days) are in the works for Milan; Spain and Portugal; and Sweden, Norway and Denmark (with new data). Gornick has been invited to New Zealand and is hoping to obtain the New Zealand data while she is there. A workshop to introduce teachers to the WebTabulator is planned for 2006-2007 and will be held in the US.

Luxembourg Wealth Study: To date, five countries have been harmonized. The first results from LWS were presented at the ECINEQ Conference in Palma de Mallorca on July 15. The first LWS conference is planned for 2006 and will be held in Italy and hosted by the Bank of Italy.

IT Audit: A written report was received from Serge Allegrezza, Director of STATEC, informing the members of a successful audit of the "LISSY" system which was conducted by UBIZEN Luxembourg SA, a company specializing in IT security services. The audit revealed, "*with regard to data protection, that the confidentiality of the LIS data is perfectly guaranteed.*"

Security Issues and Data Access: At this time, there is a need to organize metadata (not datasets) and create a system to manage different sources of information. This would allow the staff to create, maintain, and view the large amounts of information that has been gathered related to the harmonization of datasets, the country-specific institutional information, survey sources, working papers, etc. The goal is to create a system that brings all of these pieces together in a unified management information system. Testing is in progress on a JAVA-based tool that extracts information about the data harmonization process directly from the SPSS programs used to prepare the datasets and places this information directly into the database. SAS

programs have been developed and tested to compute key statistics for all variables in a dataset and place them directly into a database table. While there is no definite timetable regarding completion of this work, it is estimated that the basics of the system will be up and running within one year.

Approval of 2004 Auditor Report and 2006 Budget:

The 2004 Auditor report had been previously distributed to membership and was approved unanimously. The proposed budget for 2005 was presented. A proposal for a fee increase for 2007 was presented and approved unanimously. This would be the first increase since 1997 (10 years). The proposal includes an increase of the basic fee from €15,000 to €20,000 beginning in 2007, plus a request for an additional €5,000 for all payers currently paying above €20,000. Rationale for the increase includes the need to cover increasing staff salaries which are predicted to top €300,000 in 2007. This increase will yield €57-85,000 extra revenue per year.

Plans for Future from Secretary General-Designate:

Data quality with existing and future datasets is priority. Inclusion of more developing countries in LIS would be desirable, but there are several questions to be considered such as funding and selection of countries for inclusion. There is interest in developing a research project on non-cash data and indirect taxes. Another project may be developed to improve the institutional data in both scope and accessibility. Areas to be focused on include wealth and labor market, as well as income transfers, taxes, and services. Plans are in place to begin shortening the interval between data years. The current workshop format is being rethought with the idea of adding more methods to the curriculum, as well as plans to offer an advanced workshop.

Date for Next Meeting: The next meeting of the ASBL is *Monday, 2 July 2007*. The 2006 annual meeting will be held electronically.

Q: How do I become a LIS user? **A:** A signed pledge (commitment to use the data without attempting to derive information relating specifically to an identified individual and to publish each piece of research based on the data in the Working Paper Series).

Use of the database for commercial purposes is strictly forbidden. Once your signed registration has been returned (by fax or mail), you will be assigned an ID and password granting access to the database.

FAQ

New Datasets

New datasets, based on the European Household Panel, are available for **Spain 1995 and 2000**. To comply with ISO 3166, please note that the country abbreviation for all Spanish datasets has been changed to **ES**.

New datasets are now available for **Austria 2000, Belgium 1995, Greece 1995 and 2000, and Switzerland 2000 and 2002**.

Revised Datasets

A major revision has been completed in June 2005 for the **United States 1991** data. The U.S. 1991 dataset was re-lisified using the complete sample. By enlarging the sample from 25% to 100%, the number of households increased from 16052 to 59038. As a result of re-lisification, there is a slight change in inequality and poverty figures. The gini coefficient increased from 0.336 to 0.338 and DPI increased from 28038.0769 to 29288.4689 U.S. dollars. Also poverty rates increased slightly:

Poverty line(percent of median)	40	50	60
Old version	11.5	17.5	23.5
New version	12.1	18.1	24.3

The **United Kingdom 1999** dataset was slightly revised to adjust for underestimated self-employment taxes. Some other smaller improvements were also completed. The following LIS variables were involved in the revision.

- PTOCC, D12, D13, actual ongoing training - the scope was enlarged to include all persons actually being in full-time or part-time education.
- D6, number of earners - the scope was slightly extended by including as earner also those persons who run their own business, but who during 1999 made neither profit nor loss.
- V3, non-mandatory employer contributions - the amounts of rent paid by the employer that were recorded here were moved to variable V6, we realized that the character of these employer payments as more in line with in-kind earnings. This move has no effect on DPI.
- V8, income from capital - the new subvariables were added, and V8s, V8s2, V8s3 and V8s4 were filled.
- V11, PYTAX, income taxes - due to the complexity of the original survey files, some income taxes paid by self-employed were previously omitted. After thorough comparison to the derived variables within the FRS we have now also included taxes paid by those who do not prepare business accounts for tax purposes. Also, whenever the difference between the gross and net self-employment income as derived by the FRS team did not coincide with sum of taxes and contributions as defined by LIS variables, the difference was added to PYTAX respectively V11.
- V7, contributions for self-employed - contributions were included for those self-employed who do not prepare business accounts for tax purposes.
- V13, contributions for employees - contributions for non-workers were added.
- V21s1, unemployment insurance - used to contain total job seekers allowance. Now the income based component has been taken out (included under V25s3), thus only the contributory component remains. The near-cash DSS direct payments for jobseekers allowance were deducted and are now found in V26sr.
- V24sr, other social insurance - income tax refunds have been added
- V25s1, social assistance - the near-cash DSS direct payments for income support were deducted and are now found in V26sr.
- V32sr, other occupational pensions - personal pensions were taken out and moved to V8s3.

Most of the changes were simply refinements of the LIS income variables. The mere increase of income taxes for self-employed caused a slight decrease in DPI. However, as this is a small subgroup of the total population, the effects on the Gini coefficient and poverty rates remain minimal.

Update

Luxembourg Wealth Study

Work continues to progress on the development of the Luxembourg Wealth Study. The first set of five datasets have been prepared for inclusion on the LWS database and work continues on harmonizing an additional six datasets. It is expected that the beta version of the LWS database will be available for testing by the members of the LWS development committee in early 2006, and an alpha version will be open to all registered users in 2007. Questions? Please contact Eva Sierminska, LWS Project Coordinator at sierminska@lisproject.org.

Datasets in LWS – \hat{a} version

Work Completed

Canada Survey of Financial Security (SFS) 1999
Finland Household Wealth Survey 1998
Italy Survey of Household Income and Wealth (SHIW) 2002
Sweden Wealth Survey 2002
United States Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF) 2001

In Progress

Cyprus Survey of Consumer Finances (CySCF) 2002
Finland Household Wealth Survey 1994
Germany Socio Economic Panel Study (German SOEP) 2002
Norway Income and Wealth Survey 2002
United Kingdom British Household Panel Study (BHPS) 2000

To Be Done Next

United States Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) 2001

LWS Wealth Variables

Ownership and Value of Holdings

Financial Assets

Transaction and savings accounts, CDs
Total Bonds
Stocks
Mutual and investment funds
Life insurance
Other financial assets (non-pen)
Pension assets

TFA

DA
TB
ST
TM
LI
OFA
PA

NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS

Principal residence
Investment real estate
Business Equity
Vehicles
Durables/Collectibles
Other non-financial assets

TNF

PR
IR
BE
VH
DR/CL
ONF

LIABILITIES

Total home secured debt
Principal residence mortgage
Other property mortgage
Other (inc. line of credit)
Vehicle loans
Installment debt (inc. credit cards)
Education loans
Other loans from financial institutions
Informal debt

TD

HD
MG
OMG
OHD
VL
IL
EL
OL
ID

In early December 2005, preliminary results of the first set of harmonized countries in LWS (Canada, Finland, Italy, Sweden, United States) were released and are available on the LWS website. See below and <http://www.lisproject.org/lws.htm> for the following tables and figures:

- Table 1. Percent of households with each type of asset or debt
- Table 2. Household portfolio composition
- Table 3. Mean and median and conditional wealth holdings
- Table 4. Household age composition
- Figure 1. Positive financial assets by household's head age
- Figure 2. Positive debt holdings by household's head age
- Figure 3. Positive net worth by household's head age
- Figure 4. Home-ownership by household's head age

Table 1. Percent of Households with Each Type of Asset or Debt

	Canada 1999	Finland 1998	Italy 2002	Sweden 2002	US 2001
Net worth (>0)	77	83	90	68	77
Net worth (=0)	3	2	8	5	4
Net worth (<0)	20	15	3	27	19
Total financial assets:	90	92	81	79	91
Deposit accounts	88	91	81	59	91
Stocks	11	33	10	36	21
Mutual Funds	14	3	13	58	19
Bonds	14	3	14	16	19
Equity in real estate:	62	67	71	.	68
Principal residence	60	64	69	53	68
Investment real estate	16	27	22	14	17
Total debt	68	52	20	70	75
Home secured debt	41	28	10	.	46
Other financial assets	13	36	3	17	9
Vehicles	77	66	80	.	85

Note: Household weights are used.

Source: Luxembourg Wealth Study (LWS).

Standardized Education Recoding Routines

The routines for the standardization of education level across countries have been improved. When harmonizing household surveys, LIS has to deal with all the typical national educational systems in the different member countries.

The slots in which information on educational attainment can be stored are: PEDUC for general education; and/or PTOCC for vocational training. When filling these variables, the rule is that all original detail is preserved. As such, no information is lost, but the comparability between countries suffers. An international comparable variable is needed when for instance running regressions. Therefore, LIS decided to supply a routine that derives such a variable. Because this new variable comes in addition to the two original ones, users now have a choice to either work with the full detail, or to use standardized categories.

See <http://www.lisproject.org/dataaccess/educlevel.htm> for methods, instructions and recoding.

Grants for Visiting Researchers

CALL FOR PROPOSALS This semi-annual Call for Proposals is supported by the Ministry for Culture, Higher Education and Research of Luxembourg, the United States National Science Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Maxwell European Union Center at Syracuse University, and is conducted in cooperation with the University of Luxembourg.

TOPICS LIS promotes the comparative study of income inequality, poverty and social policy and any topic in the LIS general research program is encouraged. Proposals which leave something behind to improve LIS are especially requested. That is, we are willing to subsidize researchers to come to LIS, but we would like something of value to the LIS (or LWS) projects in return.

HOW TO APPLY Interested candidates are invited to submit their applications by e-mail to Caroline de Tombeur, LIS Administrative Assistant: caroline@lisproject.org. An application form is available on-line at <http://www.lisproject.org>. A curriculum vita and brief description of the research project must be provided, preferably in PDF or DOC format. Please note the LIS visitor's program is open to researchers of all nationalities. However, preference will be given to researchers from LIS member countries. Applications from experienced doctoral students, post-docs, academics, and/or sabbaticants are encouraged. Research proposals are accepted all year round without any deadline restriction.

For further information see <http://www.lisproject.org> or contact: LIS Visiting Researchers Program, 17, rue des Pommiers, L-2343 Luxembourg City, LUXEMBOURG. Tel. +352 26 00 30; Fax. +352 26 00 30 30; E-mail: caroline@lisproject.org.

LIS Visitors

Anna Gourgova (Purdue University, USA) was a visitor at LIS during March 2005. Anna was conducting research on "A Model of Human Capital Return in Russia."

Mattia Makovec (European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Vienna) was a visitor at LIS during July and August 2005. Mattia's research project is entitled "The Economic Well-being of the Elderly in an Enlarged Europe."

Kathrin Zippel (Northeastern University, USA) was a visitor at LIS during November 2005 researching "Differences in Motherhood and Employment Across Countries."

Staff Presentations

Des Moines, IA, USA – Tim Smeeding presented "The Evolving Financial Workforce Crisis in Long Term Care: Designing a Rational Policy Response" at the Medical Care in the Nursing Home: Sustaining a Vital Workforce conference, October 20, 2005.

Greece - Teresa Munzi presented "Poverty and Inequality: Greece and Mediterranean Europe in Comparative Perspective (T.M. Smeeding, co-author) at the EEKE Conference on Poverty, Exclusion and Social Inequalities Conference, Lavrion, Greece, September 22-23, 2005.

Korea - Tim Smeeding presented "Recent Social Policy and Inequality Developments in Comparative Perspective" to the Department of Social Welfare – Seoul National University, Korea, August 22, 2005. While in Seoul, Tim also presented "Causes and Conditions of Social Vulnerability: Evidence from the LIS Dataset" at the APEC Symposium: Strengthening Social Safety Nets Under Rapid Socioeconomic Change, August 23-24, 2005.

Luxembourg - Antoine Haag presented his report "Labor and Social Cohesion" at a conference on micro-finance organized by the governors of the *Fondation du Grand-Duc Henri et de la Grande-Duchesse Marie Teresa*, November 15, 2005.

New York – Tim Smeeding presented "Child Poverty in Rich and Poor Countries" at UNICEF, June 10, 2005.

Syracuse, NY, USA – Tim Smeeding presented "Teachers Pay in Cross-National Context" (T. Munzi, co-author) at the Teacher Quality and Retention Conference, Maxwell School of Syracuse University, May 21, 2005.

Q: What do *harmonization*, *standardization*, and *"lisification"* mean exactly? **A:** A "**harmonized**" LIS variable is a variable that exists (or may exist, depending on its actual presence in the original dataset) for each country, but whose coding differs in principle across countries. The harmonized variables are typically all the country-specific variables; the original classification is usually preserved.

"Standardized" variables are, on the contrary, variables that have been recoded in order to fit a fixed coding scheme, i.e. variables that have categories that are the same across countries. To "**lisify**" a dataset means to apply the necessary transformations to the original dataset in order to make it correspond to the LIS variable structure, which include both "harmonized" (country-specific) and "standardized" variables (variables with common categories for all countries).

In the Press...

LIS-related items have appeared in the following:
Brady, David. 2005. "Poor More with Us than We Know," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, August 28, 2005. (www.ajc.com/opinion/content/opinion/0805/29edpoverty.html).

Dresang, Joel. 2005. "Working Vacation into Life: Americans Get Less Time Off and Don't Use Up What They Get," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (Wisconsin, USA), August 14, p. 1.

Fisher, Jim. 2005. "Don't Blame God for Making So Many Poor People," *Lewiston Morning Tribune* (Idaho, USA), September 3, 2005, pg. 6A.

Francis, David R. 2005. "It's Better to Be Poor in Norway than in the US," *The Christian Science Monitor* (Boston, MA), Features, Planet, pg. 17.

Garside, Richard. 2005. "Lessons from Abroad: Countries with High Violence Rates Like Ours Have High Levels of Income Inequality," *New Statesman*, August 1, 2005.

Hage, Dave. 2005. "Gap Between the Rich and Poor Spurs New Questions," *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis, MN, USA), July 24, p. 1AA.

Havemann, Joel and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar. 2005. "U.S. Poverty Rate Rose Again in 2004," *The Los Angeles Times*, Main News, National Desk, Part A, pg. 13.

Jennings, Derek. 2005. "Poverty of Values," *The Independent Weekly* (Durham, NC, USA), October 19, 2005, v 22 n 42 p 8

Kajimoto, Tetsushi. 2006. "Income Disparities Rising in Japan," *The Japan Times*, January 4.

Kerr, Jennifer C. 2005. "Poverty Rate Rises to 12.7 Percent, Census Says," *The Associated Press*, August 30, 2005.

Lavine, Marc. 2005. "French Riots Raise Spectre of Los Angeles Violence," *Agence France Press – English*, November 13, 2005.

Lewin, Tamar. 2005. "More Grandparents Invested in their Grandchildren's Lives," *Houston Chronicle* (Houston, TX), July 24, 2005, p. 5.

Materia, Enrico, Lorenza Rossi, and Gabriella Guasticchi. 2005. "Income Inequality and Nations' Altruism," *The Lancet*, v365, April 23, 2005, p. 1462-63.

"Relax! It's the Law," *The Economist*, v 375 n 8427 (May 21, 2005), p. 80.

"Rising Tide: Too Many Boats Left Behind," *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis, MN, USA), September 19, 2004, p. 8AA.

Sikwebu, Dinga. 2005. "Celtic High Road has a Downside," *Business Day* (South Africa), May 12, 2005, p. 11.

LIS USER SUPPORT
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New Working Paper Abstracts

No. 399. *Familialism and Welfare Regimes: Poverty, Employment and Family Policies* by Joya Misra and Stephanie Moller, January 2005. “While many nations lay a claim to supporting “family values,” these values may be interpreted in a variety of ways. How do nations support families, particularly families with children? What strategies do different nations take, and how do these strategies lead to different outcomes? In this paper, we show how different combinations of policies that support family caregiving and those that de-familialize caregiving lead to significantly different outcomes. We show that nations with stronger levels of both kinds of policies have lower poverty levels than those with weaker levels of these policies, but that strong levels of policies that support family caregiving and weak levels of de-familializing policies have more varied results, with higher levels of poverty, particularly for families headed by single mothers. In addition, this research illustrates significant variation among “continental Conservative” countries, and suggests the importance of a less static approach to welfare state regimes, which also fully recognizes the centrality of gender relations to labor market and welfare state policies.”

No. 400. *Rising Inequality and the Politics of Redistribution in Affluent Countries* by Lane Kenworthy and Jonas Pontusson, January 2005. “Inequality has been an increasingly prominent object of study among comparativists. We use data from the Luxembourg Income Study to examine household market inequality, redistribution, and the relationship between market inequality and redistribution in affluent OECD countries in the 1980s and 1990s. We observe sizeable increases in market household inequality in most countries. This development appears to have been driven largely, though not exclusively, by changes in employment: in countries with better employment performance, low-earning households benefited relative to high-earning ones; in nations with poor employment performance, low-earning households fared worse. In contrast to widespread rhetoric about the decline of the welfare state, redistribution increased in most countries during this period, as existing social-welfare programs compensated for the rise in market inequality. They did so in proportion to the degree of increase in inequality, producing a very strong positive association between changes in market inequality and changes in redistribution. We discuss the relevance of Meltzer and Richard’s median-voter theory and power resources theory for understanding cross-country differences and over-time changes in the extent of compensatory redistribution.”

No. 401. *The Impact of Taxes and Transfer Payments on the Distribution of Income: A Parametric Comparison* by Samuel R. Dastrup, Rachel Hartshorn, and James B.

McDonald, January 2005. “The Luxembourg Income Study data is used to explore the impact of taxes and transfer payments on the distribution of income across thirteen countries for different years. The five-parameter generalized beta distribution and ten of its special cases are considered as models for the size distribution of income. Maximum likelihood methods are used to estimate the model with corresponding measures of goodness of fit and inequality reported. These results identify the best-fitting two, three, and four-parameter models as well as describe the inter-temporal patterns of inequality corresponding to earnings, total income, and disposable income. A general pattern of increasing inequality is observed for almost all countries considered along with significantly different distributional impacts of taxes and transfer payments across countries.”

No. 402. *Electoral Systems, Poverty and Income Inequality* by Darwin Ugarte Ontivaros and Vincenzo Verardi, February 2005. “In this article we use the high-quality data coming from the Luxembourg Income Study Project, in a panel framework, to test for the effects of electoral systems on both poverty and income inequality. We find that when the degree of proportionality of an electoral system increases, inequality and poverty decrease. We also find that in presidential regimes, the levels of poverty and inequality are higher than in parliamentary regimes.”

No. 403. *Families at the Margins of the Welfare State: A Comparative Study on the Prevalence of Poverty among Families Receiving Social Assistance* by Susan Kuivalainen, February 2005. “The aim is to assess the prevalence of poverty among families receiving social assistance. We will examine the incidence of poverty among the recipients in relation to the general poverty profile. To answer these questions, the adequacy and poverty reduction effectiveness of social assistance schemes are examined. On the contrary to earlier studies that have mainly analysed the poverty reduction effectiveness for the recipients or the population as a whole, this paper has a specific focus on different family types. Both the model family technique and the LIS data are utilised and the period of examination is around 2000. The results indicated that outcomes differ greatly between families of different kinds and to a large extent they resembled to a general poverty profile. Out of family types considered here, the best protected family type was the elderly and the least protected the young. Findings showed significant differences in outcomes between families with children and childless families. Families with children, regardless of having one or two parent, had very high rates of poverty. Taken together, families in the receipt of social assistance had

significantly higher levels of poverty than other types of families.”

No. 404. *Market Economic Systems* by Frederic L. Pryor, October 2004. “The new comparative economics has focused on individual institutions, rather than the economic system as a whole. This essay argues that economic systems should be defined in terms of clusters of complementary or covarying institutions. A cluster analysis of OECD countries using data on forty different economic institutions shows that four economic systems characterize these nations. Further, these systems have no significant impact on economic growth or inflation, but they do have an important influence on the distribution of income. An analysis of systemic change suggests that with economic development, the differences between economic systems become greater while the differences among nations with the same economic system become less, at least up to 1990.”

No. 405. *Child Poverty and Changes in Child Poverty in Rich Countries since 1990* by Wen-Hao Chen and Miles Corak, January 2005. “This paper documents levels and changes in child poverty rates in 12 OECD countries using data from the Luxembourg Income Study project, and focusing upon an analysis of the reasons for changes over the 1990s. The objective is to uncover the relative role of income transfers from the state in determining the magnitude and direction of change in child poverty rates, holding other demographic and labour market factors constant. As such the paper offers a cross-country overview of child poverty, changes in child poverty, and the impact of public policy in North America and Europe.”

No. 406. *Principles and Practicalities for Measuring Child Poverty in Rich Countries* by Miles Corak, March 2005. “This paper has three objectives. The first is to discuss the major issues involved in defining and measuring child poverty. The choices that must be made are clarified, and a set of six principles to serve as a guide for public policy are stated. The second objective is to take stock of child poverty and changes in child poverty in the majority of OECD countries since about 1990 when the Convention on the Rights of the Child came into force. Finally, the third objective is to formulate a number of suggestions for the setting of credible targets for the elimination of child poverty in the rich countries. This involves a method for embodying the ideal of children having priority on social resources into a particular set of child poverty reduction targets, it involves the development of appropriate and timely information sources, and finally it involves the clarification of feasible targets that may vary across the OECD. Child poverty rates vary by more than a factor of ten across the OECD, from less than three percent to over 20 and almost 30%. These countries fall into four broad groups, those with child poverty rates less

than 5%, those with higher rates but still less than 10%, those with rates higher than 10% and as high as 20%, and finally two countries with more than one-in-five children being poor. In the strong majority of countries child poverty rates have actually gone up. In 16 of 24 OECD countries the child poverty rate at the end of the 1990s was higher than at the beginning, and in only three countries has it declined to a measurable degree. An important challenge in reversing this trend concerns the need to develop a clear definition of child poverty for public policy in specific national contexts and to set feasible and credible targets. Economic theory, accepted statistical practice and best practice in the OECD suggest the following six principles to guide decision making: (1) avoid unnecessary complexity by using an income based measure of resources; (2) complement this by measuring material deprivation directly using a small set of indicators; (3) draw poverty lines with regard to social norms; (4) establish a regular monitoring system and update poverty lines within a five year period; (5) set a both a backstop and a target by using fixed and moving poverty lines; and (6) offer leadership and build public support for poverty reduction.”

No. 407. *Structural Theory and Relative Poverty in Rich Western Democracies, 1969-2000* by David Brady, March 2005. “This study assesses if structural theory explains the variation in poverty across rich Western democracies. With unbalanced panel analysis of 18 countries, two poverty measures and controlling for the welfare state and economic performance, I examine five structural factors: manufacturing employment, agricultural employment, female labor force participation, the elderly population, and children in single mother families. Manufacturing employment, female labor force participation, elderly population, and children in single mother families significantly influence the headcount measure of poverty, while agricultural employment is insignificant. By contrast, all five structural variables are insignificant for the interval measure of poverty. For the headcount, the structural variables have a more powerful influence than economic growth (the only significant indicator of economic performance) but a smaller influence than the welfare state. For the interval measure, the welfare state has a much larger influence than economic growth, and the insignificant structural and other economic variables. Counterfactual simulations are used to illustrate consequences of these effects for the U.S., Germany, and Sweden. Sensitivity analyses demonstrate the main conclusions hold regardless of the U.S. cases. Though structural variables influence one of the two poverty measures, the welfare state is most important to explaining poverty in rich Western democracies.”

No. 408. *Welfare States, Social Structure and the Dynamics of Poverty Rates: A Comparative Study of 16 Countries, 1980-2000*

by Olaf Bäckman, February 2005. “The purpose of this paper is twofold. The primary purpose is to try and explain both the temporal and the spatial variation of poverty rates in terms of unemployment insurance indicators and structural/sociodemographic factors. Secondly, the paper aims to test the ‘convergence hypothesis’ of the poverty rate, i.e. whether or not poverty rates in modern welfare states have converged in recent decades. The analyses tentatively suggest that structural change in terms of the unemployment rate, the proportion of single-earner households, the female labour-force participation rate, and the proportion of families with children primarily explains the temporal variation in poverty rates. The unemployment insurance factors primarily explain the spatial variation, i.e. variation between countries. In part, however, the temporal variation is explained by the cuts in net replacements in unemployment insurance. This factor alone explains a larger share of the overall variance than all the structural factors put together. Where the convergence hypothesis is concerned, a random-effects model is proposed as a statistical tool for testing convergence (and dispersion). The results of this analysis suggest that for the 16 countries and the time frame under review the convergence hypothesis must be rejected, an outcome that is in line with some other analyses presented recently.”

No. 409. *The Material Consequences of Welfare States: Benefit Generosity and Absolute Poverty in 16 OECD Countries* by Lyle Scruggs and James P. Allan, April 2005. “Several recent studies have focused attention on the relationship between welfare states and poverty. This work has looked primarily at relative poverty, employing concepts of welfare state generosity that are problematic. This has made it difficult to evaluate claims that equality has come at the expense of economic growth. In this paper we examine more directly the relationship between welfare state generosity in three social insurance programs—unemployment, sickness and pensions—and poverty levels in advanced industrial democracies in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Our results strongly suggest that more generous entitlements to key social insurance programs are associated not only with lower *relative* poverty, but also lower *absolute* poverty. This supports the contention that promoting relative economic equality can improve the absolute material well-being of the poor. However, we find no evidence to suggest that relatively more generous unemployment benefits systematically reduce poverty.”

No. 410. *How Social Security Keeps Older Persons Out of Poverty across Developed Countries* by Kebin Wu, May 2005. “Social Security is a major retirement income source for older persons in the United States and other

developed countries. Without Social Security income, a large portion of the older population would live in poverty in all developed countries. This report analyzes how or to what extent Social Security keeps older persons out of poverty across developed countries by examining changes in poverty rates of older persons with and without Social Security income.”

No. 411. *Why Immigrants Manage to Grab More Social Benefits? Empirical Cross - Country Analysis* by Lubomira Anastassova and Teodora Paligorova, June 2005. “Using data from the Luxembourg Income Study we analyze state welfare generosity to immigrants and natives in Sweden, Norway, Belgium, Germany and the USA. The distinction between EU and non-EU immigrants proves to be an interesting one. We find a substantial social income gap between non-EU immigrants and natives, while EU immigrants are quite similar to natives. The main reasons for the existence of this social income gap are family wage income, number of children and income earners in the family. While these characteristics explain almost fully the gap in the EU countries, they are of little help in others.”

No. 412. *Unemployment Versus Inactivity: An Analysis of the Earnings and Labor Force Status of Prime Age Men in France, the UK, and the US at the End of the 20th Century* by Alena Bicakova, June 2005. “This paper focuses on the differences in earnings and labor force status of low-skilled prime age men in France, the United Kingdom, and the United States at the end of the 20th century, and their relation to the differences in wage dispersion. In the UK and the US, where the bottom of the wage distribution is more dispersed, the inactivity rate (sometimes called the not-in-labor force rate) among low-skilled men exceeds the percentage of the unemployed, whereas in France the opposite is true. This leaves the overall joblessness rate among the low-skilled in France similar to that in the US, and that in the UK about one third higher. I use a partial-equilibrium job search model to provide a supply side explanation of the observed differences. An employed individual’s decision whether to work or leave the labor force (be inactive) is affected by his wage. A jobless individual’s decision whether to be unemployed and search for a job or be out of labor force is affected by his potential wage. In the UK and the US, where wages are flexible, skill-biased change in labor demand has had a negative effect on the wage of the low-skilled at the bottom of the wage distribution. With lower returns from employment, the low-skilled in the UK and the US are more likely to be inactive. I formulate a four-step econometric procedure to estimate the effect of the wage on the probability of being inactive, the probability of being unemployed, and the probability of being employed. The estimation uses data from the Luxembourg Income Study for France, the UK, and the US in selected years

from the period 1994-2001. I find a sizable and significant effect of the wage on inactivity in the UK and the US but none in France. The probability of unemployment as a function of the wage decreases more rapidly in the UK and the US than it does in France. The low-skilled in France face a relatively similar risk of unemployment irrespective of their earning capacity. In the UK and the US, unemployment is concentrated among the low-skilled at the very bottom of the wage distribution. The findings provide evidence against the commonly used argument that wage flexibility improves the employment prospects of individuals at the bottom of the wage distribution."

No. 413. *The Determinants of the Prevalence of Single Mothers: A Cross-Country Analysis* by Libertad González, July 2005. "This paper examines the effect of public assistance, labor market and marriage market conditions on the prevalence of single mother families across countries and over time. A multinomial logit derived from a random utility approach is estimated using individual level data for 14 countries. I find evidence that increases in the level of public support are significantly and positively associated with a higher incidence of both never married and divorced mothers. The results also suggest that single mothers are more prevalent when female wages are lower. Higher male earnings and employment opportunities in a woman's marriage market appear to lead to fewer never married mothers, but more divorced mothers. Higher child support or alimony payments are associated with a higher prevalence of divorced mothers."

No. 414. *Did the dual-earner model become stronger or weaker in Finland and Sweden in the 1990s?* by Anita Haataja and Anita Nyberg, August 2005. "This article investigates the dual-earner model in families with children in Finland and Sweden from the end of the 1980s to the beginning of the 2000s. During this period the two countries introduced the same kind as well as different kinds of policies in relation to the dual-earner model. Simultaneously both countries experienced a very deep economic crisis in the beginning of the 1990s, which also could be expected to influence the dual-earner model. The study focuses on both two-parent families and single mothers. Because family leaves and benefits related to children and childcare are often available according to the age of the youngest child, we analyse the outcomes by children's age groups. We focus on mothers' labour market position and earnings, the share of dual-earner couples and the contribution of mothers' earnings on family income. We also assess the outcomes in terms of poverty rates. Instead of moving traditionally step by step from families' market income to final disposable income, we choose a stepwise way to analyse the impact on poverty rates of income from different sources, from men's earnings

income to combined spouses' income, and income from the welfare state in relation to children and childcare etc. until disposable income. Income analyses are based on the four latest waves of LIS data. In both countries the employment rate has gone down and the unemployment rate up among mothers as well as fathers. The shares of dual-earner families and the shares of families below the poverty line have increased. The situation of single mothers in general has degenerated substantially. The development can be seen as an indication of a weakening of the dual-earner model in both countries. On the other hand, the earnings of mothers in dual-earner families compared to fathers' average earnings are higher today than in the 1980s, which can be interpreted as a strengthening of the dual-earner model and of women's position in these families. The results indicate that the strength of the dual-earner model in families with school age children has not weakened and the share and the earnings pattern of dual-earner families were more similar in the two countries around 2000 than in the end of the 1980s. In families with pre-school children Finnish and Swedish mothers' earnings income contribute about the same proportion to total gross family income. But there is a difference in the direction of the development. Finnish families have moved in the direction of female homemaker – male earner model, when the child is below three years of age, i.e. the dual-earner model has been weakened. While in Sweden, parents' behaviour moves, although slowly, in the same direction as the intention of the policies, in terms of mothers contributing more to family income, i.e. the dual-earner model has been strengthened. Whether this development will continue, when and if the economy and the labour market grow, can only be disclosed by long-term empirical studies."

No. 415. *The Effects of Incomplete Employee Wage Information: A Cross-Country Analysis* by Solomon W. Polachek and Jun (Jeff) Xiang, August 2005. "In this paper, we define a tractable procedure to measure worker incomplete information in the labor market. The procedure, which makes use of earnings distribution skewness, is based on econometric frontier estimation techniques, and is consistent with search theory. We apply the technique to eleven countries over various years, and find that incomplete information leads workers to receive on average about 30-35% less pay than they otherwise would have earned, had they information on what each firm paid. Generally married men and women suffer less from incomplete information than the widowed or divorced; and singles suffer the most. Women suffer more from incomplete information than men. Schooling and labor market experience reduce these losses, but institutions within a country can reduce them, as well. For example, we find that workers in countries that strongly support unemployment insurance (UI) receive wages closer to their potential, so that doubling

UI decreases incomplete information and results in 5% higher wages. A more dense population reduces search costs leading to less incomplete information. A more industrial economy disseminates wage information better, so that workers exhibit less incomplete information and higher wages. Finally, we find that foreign worker inflows increase incomplete information, and at the same time reduce average wage levels, at least in the short-run."

No. 416. *An Atkinson-Gini Family of Social Evaluation Functions: Theory and Illustration using Data from the Luxembourg Income Study* by Abdelkrim Araar and Jean-Yves Duclos, October 2005. "We investigate the properties of a family of social evaluation functions and inequality indices which merge the features of the family of Atkinson (1970) and S-Gini (Donaldson and Weymark (1980, 1983), Yitzhaki (1983) and Kakwani (1980)) indices. Income inequality aversion is captured by decreasing marginal utilities, and aversion to rank inequality is captured by rank-dependent ethical weights, thus providing an ethically-flexible dual basis for the assessment of inequality and equity. We demonstrate a few of their interesting properties. We also illustrate their application using data from the Luxembourg Income Study."

No. 417. *Causes and Conditions of Social Vulnerability in Comparative Perspective: Asian Evidence from the LIS Dataset* by Timothy Smeeding, August 2005. "Social vulnerability due to insufficient income and earnings may come from many sources, both demographic and economic, in a globalizing world. This paper examines the problems of population aging, low wages, growing inequality, and insufficient social spending. Vulnerable groups such as children and the aged are considered. The paper will look at the United States, Canada, and Europe, and Chinese Taipei-Taiwan using the LIS (Luxembourg Income Study) database, and will assess the net effects of existing policies and particularly the United Kingdom's program to reduce child poverty. While best practices may be identified, each nation must create its own set of mutually supportive policies which provide protection against global economic forces while at the same time encouraging self effort and efficient behavior. Still, policy can make a difference in outcomes as shown by the recent British success in fighting child poverty."

No. 418. *Poverty and Place in North America* by Mary Jo Bane and Rene Zenteno, April 2005. "This paper provides an overview of poverty in North America. In it we look at the three countries of North America—Mexico, the US, and to a lesser extent Canada—and attempt to both describe poverty as it exists in the three countries and explore some of the correlates of poverty. In doing so, we attempt to bring together the concepts and approaches used mostly in

studying poverty in developing countries and those used in developed countries. We propose some definitions of poverty that we believe can be usefully applied across very different countries. We explore some correlates of poverty in the three countries, and both the similarities and the differences in the correlates of poverty across the three. We take note of the policy issues that are raised by these relationships. As might be expected, we raise more questions that we answer, about both our approach and our findings. We begin with an overview of growth and inequality in the three countries. The second section of the paper presents concepts and measures of poverty and reports the overall incidence of poverty in the three countries using various measures. The third section explores the relationship between the level of economic development and poverty, both between and within countries. The fourth section looks at the relationships between household composition and poverty and between race/ethnicity and poverty in the US and Mexico. The final section briefly raises policy issues that emerge from the analysis."

No. 419. *Poor People in Rich Nations: The United States in Comparative Perspective* by Timothy Smeeding, October 2005. "Most examinations of United States domestic antipoverty policy are inherently parochial, for they are based on the experiences of only our nation in isolation from the others. However, cross-national comparisons can also teach lessons about antipoverty policy. While all nations value low poverty, high levels of economic self-reliance, and equality of opportunity for younger persons, they differ dramatically in the extent to which they reach these goals. Nations also exhibit differences in the extent to which working age adults mix economic self-reliance (earned incomes), family support, and government support to avoid poverty. We begin by reviewing international concepts and measures of poverty. The Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) database contains the information needed to construct comparable poverty measures for more than 30 nations. It allows comparisons of the level and trend of poverty and inequality across several nations, along with considerable detail on the sources of market incomes and public policies that shape these outcomes. We will highlight the different relationships between antipoverty policy and outcomes among several countries, and consider the implications of our analysis for research and for antipoverty policy in the United States. In doing so, we will draw on a growing body of evidence that evaluates antipoverty programs in a cross-national context. Many international bodies have published crossnational studies of the incidence of poverty in recent years, including the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Human Development Report, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the Luxembourg Income Study. A large subset of these studies is based on LIS data."

No. 420. *The Tragedy of the Commons or the Curse of Federalism* by Laurent Bouton, Marjorie Gassner, and Vincenzo Verardi, September 2005. "It has been suggested that fiscal federalism is a good way to induce decentralized entities to behave parsimoniously, but this has been largely criticized in the literature, in particular because of the Common-Pool problem. In this paper, we present an extra facet of the latter problem. We present a simple theoretical model confirmed by empirical evidence suggesting that vertical imbalance induces governments to substitute redistributive spending for non-distributive expenditures. This drives fiscal policies to be less efficient in reducing income inequality."

No. 421. *Poverty and Inequality: Greece and Mediterranean Europe in Comparative Perspective* by Teresa Munzi and Timothy Smeeding, September 2005. "Social vulnerability due to insufficient income and earnings may come from many sources, both demographic and economic, in a globalizing world. This paper examines the problems of population aging, low wages, growing inequality, and insufficient social spending. Vulnerable groups such as children and the aged are considered. The paper will look at the United States, Canada, and Europe using the LIS (Luxembourg Income Study) database, and especially with a focus on Greece whose data has recently been added to LIS. It will assess the net effects of existing policies and particularly the United Kingdom's program to reduce child poverty. While best practices may be identified, each nation must create its own set of mutually supportive policies which provide protection against global economic forces while at the same time encouraging self effort and efficient behavior. Still, policy can make a difference in outcomes as shown by the recent British success in fighting child poverty."

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Q: Can LIS data be used for longitudinal analysis?

A.: No. LIS data can only be used for cross-sectional studies. There are no household identification numbers (necessary to be able to link persons between waves).

FAQ

Q: Can LIS data be used for regional research? **A.:** Yes. Many datasets have a geographic location indicator (LIS variable D7).

Q: Can I use external data with the LIS data? **How?** **A.:** Yes. If your data is small, you can add it directly to your program. If it is large, you should convert it to SPSS, SAS or STATA and e-mail it to usersupport@lisproject.org along with your request.

Where They've Turned Up

Income Packaging and Economic Well-being at the Income Last Stage of the Working Career (No. 270) by Martin Rein and Heinz Stapf-Finé was published in *Rethinking the Welfare State: The Political Economy of Pension Reform* (M. Rein and Winfried Schmähl (eds.). Routledge, 2004. p. 412-437.

Love and Money: a Theoretical and Empirical Analysis of Household Sorting and Inequality (No. 283) by Raquel Fernández, Nezih Guner, and John Knowles appeared in *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 20(1): 273-344.

European Schemes of Social Assistance: An Empirical Analysis (No. 312) by Katja Hölsch and Margit Kraus appeared in the *Journal of European Social Policy* 14(2): 143-164.

International Evidence on the Impact of Transfers and Taxes on Alternative Poverty Indexes (No. 325) by Robert H. DeFina and Kishor Thanawala was published in *Social Science Research* 33(2): 322-338.

Income Distribution and Social Expenditures: A Crossnational Perspective (No. 350) by Jonathan Schwabish, Timothy M. Smeeding, and Lars Osberg appeared as "Income Distribution and Public Social Expenditure: Theories, Effects and Evidence" in *Social Inequality* (K. Neckerman, ed.). NY: Russell Sage Foundation. 2004. p. 821-859.

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