



Dynamics and Consequences of Child Economic Vulnerability in the Recession: An analysis of Two waves and Two Cohorts

Dorothy Watson, Bertrand Maître,
Christopher T. Whelan, James
Williams



Introduction

- Child poverty is not just an immediate issue of the well-being of children ...
- It has long term effects, so implications for ...
 - future of the economy
 - future demand on public services
 - important in breaking the cycle of disadvantage.
- How has child poverty been affected by the Great Recession and what were its consequences?



Outline

- 1. Data and Measures**
- 2. Economic Vulnerability dynamics**
- 3. Consequences for children's socio-emotional development**
- 4. Conclusions and Implications**

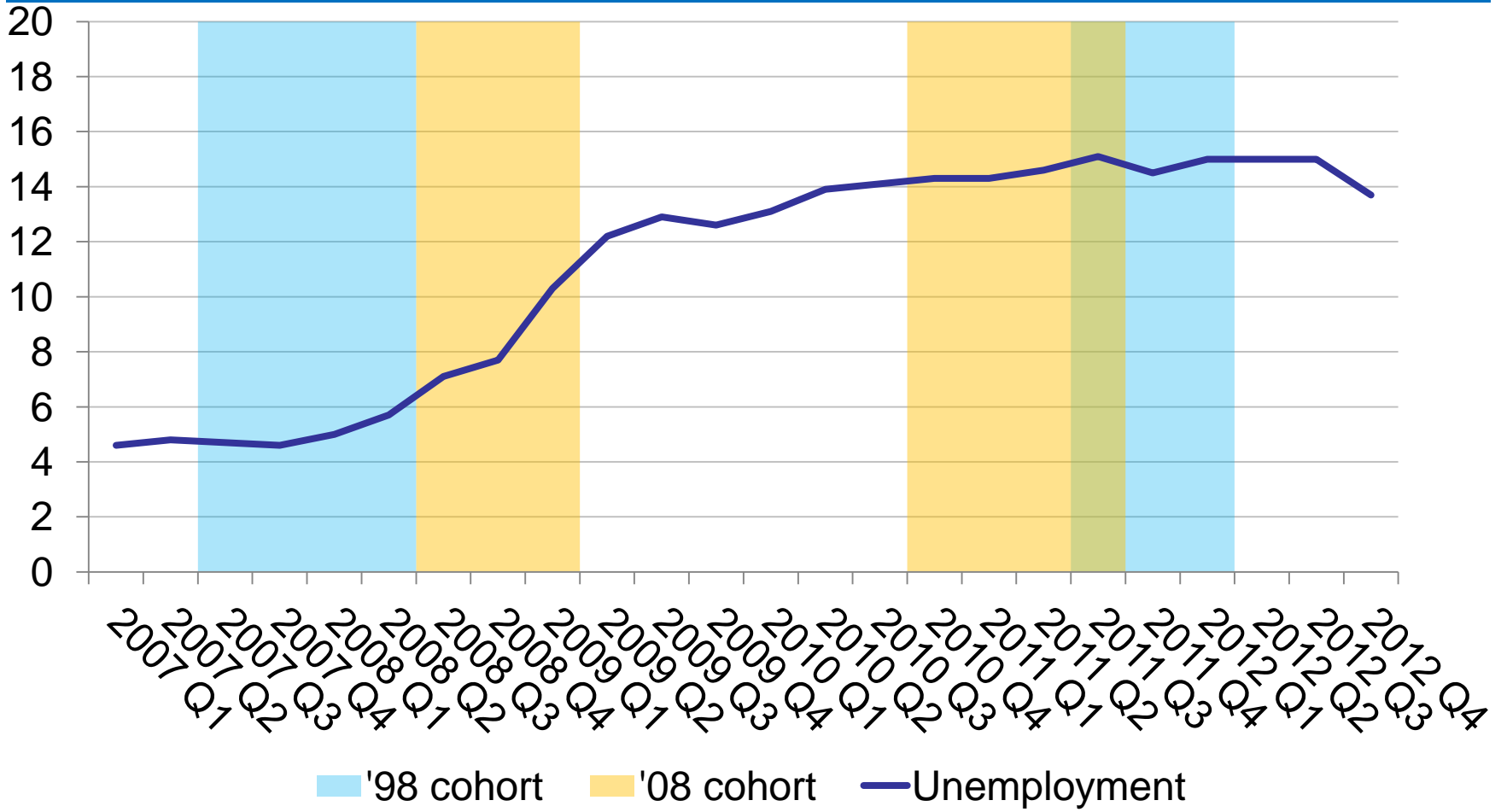


1a. Data and Measures

- **Growing Up in Ireland Survey (GUI) – survey of families with children. Two waves and Two cohorts –**
 - Born in 1998 (child aged 9 at first wave; 7,423 families responded in both waves)
 - Born in 2008 (child aged 9 mo. at first wave; 9,793 families responded in both waves)
- **Economic Vulnerability (EV): people living in a HH with a disadvantaged risk profile in terms**
 - low income,
 - household joblessness and
 - economic stress.
- **Identify the EV group using latent class analysis.**

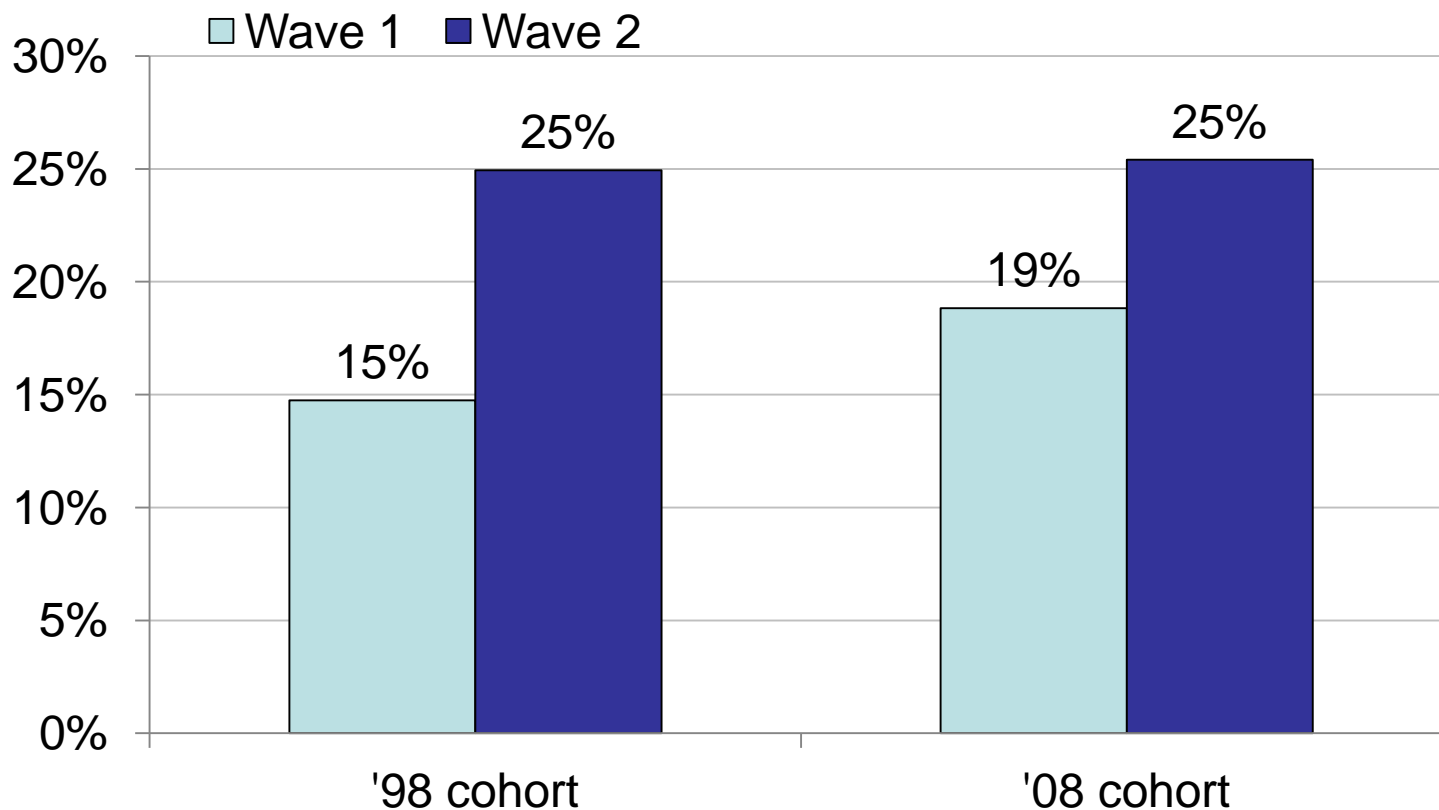


1b. GUI – Timing of Fieldwork & Recession





2a. Economic Vulnerability (EV) in Irish families



- Difference between the cohorts mainly due to timing of 1st wave (before vs. at start of recession).

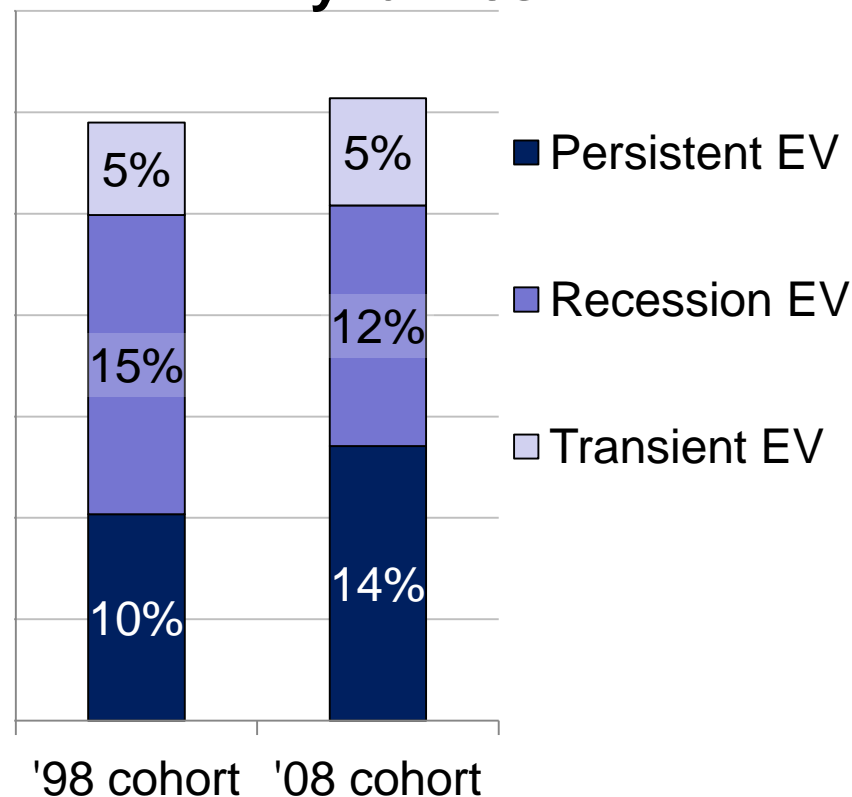


2b. Economic Vulnerability Dynamics –

Did the same families remain EV in both waves?

- There was persistence and also movement
 - into EV ('Recession EV')
 - out of EV ('Transient EV')
- **Change in the profile of the EV group – economic stress more central in recession**

Economic Vulnerability Dynamics





2c. Risk factors for Economic Vulnerability

- **Parental Education: Mother lower education**
- **Family type: higher EV for**
 - Lone parent families
 - Larger families
 - Cohabiting couples vs. married couples
- **Age of mother - younger at child's birth**
- **Differences by whether EV Persistent or 'Recession'**
 - Associations are strongest with Persistent EV
 - Associations somewhat weaker for 'Recession EV'
 - Those becoming EV in recession were a broader group



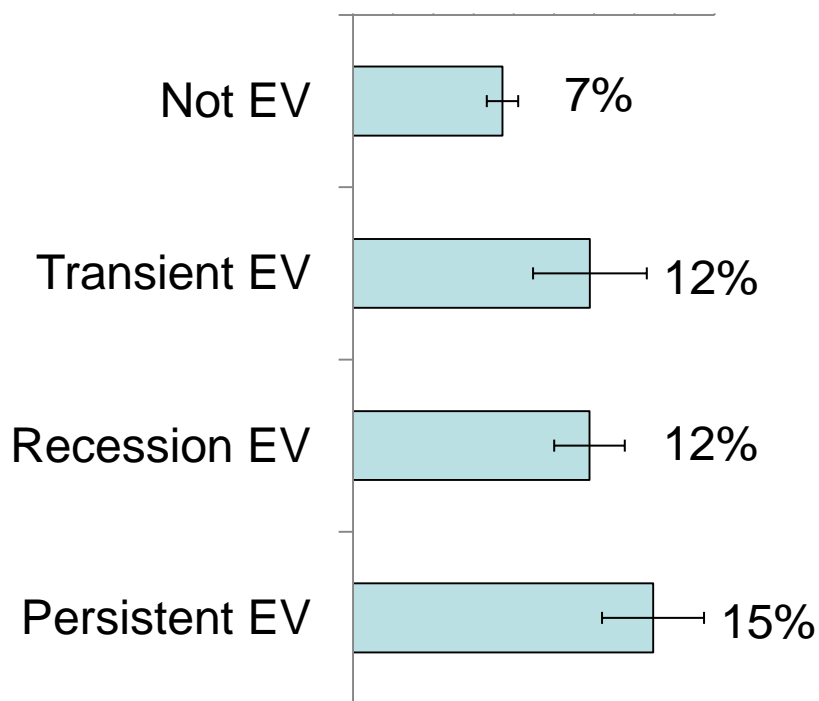
3a. Consequences for Children

- **Child socio-emotional development: Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ, Goodman et al. 1997)**
 - Designed to assess emotional health & problem behaviours among children and young people.
 - Included measures of emotional problems, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship problems
 - Questionnaire completed by Primary Care Giver (PCG, usually the child's mother)
- **Used to identify group at risk of socio-emotional problems (top 10 per cent of cases)**



3b. EV & Socio-emotional Difficulties

Adjusted Risk of Socio-emotional Problems by Economic Vulnerability



Adjusted risk = from model, other characteristics controlled:

child gender, cohort, family type, PCG education, PCG age at child's birth, change in family composition (e.g. separation, additional children)

- **EV has similar association with socio-emotional problems for ...**
 - the two cohorts and
 - for boys and girls.

3c. Protective Factors

‘Protective’ factors for both EV and non-EV children

- **Children less likely to have socio-emotional problems where ...**
 - **Mother in 30s** at child’s birth
 - **Mother not emotionally distressed** (at wave 1)
 - **Good relationship between parents** in couple families (vs. couple with problems)

Protective factors that differ by presence/ absence of EV:

- **Mother education - even more important in EV families (Lower education has more negative impact in EV families.)**
- **Lone parent families: SDQ high whether or not family is EV**



4a. Summary

- **Economic Vulnerability (EV) increased for families during recession (reaching 25%)**
- **Risk factors for EV include low levels of education, lone parenthood, younger parents at child's birth**
 - Risk factors more strongly related to Persistent EV
 - 'Recession EV' group had less disadvantaged profile
- **EV associated with higher risk of child socio-emotional problems**
 - In lone parent families risk was high with/without EV
- **Protective factors: parental education, mother in 30s at birth of child, good relationship between parents in couple family, parental emotional wellbeing,**



4b. Policy Implications

- **Attention to economic vulnerability of children warranted, especially persistent vulnerability**
 - But even non-persistent EV linked to negative outcomes
- **High risk groups identified (family type, parental education and age)**
- **A broader group became vulnerable in the recession**
 - Need for policies to address wider issues
 - Not just income support but childcare, housing



Thank You.