



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

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# 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**

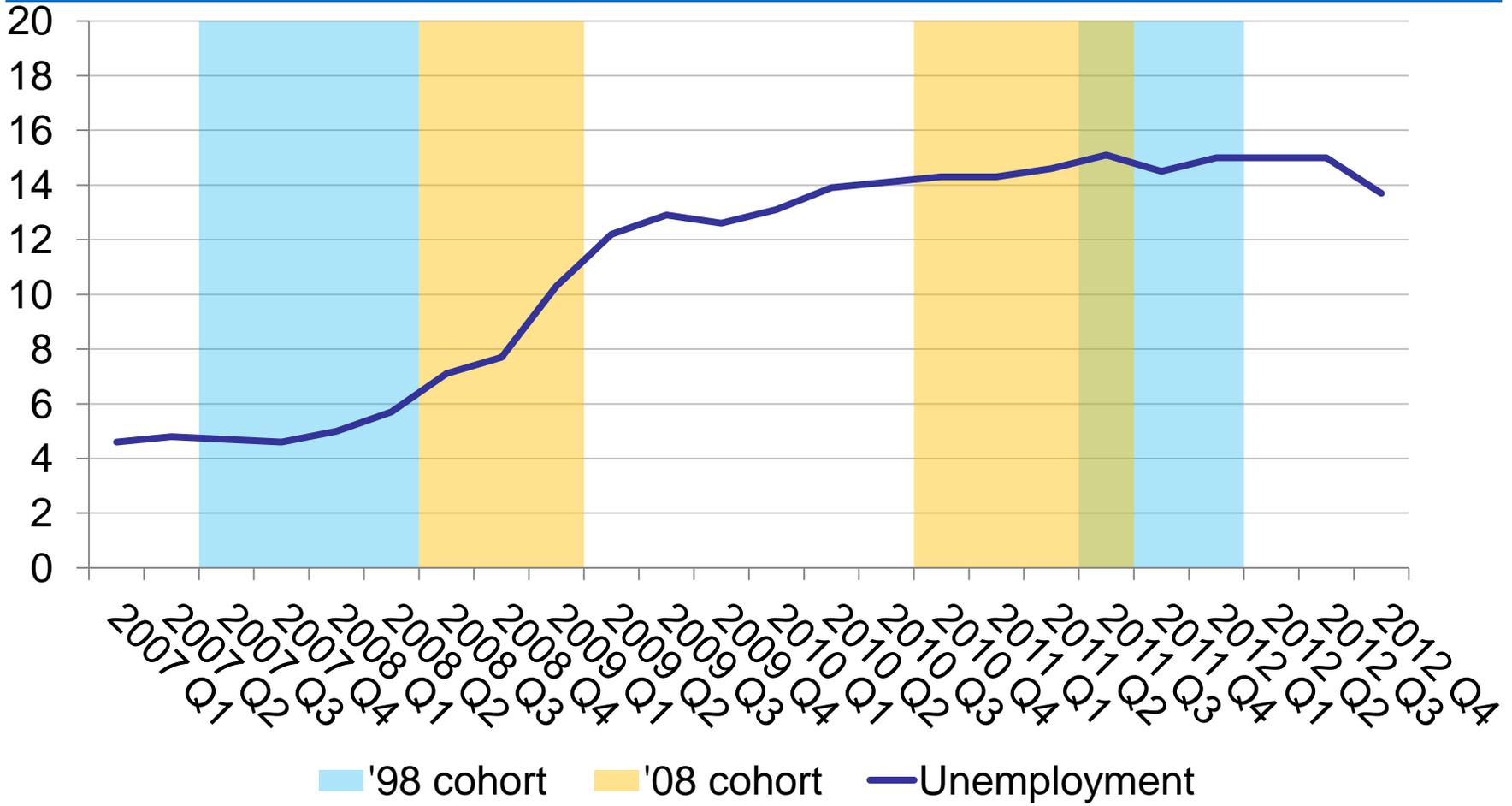


# 1a. Data and Measures

- **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.**

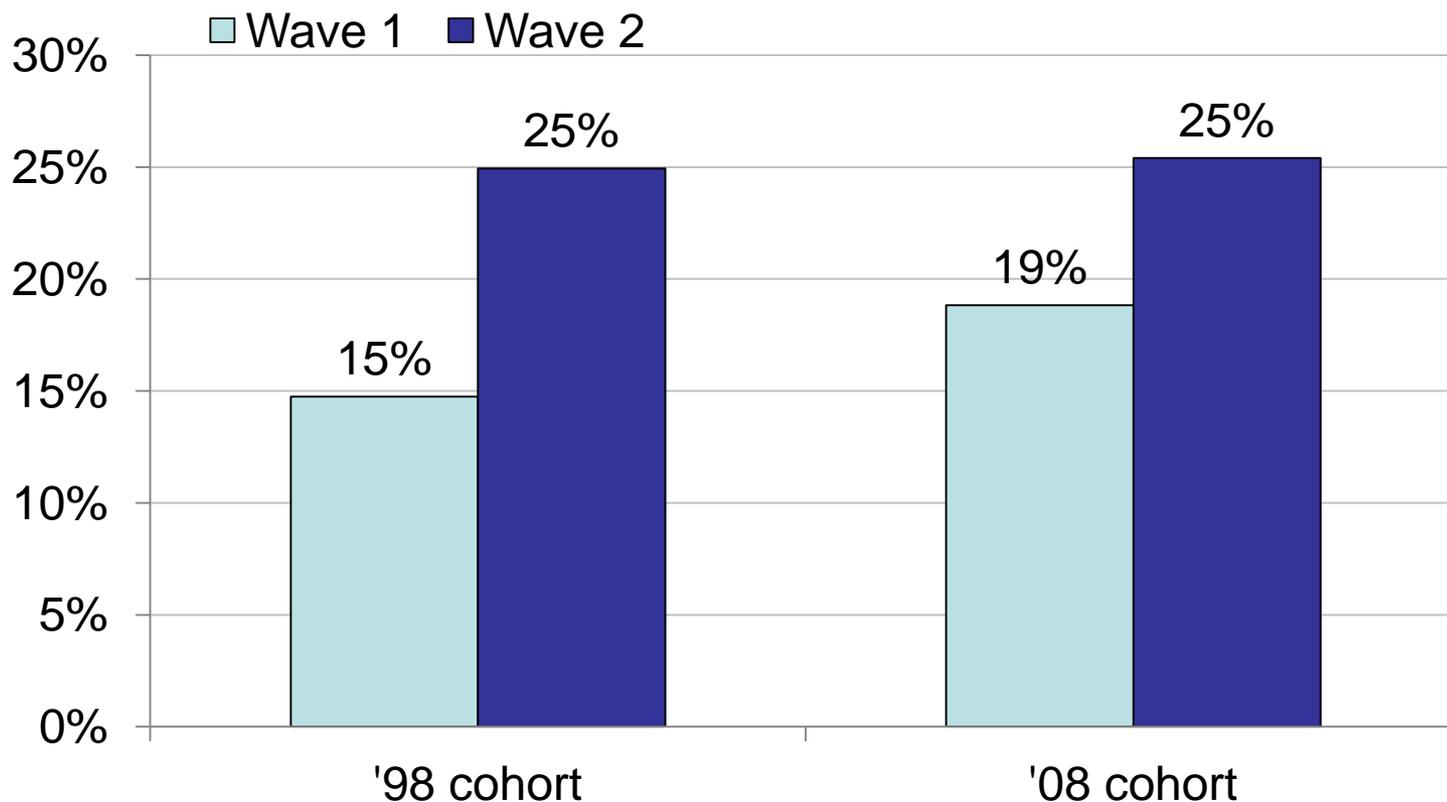


# 1b. GUI – Timing of Fieldwork & Recession





## 2a. Economic Vulnerability (EV) in Irish families



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

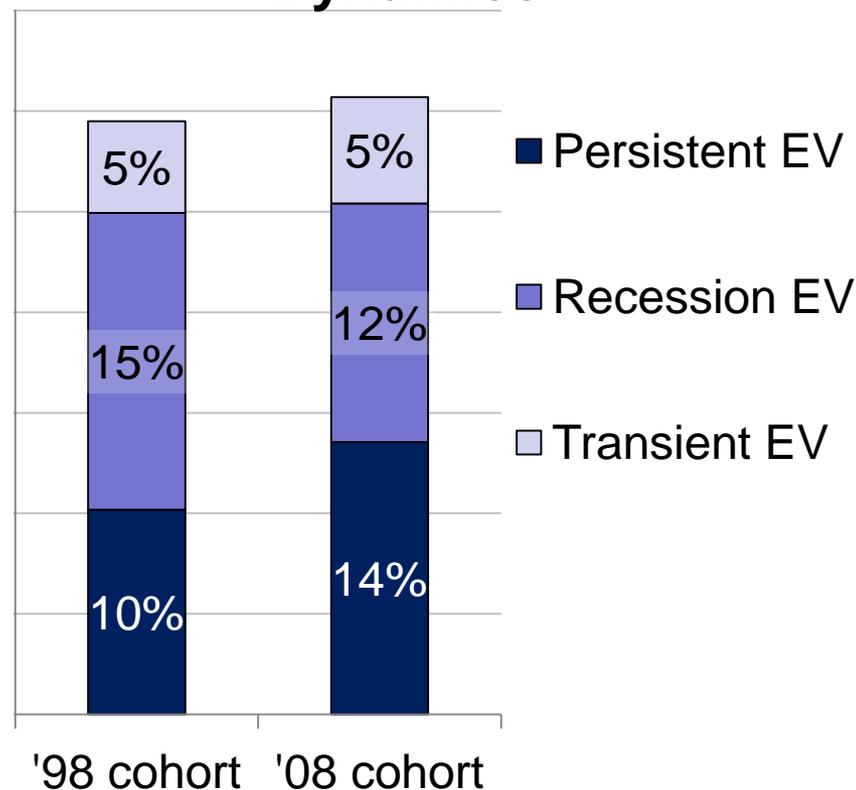


## 2b. Economic Vulnerability Dynamics –

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



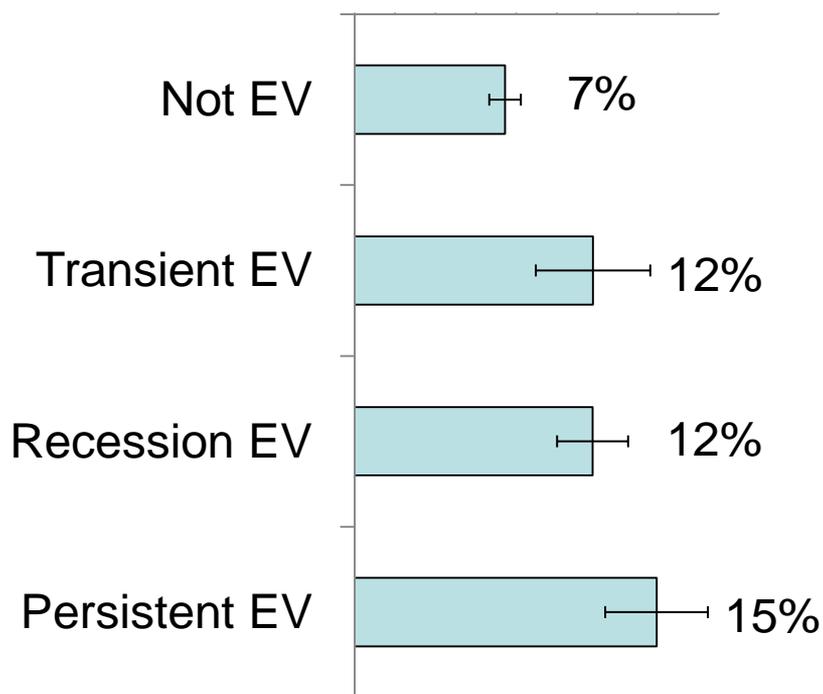
## 3a. Consequences for Children

- **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.**