



# Family Stability: The effects of the economic crisis on families

Carmel Hannan and Ross MacMillan  
Department of Sociology, University of Limerick

11<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Research  
Conference  
2019

# Research Questions

## 1. What is Family? What are Families?

What do they do?

Who is in “the family”?

**Families are located in a socioeconomically stratified societal structure**

## 2. How do families cope with shocks? Risk and protective factors.

Dynamic

Dyadic

# Families as Social Structure

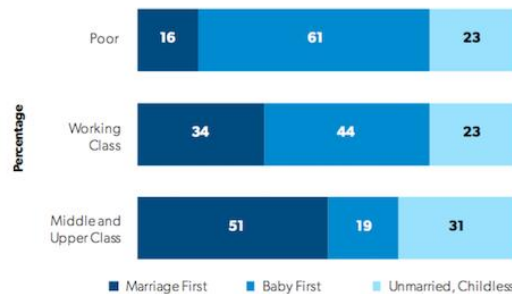
Lots of dimensions but two dominant descriptives in sociological thinking are

- 1. Class** (Engels, Parsons, Kohn, Gerson, Straus, Hartmann, Lareau)
  - How does position in socioeconomic orders shape what families are and what families do?
  
- 2. Family structure** (Astone, McLanahan, Waite, Carlson, Thomson, Ermisch, Amato, Brown, Cherlin, Ruggles)
  - Who is in families and what do they do?
    - Network ties, interactions, contributions, extractions

# Class and Family Structure

- Huge body of work looks at the relationship between class and family structure e.g. the marriage divide

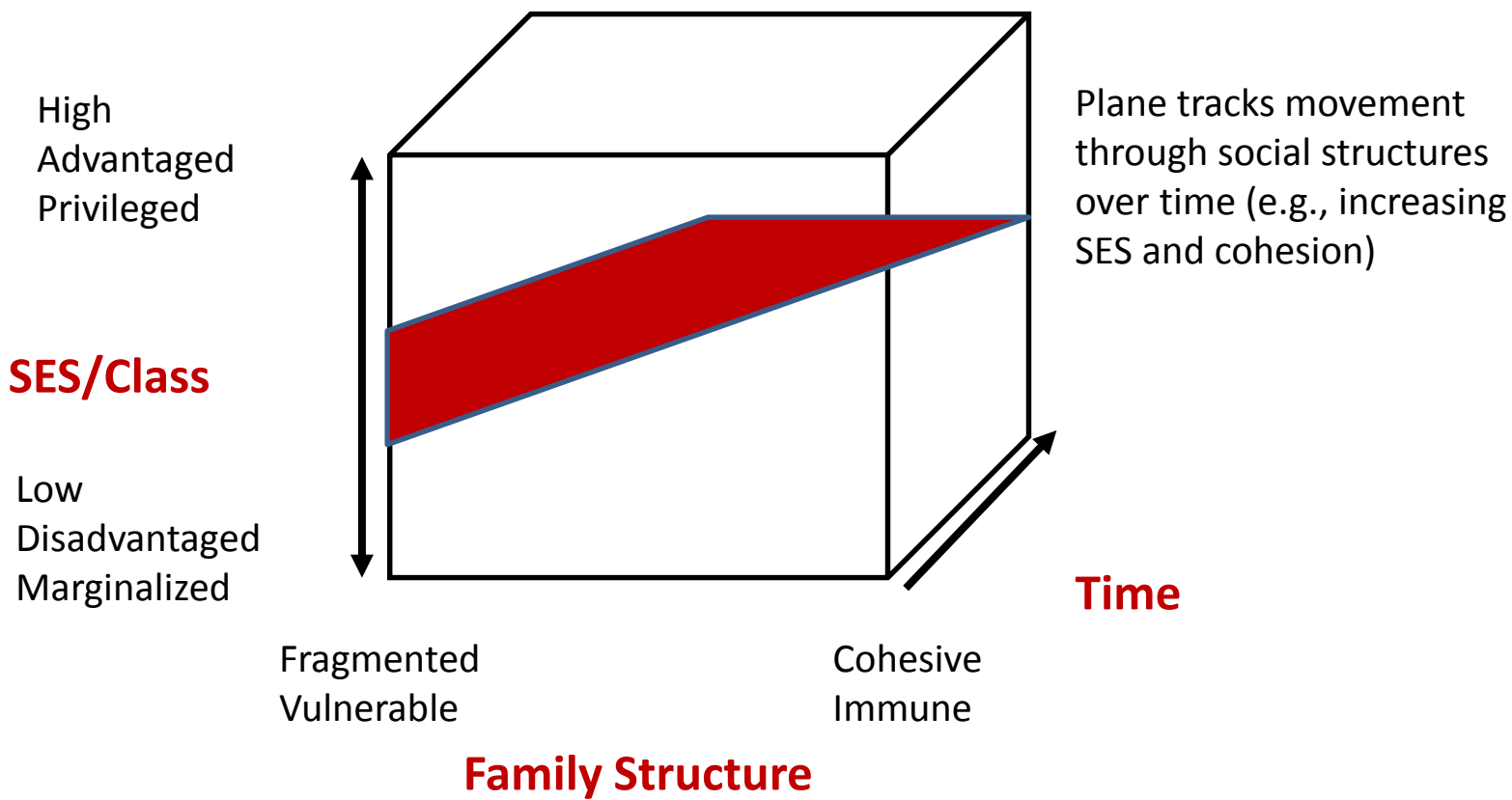
Figure 7. Millennials' Family Paths, by Class



IFS, 2017

Note: The data are based on adults surveyed in 2013-14. "Marriage first" includes those who had children after marriage, regardless of their current marital status or who are currently married but do not have children. "Baby first" refers to those who had children before marriage or outside marriage, regardless of their current marital status. Class is based on education and family income adjusted by family size. Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1997, <https://www.nlsinfo.org/content/cohorts/nlsy97>.

- Clearly, they are related but the relationship is highly variable and often dependent upon third variables e.g. race (Allen, Putnam, Edin, McLanahan, Rainwater)
- So we can think about them as intersecting social structures



# The Cube

## Class structure

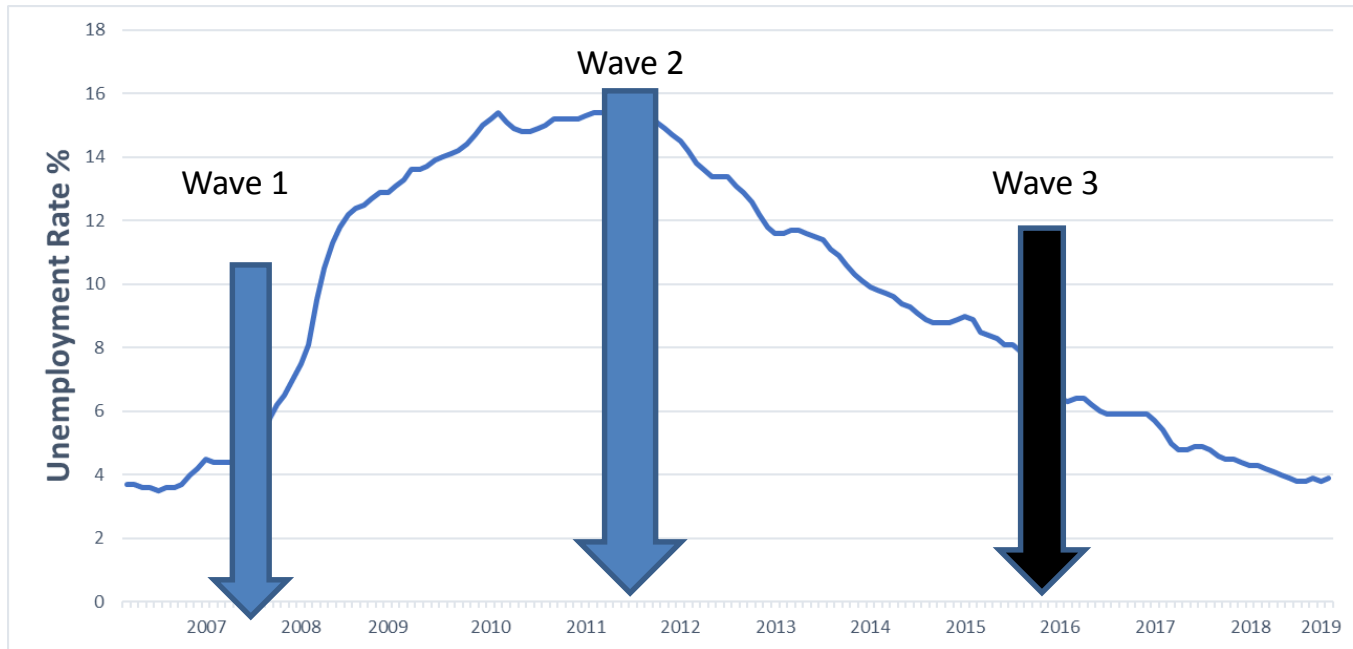
- High versus low – social, cultural and economic capital (Lareau)
- Advantaged versus disadvantaged – resource based (Pollak, DiPrete)
- Privileged versus marginalized – Families are located in a socioeconomically stratified societal structure (Bourdieu)

## Family structure

- Fragmented versus cohesive – family ties and strength of ties/family systems (Olson)
- Vulnerable versus immune/resilient – adaptability (Hawley)

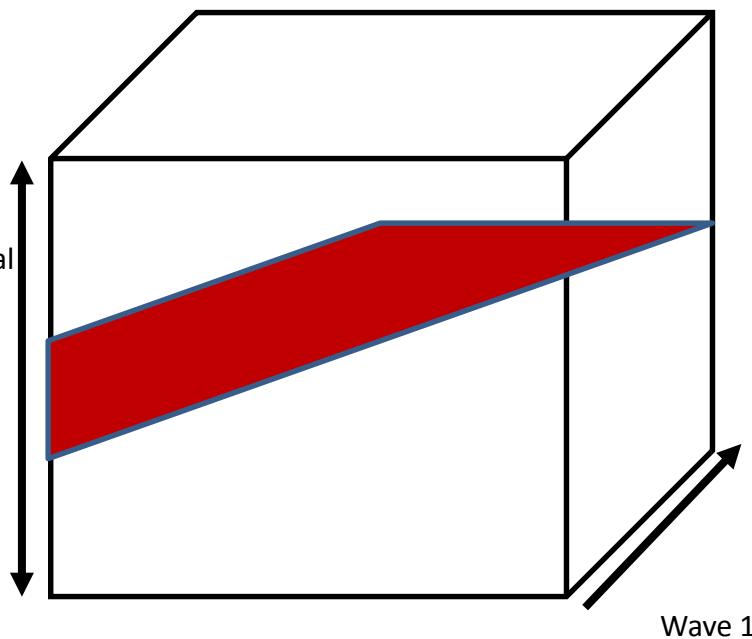
**Family resilience:** “describes the path a family follows as it adapts and prospers in the face of stress, **both in the present and over time**. Resilient families respond positively to these conditions in unique ways, depending on the context, developmental level, the interactive combination of risk and protective factors, and the family’s shared outlook” (Hawley and DeHaan 1996, p. 293).

# GUI Child Cohort



**Family Social Class**

- Professional
- Managerial and technical
- Non-manual
- Skilled manual
- Semi-skilled
- Unskilled
- Occupation unknown
- No class info



Recession period

Wave 2

**Time**

Wave 1

- Parent's status
- SibSize
- Household members (grandparent)

**Family Structure**



# Latent Class Approach (SPSS Gold)

- Latent classes estimated within and across time (W1 and W2) to **show stability and change** in positions within social structures
- **Data reduction strategy** that identifies underlying construct (family clusters) that generates (multiple) observed indicators
- Indicators based on our 2 dimensions: social class position and family/HH structure
- GOF based on BIC/LL statistics generate the minimum intrinsic set of classes that are not redundant
- Class-specific values and probabilities indicate the **empirical structure** of classes

Family Cluster	Prevalence % (N=7523)	Main Feature
<b>Class 1*</b>	<b>35.9</b>	<b>Managerial and technical</b>
<b>Class 2</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>Professionals</b>
<b>Class 3</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>Non-manual</b>
<b>Class 4*</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>Skilled/semi-skilled</b>
Class 7	3.3	Intact family one child
Class 8	2.6	Lone-parent one child
Class 5*	7.8	Lone-parent with more than one child
Class 6*	3.5	Blended families
Class 9	2.5	Father PCG
Class 10	1.2	Stem Family
Class 11	0.8	Lone parent & granny

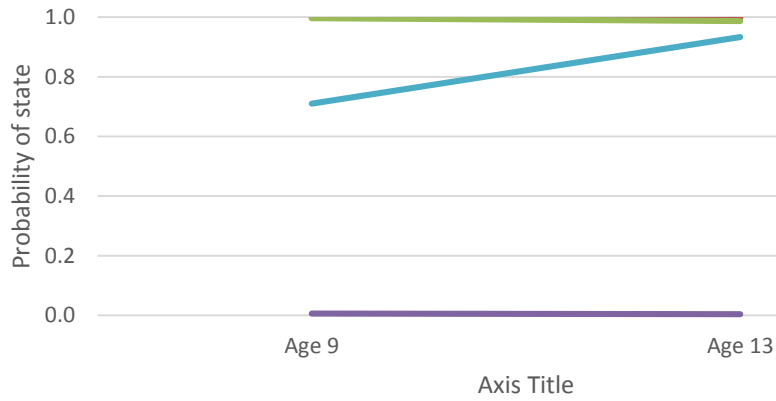
# Overall Results

Stability

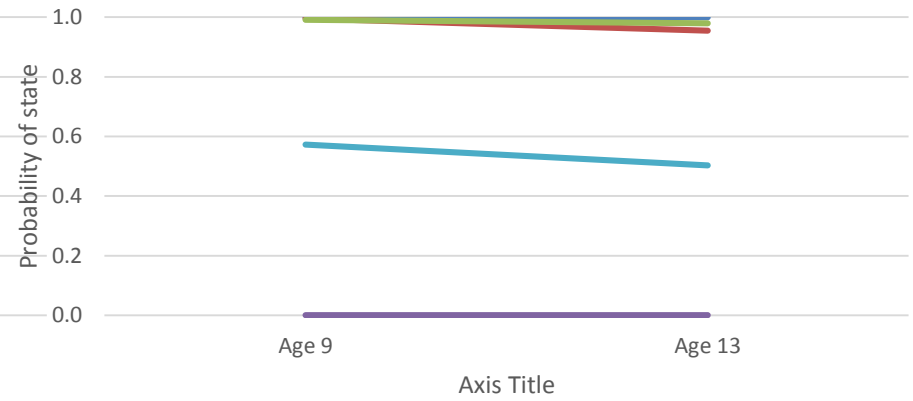
Traditional  
family  
structures  
prevail

# Family Stability

Cluster 1  
Prevalence 36%



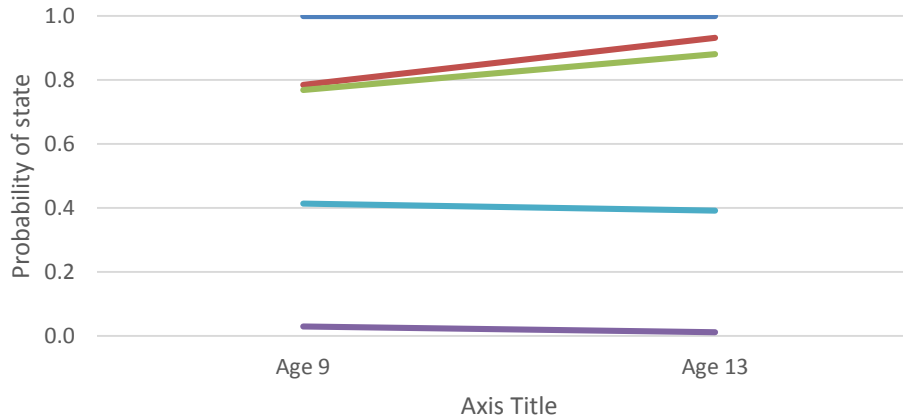
Cluster 4  
Prevalence 13%



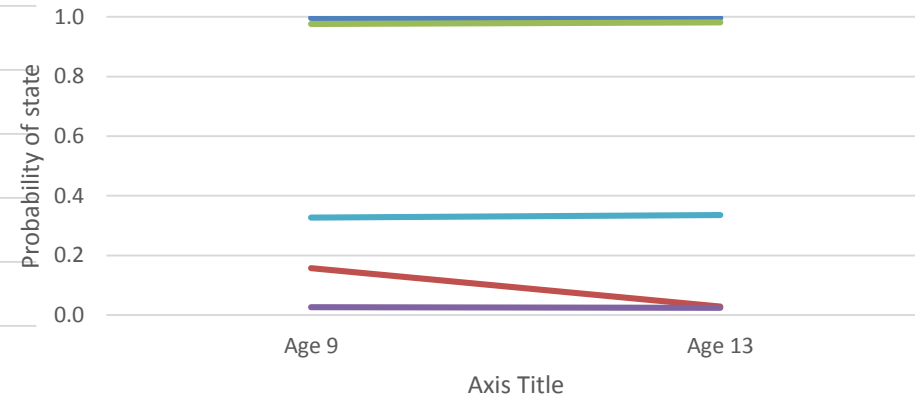
— Mother  
 — Father  
 — >1 SibSize  
 — Grandparent  
 — Managerial  
 — Mother  
 — Father  
 — >1 SibSize  
 — Grandparent  
 — Skilled Manual

# Family Change

Cluster 6 Blended Families  
Prevalence 3.5%



Cluster 5 Lone Parent  
Prevalence 8%

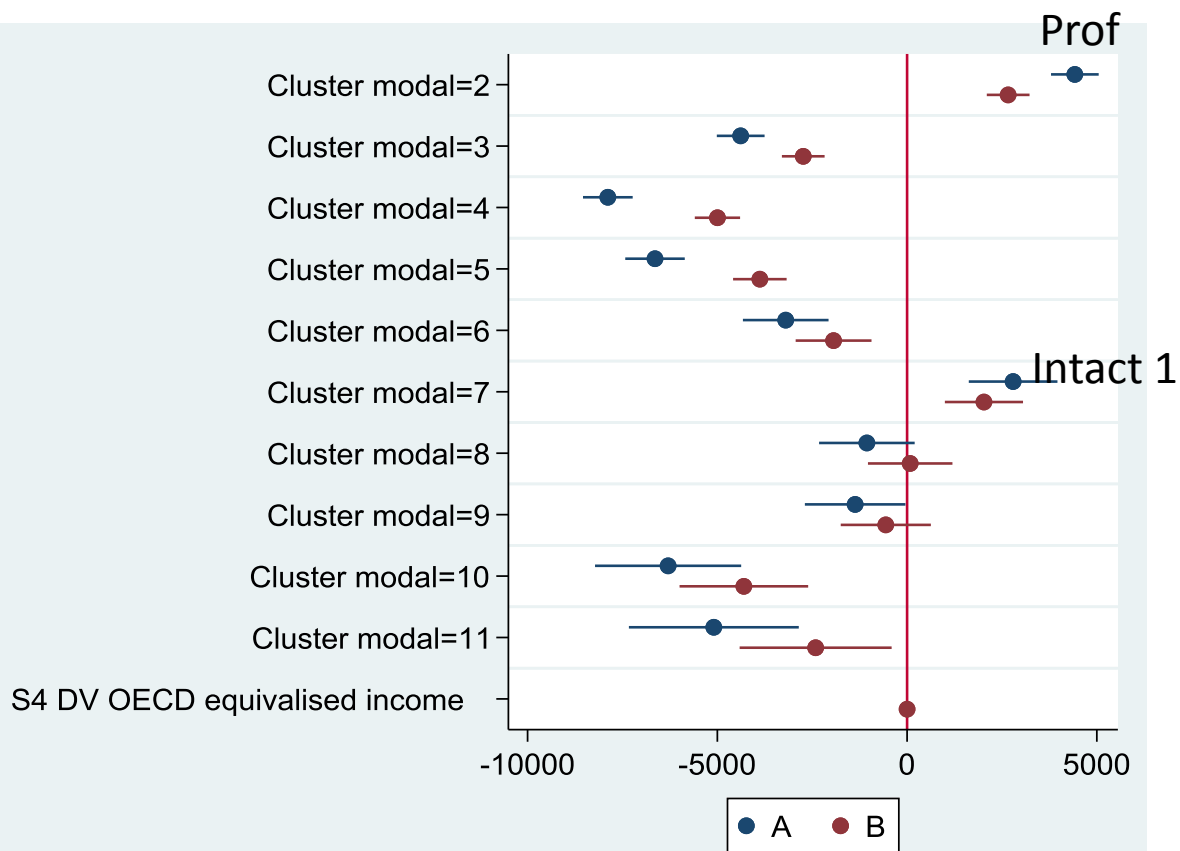


— Mother 
 — Step Dad 
 — >1 SibSize 
 — Grandparent 
 — Prof/Managerial 
 — Mother 
 — Father 
 — >1 SibSize 
 — Grandparent 
 — No Social Class

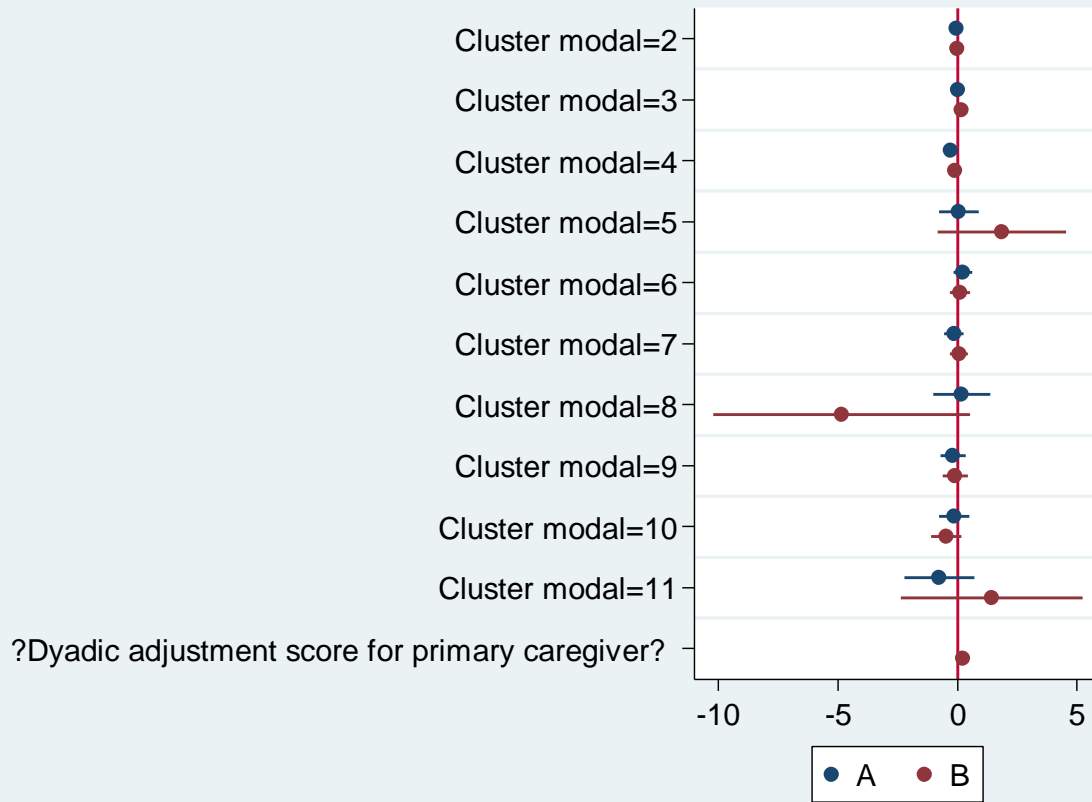
# Why does this matter?

We model a series of outcomes in wave 2 (age 13) based on family class position (model A)

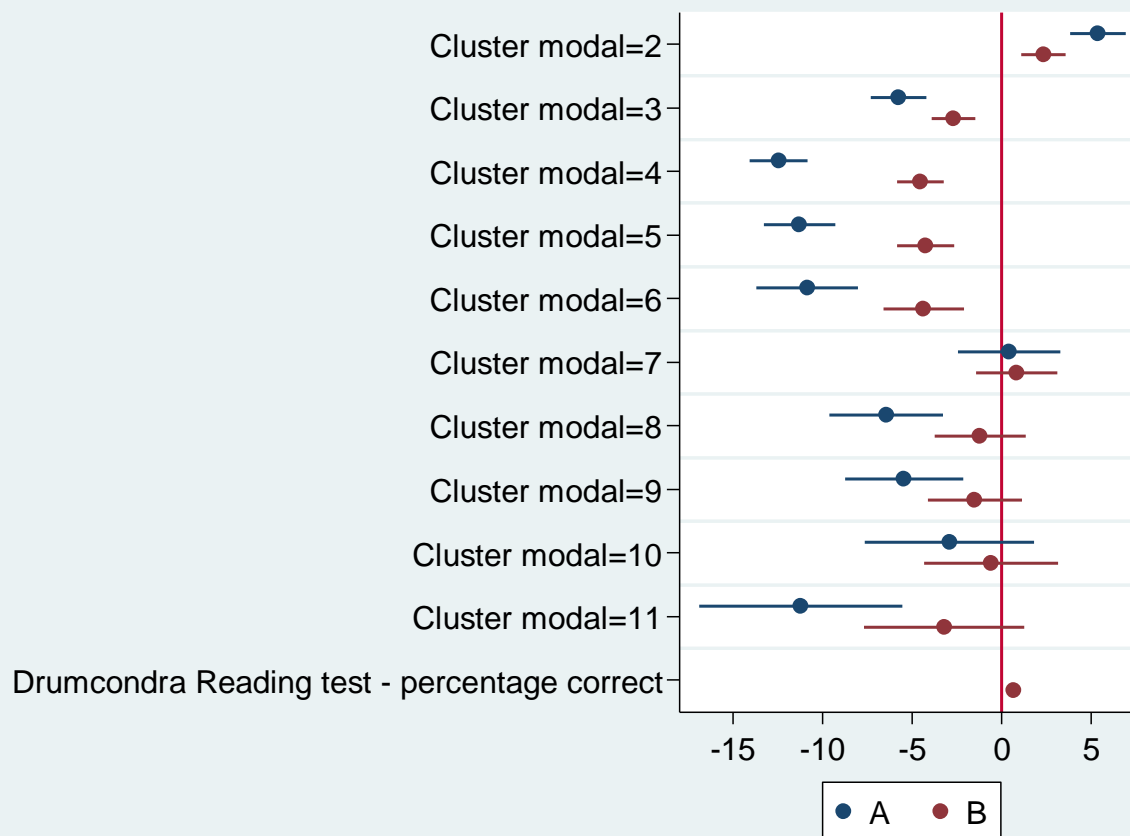
We model them again while controlling for outcomes in wave 1, at age 9 (model B)



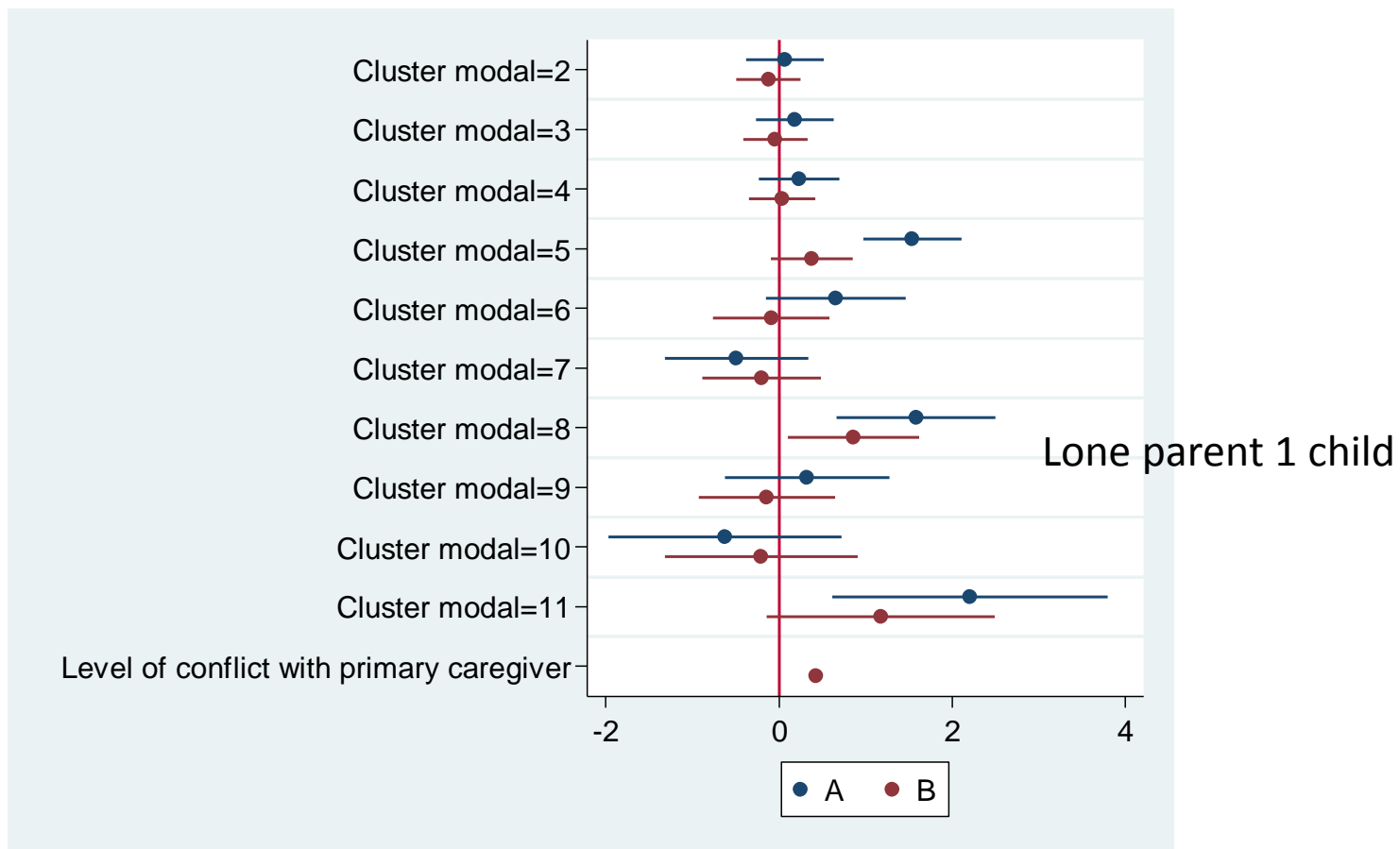
# Marital Conflict



# Child Outcome (Reading Test)



# Child Outcome (Pianta Conflict)





# Discussion

- The majority of families maintained their basic position within the social structure over time.
- In other words, initial locations in class and family structures are important.
  - Shaping susceptibility to economic shocks on both domains simultaneously.
  - Produces cycles of accumulating risk or resilience over time
- In terms of outcomes, the implications of change over time are variable.
- Collectively, these classes give shape to the broad social context of the children with implications for success in education

Thank You

[carmel.hannan@ul.ie](mailto:carmel.hannan@ul.ie)

[ross.macmillan@ul.ie](mailto:ross.macmillan@ul.ie)