Introduction

- Great Recession has increased poverty in Ireland
- Poverty has a range of negative effects on children
  - Including emotional, educational, and health outcomes
  - Especially persistent poverty, poverty in early childhood
- Much of the research from the US – a different context
- We draw on the first two waves of the Growing Up in Ireland study, for both the infant and child cohorts, to ask
  - How did the recession affect material circumstances of families?
  - Does the impact of poverty on child outcomes differ for younger and older children (socio-emotional development)?
  - Is persistent poverty more harmful than transient poverty?
  - Are there factors that protect children in context of poverty?
Outline

• Data and fieldwork
• Economic Vulnerability (EV) as an indicator of poverty, broadly understood
• Risk of EV overall (i.e. in either wave)
• Risk of Persistent EV and of Becoming EV in Wave 2
  – Profile of those who are EV in W1 and in W2
• EV and Socio-Emotional Development
• Summary and Implications
- Draw on two waves of GUI for the two cohorts:
  - Infant (‘08) cohort, most of whom born in 2008
  - Data collected at age 9 months and age 3 years
  - N=9,793 families in both waves

  - Child (‘98) cohort, most of whom born in 1998
  - Data collected at age 9 years and 13 years
  - N=7,423 families in both waves
Economic vulnerability (EV): an increased risk of material disadvantage, as indicated by:
- low income,
- household joblessness &
- economic stress.

(Latent Class Analysis; EV group identified within each wave and cohort)

Increase in EV over time:
- '08 cohort: from 19% to 25%
- '98 cohort: from 15% to 25%
Models of Risk of EV

- Logit Models, weighted data, robust standard errors
- Examine risk by family characteristics at first wave:
  - Family type (one- or two-parent, cohabiting, number of children)
  - Education of primary care giver (PCG),
  - Age of PCG at birth of child
  - Cohort
- Used to calculate expected % EV controlling for these characteristics
Results: Model-Estimated Risk of EV, overall (in either wave)

Family Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Type</th>
<th>PCG age at birth &amp; Education</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-parent, 1 child</td>
<td>Under 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-parent, 2+ children</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-parent, one child</td>
<td>25-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-parent, 2 children</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-parent, 3+ children</td>
<td>30-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>35-39</td>
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<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cohabiting couple</td>
<td>Lo 2nd or less</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upr. 2nd - Lo 3rd</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upper 3rd</td>
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<td></td>
<td>16%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Did Risk of Economic Vulnerability differ by Cohort?

- Higher risk of economic vulnerability for the ‘08 cohort because W1 fieldwork took place after start of recession.

- Some characteristics had a weaker association with EV for the ‘98 cohort (older children):
  - *PCG education (upper 2\textsuperscript{nd} level vs. 3\textsuperscript{rd} level)
  - *PCG younger at child’s birth
  - Lone parenthood
  - *Larger family size (3+ children)

- * More common in ‘98 cohort – weaker link to EV
  - For instance, when parents of the ‘98 cohort were leaving school, fewer people went on to third level;
  - The ‘98 cohort families tend to be at a later stage of family formation so more of them have 3 or more children;
Risk of Persistent EV and Risk of Becoming EV in Recession

- **Risk of persistent economic vulnerability (i.e. EV in both waves)**
  - even *more* strongly associated with lone parenthood, and PCG lower levels of education than transient (one wave) vulnerability

- **Risk of becoming economically vulnerable in Wave 2 (vs. being vulnerable in wave 1)**
  - *less* strongly associated with lone parenthood, PCG lower level of education, and PCG age at child’s birth.
  - Recession affected a broader group than those EV in wave one;
  - Implication for profile of EV families
    - More two-parent families and families where the PCG had higher levels of education were drawn into EV as a result of the recession
Profile of the Economically Vulnerable

‘08 (Infant) Cohort

PCG <30 at birth
- W1: 55%
- W2: 51%

One-parent family
- W1: 48%
- W2: 36%

2-parent family (all)
- W1: 52%
- W2: 64%

2-parent, 3+ children
- W1: 22%
- W2: 27%

PCG Educ 1
- W1: 48%
- W2: 42%

‘98 (Child) Cohort

PCG <30 at birth
- W1: 60%
- W2: 52%

One-parent family
- W1: 58%
- W2: 33%

2-parent family (all)
- W1: 42%
- W2: 67%

2-parent, 3+ children
- W1: 28%
- W2: 40%

PCG Educ 1
- W1: 56%
- W2: 51%
Measuring socio-emotional development (SDQ)

- Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman et al. 1997)
  - Designed to assess emotional health & problem behaviours among children and young people.
- Completed by primary care giver (PCG)
- Four sub-scales used here:
  - emotional problems,
  - conduct problems,
  - hyperactivity/inattention and
  - peer relationship problems
- Used to identify group at risk of socio-emotional problems (score of 17 or over out of 40)
  - Results replicated with scale dichotomised at top 10%
**EV & Socio-emotional development**

- **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)

- **Model-estimated Risk of Socio-emotional Problems by Economic Vulnerability**
  - Neither wave: 4%
  - Wave 1 only: 6%
  - Wave 2 only: 7%
  - Both waves: 10%

- **Not significantly different**

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

- Factors intervening between EV & socio-emotional problems?
- Do children in EV families benefit from ‘protective’ factors
  - (e.g. both parents present, PCG higher education)

- Additional indicators:
  - PCG emotional distress (measured by CESD scale)
  - Quality of relationship between parents, in 2-parent families (measured using Dyadic Adjustment Scale)
Both EV and non-EV children are less likely to have socio-emotional problems where ...

- PCG in 30s at child’s birth
- PCG had third level education
- PCG was not emotionally distressed in wave 1
Protective and Intervening Factors that differ depending on whether or not EV (2)

- **Non-economically vulnerable:**
  - Lower risk of socio-emotional problems in 2-parent family with good relationship
  - No difference between 1-parent family and 2-parent family with problem relationship

- **Economically vulnerable:**
  - Differences by family type are not statistically significant
  - Protective effect of good relationship between parents is weak or absent in context of economic vulnerability

### High SDQ %- Interactions with economic vulnerability (EV)

- **Not economically vulnerable:**
  - 1-parent: 7%
  - 2-parent, r'ship problems: 5%
  - 2-parent, good r'ship: 3%

- **Economically vulnerable:**
  - 1-parent: 9%
  - 2-parent, r'ship problems: 11%
  - 2-parent, good r'ship: 7%
Summary

- Economic Vulnerability (EV) increased for both cohorts
  - Reaching 25% by W2
- EV associated with lone parenthood, lower levels of education, PCG being younger at child’s birth
  - Risk factors more strongly related to persistent EV
  - Those becoming EV by W2 had less disadvantaged profile
- EV increases risk of socio-emotional problems
  - Persistent EV had a stronger impact than transient EV
  - Even in EV families, outcomes improved where PCG emotionally well, has higher level of education, in 30s at birth
  - Family type / relationship - different pattern for EV & non-EV families
  - Could see patterns in terms of ‘protective factors’ or ‘risk factors’
Policy Implications

• Attention to economic vulnerability of children warranted, especially persistent vulnerability

• High risk groups included lone parents, parents with lower levels of education, younger parents
  – Core policy issues: income support, education and training, support for job search
  – Optimal mix of income support and support for employment
  – Child care likely to be a particular issue for lone parents

• Those becoming vulnerable as result of recession were a broader group
  – Need for policies to address wider issues – childcare and housing
Thank you!