



Family economic vulnerability in the great recession: Dynamics & links to child socio-emotional development

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***Family economic vulnerability in the Great
Recession:
Dynamics & links to child socio-emotional
development***

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Importance of Child Poverty

- 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

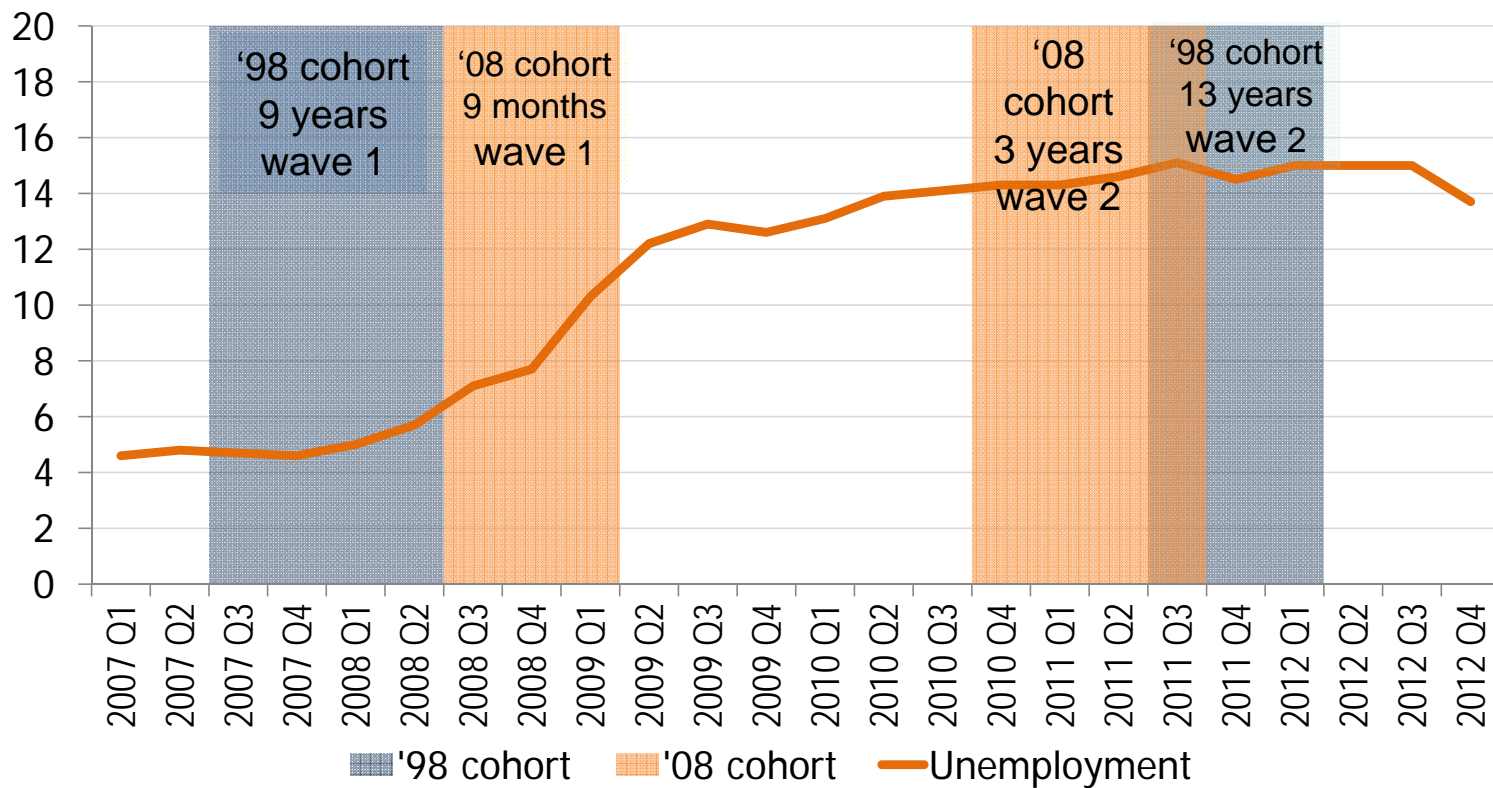
1. Data and Measures
2. Economic Vulnerability dynamics
3. Consequences for children's socio-emotional development
4. Conclusions and Implications



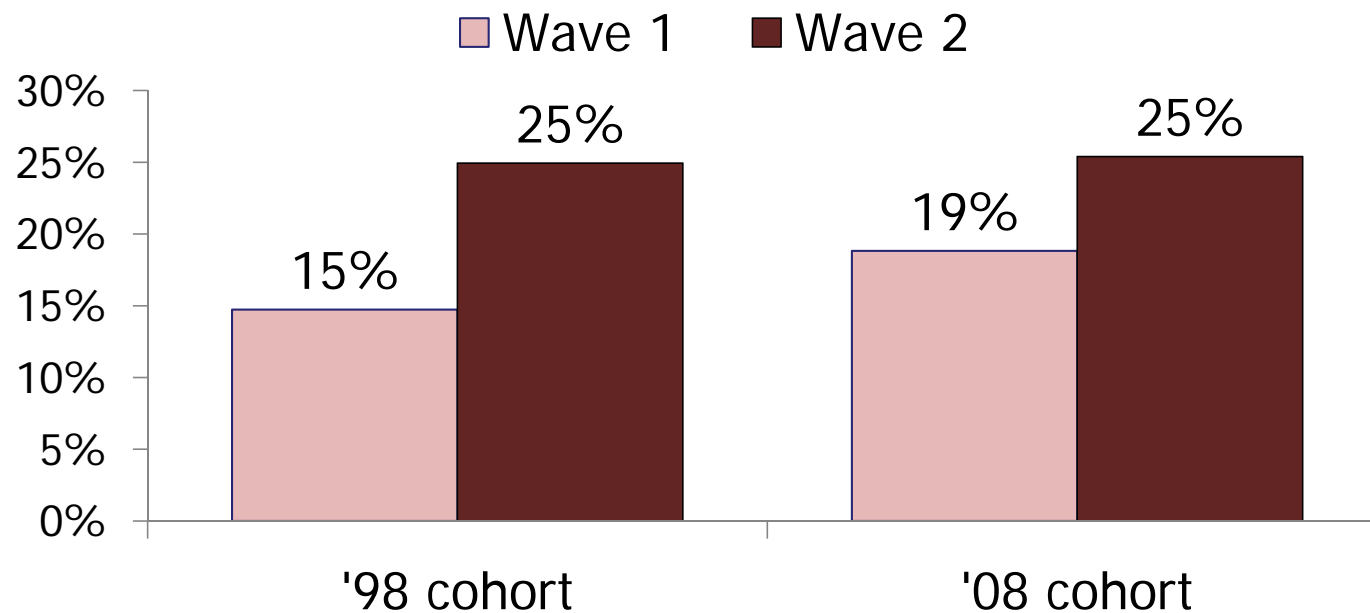
1a. Data and Measures

- Growing Up in Ireland Survey (GUI) – survey of families with children. Two waves and Two cohorts –
 - One born in 1998 (child aged 9 at first wave in 2007-8; 7,423 families responded in both waves)
 - One born in 2008 (child aged 9 mo. at first wave in 2008-9; 9,793 families responded in both waves)
- **Economic Vulnerability** (GUI): people living in a HH with a disadvantaged risk profile in terms low income, household joblessness and economic stress.
 - Identify the vulnerable group using latent class analysis.

1b. GUI – Timing of Fieldwork & Recession



2a. Economic Vulnerability (EV) in Irish families

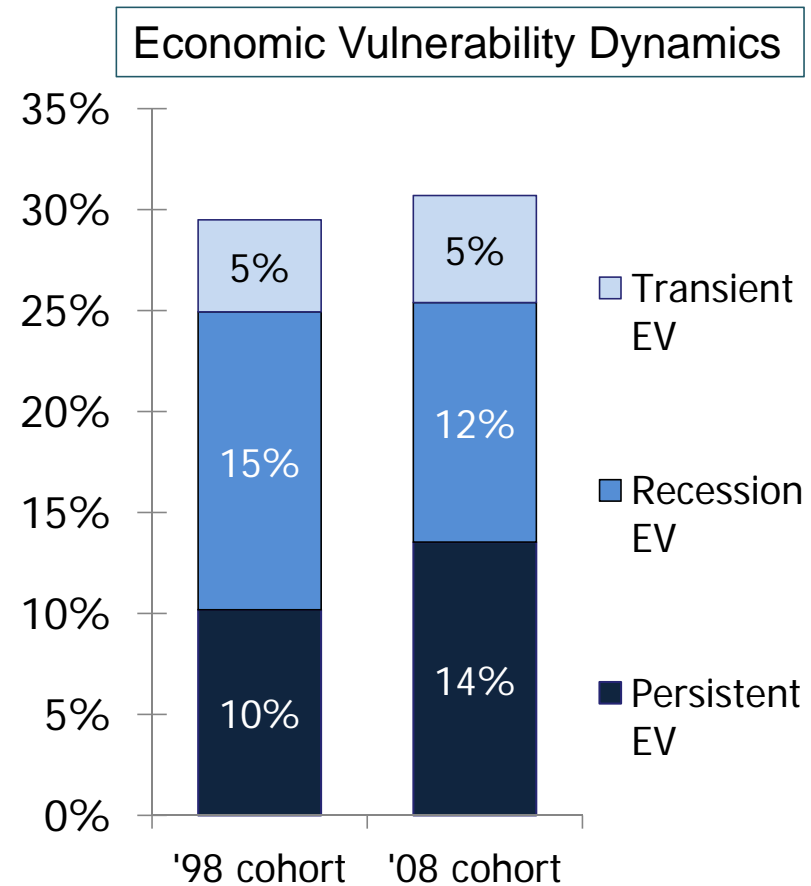


- Difference between the cohorts mainly due to timing of 1st wave (before vs. at start of recession).

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**



2c. Risk factors for Economic Vulnerability

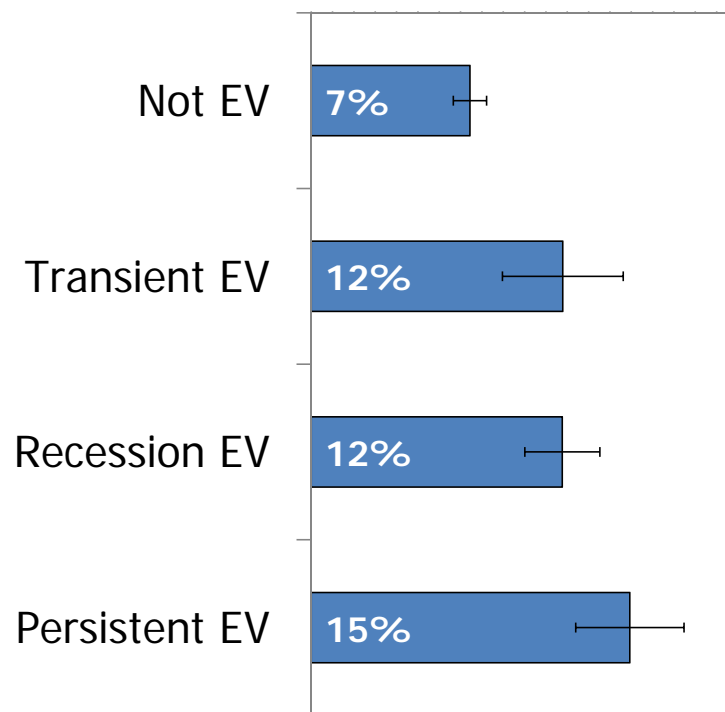
- Parental Education: Primary care-giver (PCG) lower education
- Family type: higher rate of EV for
 - Lone parent families
 - Larger families
 - Cohabiting couples vs. married couples
- Age of PCG: PCG younger at child's birth
- Differences by whether EV Persistent or 'Recession'
 - Associations are 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, with 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

- There are **'protective' factors** for both EV and non-EV children
- Children less likely to have socio-emotional problems where ...
 - **PCG in 30s** at child's birth
 - **PCG not emotionally distressed** (at wave 1)
 - **Good relationship between parents** in couple families (vs. couple with problems)
- **Some protective factors differ by presence/absence of EV:**
 - **PCG education** - even more important in EV families (Lower PCG 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
 - Those becoming EV in recession had less disadvantaged profile
- EV associated with higher risk of child socio-emotional problems
 - Except in lone parent families where risk was high with/without EV
- Protective factors: parental emotional wellbeing, parental higher level of education, mother in 30s at birth of child, good relationship between parents in couple family

4b. Policy Implications

- Attention to economic vulnerability of children warranted, especially persistent vulnerability
 - But even non-persistent EV linked to negative outcomes
 - Child-specific poverty targets established in Ireland in 2014
- High risk groups identified (family type, education, parental age)
- A broader group became vulnerable in recession
 - Need for policies to address wider issues
 - Not just income support but childcare, housing



Thank You.