Social risk and social class patterns in poverty and quality of life in Ireland

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Background

- Certain groups have a higher risk of poverty and deprivation
  - Lone parents, people with a disability, children, young adults
- How did this change from 2004 to 2013?
- Do these groups also have problems with other dimension of quality of life (QoL) – health, housing, mental health?

- Data & measurement
  - SILC, 2004-2013
  - Special Module on QoL in 2013
Outline

- Social risk groups and social classes – defining, sizes;
- Trends in poverty and deprivation from 2004-2013
- Trends in Deprivation for social risk groups and social classes
- Quality of Life in 2013 – differences by social risk and social class
- Summary
- Implications
Social Risk Groups and Social Classes

- Social risk groups: differ in capacity to reach an adequate standard of living through the market because of barriers to labour market access
  - Barriers associated with life cycle stage (children, people above retirement age, young adults)
  - Or with disability or parenting alone

- Social Classes: groups that differ in their life chances because of different power in the market
  - Due to ownership of assets (e.g. employers, self-employed)
  - Or differing skills (especially professionals, but also technical skills)
  - Or occupying a position of trust (the ‘service class’ of high level managers and administrators)
Sizes of social risk groups, 2004 - 2013

- Lone parents: 4%
- Child of lone parent: 6%
- Working-age disabled adult (WD): 9%
- Child of WD: 4%
- Other children: 17%
- Other young adults (18-29): 15%
- Other working-age adults (30-65): 36%
- Other adults aged 66+: 11%
Sizes of social classes, 2004 - 2013

- Hi profess/manag: 17%
- Lo profess/manag: 22%
- Intermed/tech.: 14%
- Self-emp./farm: 11%
- Lo services/sales etc: 17%
- Unskilled & never worked: 18%
Trends in Poverty, Deprivation & Consistent Poverty

- Basic deprived
- Income Poor
- Consistently poor
Social Risk and Trends in Basic Deprivation

Note: Children of LP and of WD not shown, but pattern over time very similar to their parents.
Social Class and Trends in Basic Deprivation

- Higher professional/managerial
- Lower professional/managerial
- Intermediate/technician
- Self-employed & farm
- Lower service/technical
- Unskilled manual etc.

Are social class patterns in deprivation the same across social risk groups?

- Some overlap between social risk group & social class
  - e.g. Lone parents and people with disabilities more likely to be in lower social classes
  - But enough social class variation within social risk group to ask whether social class patterns differ by social risk group.

- In general, the social class differences are substantial in all social risk groups
  - The professional/managerial classes have a lower risk of deprivation than the unskilled working class in all social risk groups
  - But some differences, e.g. lone parents benefit less from higher social class position
Quality of Life Measurement

- QoL is **broader** than income poverty and deprivation
  - Includes dimensions such as health, housing, environment
- We focus on those with **multiple** (3+) QoL problems
- Ask whether we see the same differences in QoL as in deprivation by social risk group
- The method we use allows us to examine group differences in **level** and **composition** of QoL problems
  - Technical paper provides detail on method
- Data: EU-SILC 2013 for Ireland (special well-being module)
  - Adults aged 16+ interviewed directly (5,700 cases)
  - Assign to children the AHCR of parent
Eleven Indicators of QoL for Adults Interviewed Directly, 2013

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income poverty</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>Housing quality</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deprivation (lack 4+)</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>Neighbourhood problems</td>
<td>20.2</td>
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<td>Financial Strain</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>Institutional mistrust</td>
<td>16.1</td>
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<td>Poor health</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>Lack social support</td>
<td>6.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental distress</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>Lack of safety</td>
<td>12.2</td>
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<td>Crowding</td>
<td>17.3</td>
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Threshold: at what level on each indicator is a person considered to have a problem? as close as possible to the income poverty level for the population
Percentage of **Adults** Experiencing QoL Problems by Number of Dimensions

If we include children, 28% of people are in households affected by 3+ problems.
Decomposing QoL problems by Indicator
Of all the problems experienced by those with 3+ problems, what % are of each type

- Financial stress, 11%
- Mental distress, 11%
- Health, 11%
- Neighbourhood problems, 11%
- Housing quality, 10%
- Deprivation, 10%
- Institutional mistrust, 10%
- Crowding, 8%
- Income poverty, 7%
- Safety, 6%
- Social support, 4%
Decomposition of QoL problems by social risk

- Housing
- Mistrust
- Lack support
- Deprivation
- Neighbourhood
- Mental distress
- Poverty
- Financial stress
- Crowding
- Unsafe
- Poor health

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Decomposition of QoL problems by social class
Are social class patterns in QoL the same across social risk groups?

- In general, the social class differences are substantial in all social risk groups
  - Multiple (3+) QoL problems more common in the unskilled working class than professional/managerial classes in all social risk groups
  - But some differences, e.g. as in the case of deprivation, lone parents benefit less from higher social class position
  - For QoL, families of working-age people with disabilities and adults age 66+ also show less benefit from higher social class position.
Are social class patterns in QoL similar across social risk groups (1)

Dashed lines represent pattern constrained to be similar across social risk groups; Solid line – pattern allows to vary

Self employed/farm social class not shown (small N in some social risk groups)
Summary

- Impact of recession most visible in deprivation
  - Income poverty affected by falling threshold
- Deprivation increased for all social risk groups & classes
  - Highest for lone parent families & for people with a disability. High for unskilled social class.
- Both social risk group and social class matter
- 2013 QoL problems
  - Highest for people with a disability, lone parent families
  - Highest for unskilled social class
- Type of QoL problems – differs by social risk group
  - Health problems, lack of safety more an issue for older adults
  - Crowding, financial stress more an issue for families with children
Implications for Policy

- High level of deprivation and QoL problems among lone parents and people with disabilities
  - Specific focus needed on the labour market barriers they face
  - Policies such as childcare, flexible working arrangements, protection of secondary benefits as well as income support
- Multiple problems experienced by vulnerable groups – requires comprehensive measures
  - income support, inclusive labour markets & access to quality services.
- Lone parenthood and adult disability are associated with high poverty rates for children.
  - child poverty interventions should take account of the family context
Thank you!