

# Defining the breadline

## Is there a Northern Ireland consensus?



Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series  
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## Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK

### Participants

- University of Bristol
- Heriot-Watt University
- The Open University
- Queen's University Belfast
- University of Glasgow
- University of York



[www.poverty.ac.uk](http://www.poverty.ac.uk)

## Context

- International financial crisis
- 'Austerity' budgets in Europe
- Role of the UK state to be pegged back to a level of intervention below that in the United States
- Welfare Reform Act 2012
- Rising costs – fuel and food

## PSE project aims:

1. Improve the measurement of poverty, deprivation, social exclusion and standard of living.
2. Measure the change in the nature and extent of poverty and social exclusion over the past ten years.
3. Produce policy-relevant results about the causes and outcomes of poverty and social exclusion and how best to address these problems.

## PSE project aims – N. Ireland specific

1. The extent to which poverty and social exclusion vary across the nine dimensions of equality specified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998
2. to compare poverty levels East/West and North/South
3. To assess the impact of the legacies of the conflict on poverty and social exclusion

## PSE project activities:

1. Focus groups on basic necessities
2. Omnibus survey: opinion poll of necessities
3. Qualitative interviews: family networks
4. Main survey
5. Work with local communities and mass media (OU)

# PSE project activities

## Domains in Main Survey

Housing

Fuel poverty

Area/neighbourhood  
deprivation

Local services

Income change and  
indebtedness

Education & Parenting

Employment and working  
conditions

Health and disability

Time

Social networks and support

Necessities

Intra-household decisions

Poverty over time and subjective  
poverty

Subjective well-being  
(‘satisfaction’)

Harm, crime, criminalisation

Critical life events

Social and political engagement

Experience of the Troubles (N  
Ireland only)

# Why deprivation indicators?

1. UN Summit for Social Development 1995
2. Irish National Anti-Poverty Strategy 1997
  - 'Overall poverty' = low income
  - 'Consistent poverty' = low income + enforced deprivation
  - 2007: Two out of eleven items
3. EU 2009: three of nine items

Ireland 2007	EU 2009
Two pairs of strong shoes	To have a washing machine
A warm waterproof overcoat	To have a colour TV
Buy new not second-hand clothes	To have a car
Meat, chicken, fish (...) every second day	Meat, chicken, or fish every second day
Roast joint or its equivalent once a week	To have a telephone
Go without heating during the last year through lack of money	To pay for arrears (mortgage or rent, utility bills or hire purchase instalments)
Keep home adequately warm	Keep home adequately warm
Presents for family/friends at least once a year	
Replace any worn out furniture	Face unexpected expenses
Have family or friends for a drink or meal once a month	One week annual holiday away from home
Have a morning, afternoon or evening out in the last fortnight, for entertainment	



# What deprivation questions for Omnibus survey?

76 items (30 relating to children)

## Considerations:

- Comparisons with other surveys
- Standards and expectations change
- Expert views not always same as popular views
- Spectrum of living standards

## Main innovations:

‘all recommended dental work’

‘hair done or cut regularly’

‘table with chairs at which family can eat’

‘taking part in sport/exercise activities or classes’

# Results of Omnibus survey

## Adult items:

**11 items scored  $\geq$  75%**

including dental work, fresh fruit and veg daily

**12 items 55-74%**

including Church, table + chairs, sport/exercise, contents insurance

**4 items borderline majority**

including car, unexpected expense, shoes, new clothes

**10 items 35-44%**

including holiday, replace furniture, presents, haircut

**9 items 30% or below**

including computer, internet, out socially, dishwasher

# Results of Omnibus survey

Children's items:

PSE used 30, EU-SILC 2009 used 19

12 items scored  $\geq 75\%$

including books, outdoor space, study area, clubs

6 items 55-74%

including, internet, family trips, outdoor kit

6 items borderline 47-54%

including pocket money, school trips, bicycle, holiday

4 items below 30%

including mobile phone (for 11+), MP3 player

## Is there a consensus on 'necessities'?

YES but some differences

*Two pairs all-weather shoes:*

Women 62%, Men 46%

Older 68%, Younger 40%

*Warm coat:*

Older 85%, Younger 59%

*Clothes for job interview:*

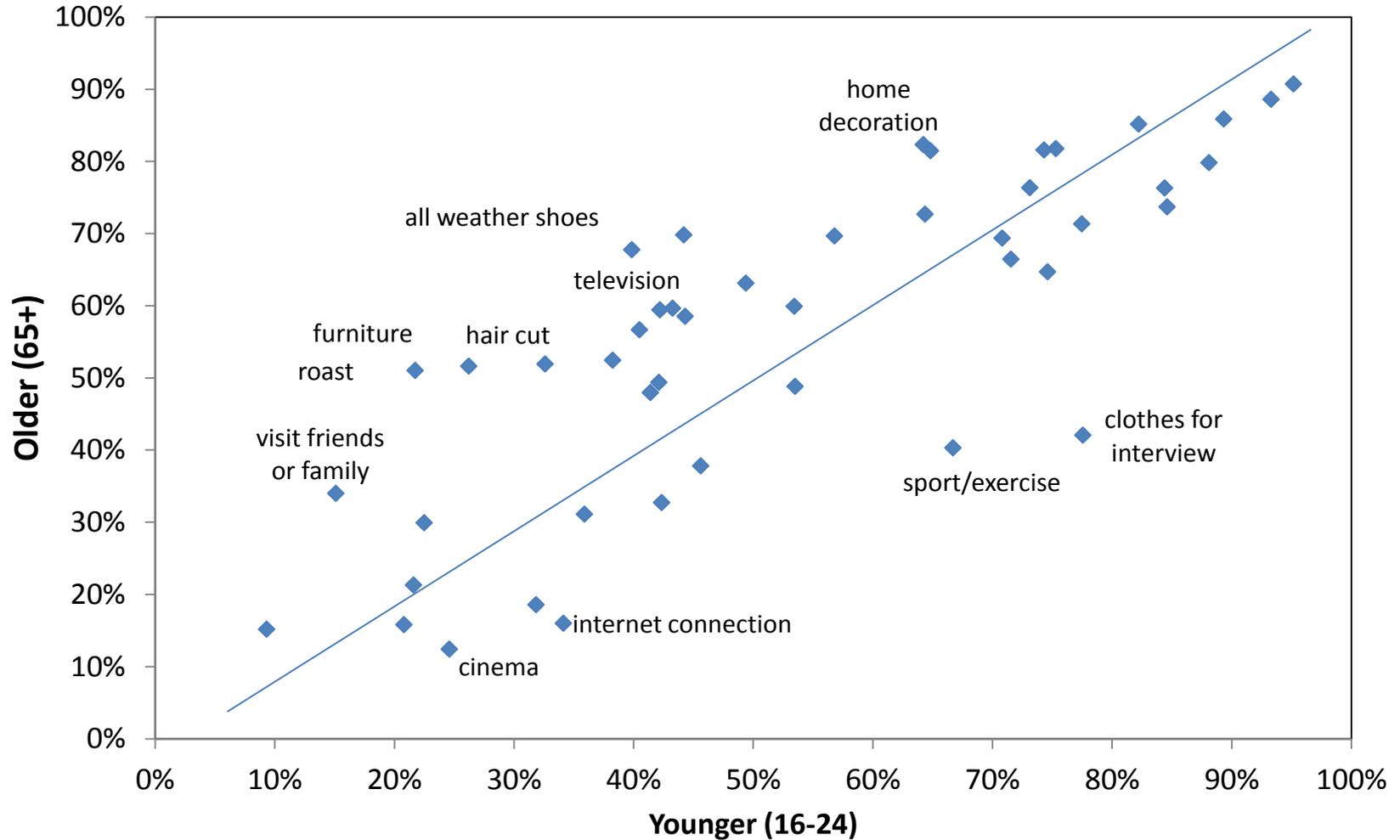
Older 42%, Younger 78%

Tertiary 71%, Primary 45%

*Television:*

Higher scores: Older, Primary, Less skilled, Disability

# Largest divergence of views on necessities is between Older and Younger people



# Deprivation measures

## Pensioners' deprivation items (DWP)

	Omnibus score (or closest equivalent)
• At least one filling meal a day 99%	(88)
• Go out socially at least once a month 72%	(28)
• See friends or family at least once a month 95%	(43)
• Take a holiday away from home 60%	40
• Able to replace cooker if it broke down 89%	(80)
• Home kept in good state of repair 96%	71
• Heating, electrics, plumbing and drains working 98%	-
• Have a damp-free home 94%	92
• Home kept adequately warm 96%	92
• Able to pay regular bills 96%	-
• Have a telephone to use, whenever needed 99%	(72)
• Have access to car or taxi, whenever needed 90%	(50)
• Have hair done or cut regularly 89%	36
• Have a warm waterproof coat 98%	80
• Able to pay an unexpected expense of £200 87%	51

# Deprivation measures – issues

## 1. Three categories?

Pensioners, Children and Overall

## 2. Prevalence weighting

a) DWP May 2011 new measure – score of 20 for pensioners, 25 for children

b) Non-monetary reasons for lacking items

## 3. Deprivation rate (EU-SILC):

Proportion lacking 3 or more out of 9 items

e.g. 2010: 13.4% UK

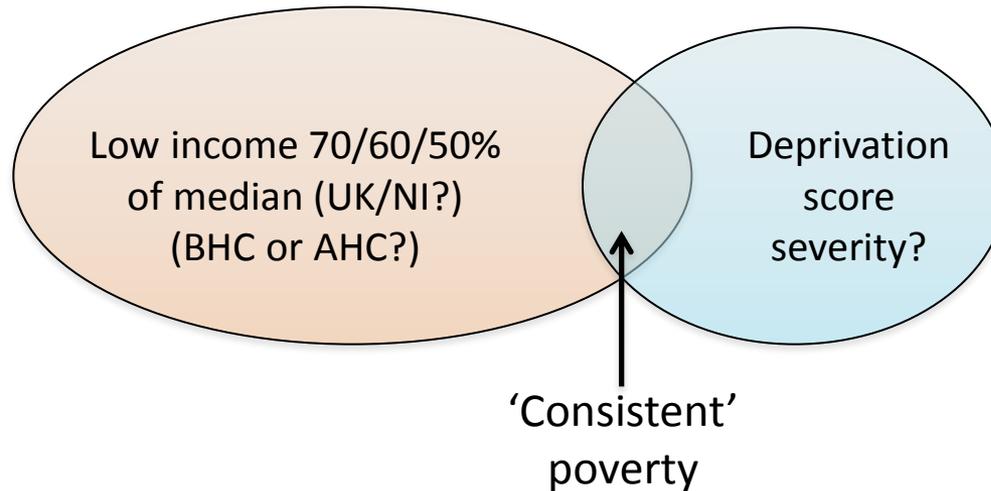
19.6% Ireland (S)

## 4. Consensus vs expert?

- 5 of 11 deprivation items in Ireland measure are below 50% threshold in N Ireland Omnibus
- 3 of 9 EU deprivation items are below or on margins of 50% threshold in N Ireland Omnibus

# Deprivation measures – issues

Low income and/or deprivation?



# Conclusion

## 1. Technical issues

- a) Are individual items **valid** indicators of PSE?
- b) Do individual items **add** to the picture of PSE?
- c) Is the group of items **reliably** related to underlying PSE concept?

## 2. Policy issues

- a) One measure or multiple measures (older, younger etc)
- b) How can deprivation data inform priorities and targets?
- c) What use is PSE measurement research to low income communities/areas?

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