Defining the breadline
Is there a Northern Ireland consensus?

Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series
26 April 2012
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
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)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSE project activities</th>
<th>Domains in Main Survey</th>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Social networks and support</td>
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<td>Fuel poverty</td>
<td>Necessities</td>
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<td>Area/neighbourhood deprivation</td>
<td>Intra-household decisions</td>
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<td>Local services</td>
<td>Poverty over time and subjective poverty</td>
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<td>Income change and indebtedness</td>
<td>Subjective well-being (‘satisfaction’)</td>
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<td>Education &amp; Parenting</td>
<td>Harm, crime, criminalisation</td>
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<td>Employment and working conditions</td>
<td>Critical life events</td>
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<td>Health and disability</td>
<td>Social and political engagement</td>
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<td>Time</td>
<td>Experience of theTroubles (NIreland only)</td>
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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
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<tr>
<th><strong>Ireland 2007</strong></th>
<th><strong>EU 2009</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Two pairs of strong shoes</td>
<td>To have a washing machine</td>
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<td>A warm waterproof overcoat</td>
<td>To have a colour TV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buy new not second-hand clothes</td>
<td>To have a car</td>
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<td><strong>Meat, chicken, fish (...) every second day</strong></td>
<td>Meat, chicken, or fish every second day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roast joint or its equivalent once a week</td>
<td>To have a telephone</td>
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<td>Go without heating during the last year through lack of money</td>
<td>To pay for arrears (mortgage or rent, utility bills or hire purchase instalments)</td>
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<td>Keep home adequately warm</td>
<td>Keep home adequately warm</td>
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<td>Presents for family/friends at least once a year</td>
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<td>Replace any worn out furniture</td>
<td>Face unexpected expenses</td>
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<td>Have family or friends for a drink or meal once a month</td>
<td>One week annual holiday away from home</td>
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<td>Have a morning, afternoon or evening out in the last fortnight, for entertainment</td>
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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 € 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 ≥ 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)

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

Omnibus score (or closest equivalent)
- 80
- 71
- 40
- 72
- 50
- 80
- 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?

- Low income 70/60/50% of median (UK/NI?) (BHC or AHC?)
- Deprivation score severity?
- ‘Consistent’ poverty
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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