The long-term effect of parental separation on childhood financial poverty and multidimensional deprivation: a lifecourse approach

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Outline

Introduction

Data

Methodology

Deprivation and monetary poverty

Parental separation and child deprivation

Conclusions

What about in France?
Experiencing parental separation

- Socio-demographic shifts have increased the proportion of children not always living with two biological, married parents throughout their childhood.
- In 2010-11, one third of all UK children aged 16 and under were not living with both of their birth parents (DWP, 2013), some of the highest levels in the OECD.
- An experience starting in early childhood: over 20% of children have already experienced parental separation by age 5 (Panico et al., 2010).
Parental separation

Cumulative distribution of child's age at separation

Proportion of children whose parents have separated

Child's age

Data: Millennium Cohort Study
Children born in 2000-2001 in the UK
Consequences of poverty on children’s development

- Decades of research has shown that children growing up in deprived circumstances have poorer outcomes on a range of domains (Atkinson et al., 1983; Duncan and Brooks-Gunn 1997; Heckman 2006; Blanden et al., 2013).

- Parental separation appear to be linked to negative child outcomes (Amato, 2005, 2001, 1991; Cherlin et al., 1998); poverty seems to be an important channel (McMunn et al., 2001; Schoon et al, 2011).

- Longstanding line of research shows that divorce means a drop in income (Brewer and Nandi, 2014; Fisher and Low, 2015; Aassve et al., 2007), especially for women with dependent children (Brewer and Nandi, 2014).
Drop in income around parental separation

Weekly equivalized income around separation

- Household who separates
- Household who don't separate
Gaps in the literature

- First, most literature focuses on the effects of parental separation on income poverty, but income has been criticized as a marker of deprivation for children (Guio et al., 2009), and this may be especially the case around separation.

- Second, relatively short term effects, comparing recovery to pre-separation income.
Income as a marker of childhood disadvantage?

- Income data not always reliable for poorer households.
- Financial security also based on savings and debts, housing tenure, the wider family, etc.
- Some families may be better equipped than others in managing income, or in prioritizing children’s needs.
- Income does not include benefits and services used by children.
- Income poverty does not predict well exclusion from normative or customary social activities (relative deprivation).
Income as a marker of childhood disadvantage?

- Towards the idea of multi-domain childhood disadvantage - which considers that multiple factors in childhood beyond childhood poverty (Bradshaw et al., 2007; Tomlinson et al., 2008; Nolan and Whelan, 2011).

- Difficult to operationalize longitudinally, especially for children (some exceptions: Roelin, 2010; Dickerson and Popli, 2015).

- One major difficulty is to construct age-relevant measures of children deprivation
Research questions

- How does parental separation affect the experience of childhood poverty and multi-domain deprivation over a long period of time?
- Do all domains of deprivation react similarly to separation?
- What are the post-separation channels by which recovery occurs and do they vary across measures of poverty and deprivation?
What this paper does

1. We create a longitudinal, child-centred, age-relevant, multidimensional measure of childhood deprivation; and compare it to income poverty (measured as hh equivalised income).

2. Explore how such measures reacts to parental separation over a relatively long period of time, and through which channels (re-partnering, maternal employment) they may recover.
Outline

Introduction

Data

Methodology

Deprivation and monetary poverty

Parental separation and child deprivation

Conclusions

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Millennium Cohort Study

- A nationally representative prospective cohort study in the UK following included 18,818 children in 18,552 families living in the UK shortly after birth and born between 2000 and 2002 (Dex and Joshi, 2005).
- Over sample of ethnically mixed and disadvantaged areas and the 3 smaller countries.
- Interdisciplinary approach.
- Five waves: 9 months, 3 years, 5 years, 7 years and 11 years of age.
Analytical sample

1. Parents in a co-resident relationship at birth of the cohort child.
2. Twins and triplets: we keep one case per household.
3. \( n = 12,658 \) households.
Outline

Introduction

Data

Methodology

Deprivation and monetary poverty

Parental separation and child deprivation

Conclusions

What about in France?
Methodology (inspired by Alkire and Foster (2011))

Defining dimensions of deprivation and indicators

- **Material deprivation** (no car, damp is a problem, overcrowded housing, no central heating)
- **Extreme material deprivation** (cannot afford waterproof coat or fitted shoes)
- **Leisure activities** (cannot afford holidays, celebrations, leisure activities)
- **Parenting activities and routines** (read to child less than once a week, nobody help with learning alphabet, counting, sport, and routines)
Methodology

Indicators change with age (but not dimensions)

- Dimensions remain the same
- Some indicators making up the dimensions do not change (damp)
- But least some indicators change with child age (stairgates to computers; singing to checking homework)
- Same definition for overall deprivation
Outline

Introduction

Data

Methodology

Deprivation and monetary poverty

Parental separation and child deprivation

Conclusions

What about in France?
Deprivation and income poverty

Similar evolution across time

Proportion of deprived children in different dimensions

Data: Millennium Cohort Study
Children born in 2000-2001 in the UK
Deprivation and income poverty
Overlap of two definitions of poverty

Similar overlap across waves
Similar exercise for different dimensions exhibits correlation between income poverty and material deprivation, and leisure deprivation larger than corr with lower correlation with parenting involvement
Outline

Introduction

Data

Methodology

Deprivation and monetary poverty

Parental separation and child deprivation

Conclusions

What about in France?
Descriptive

Monetary poverty

Among children whose parents separate when child younger
Among children whose parents separate when child older
Descriptive

Overall deprivation

Proportion of deprived children

Years from separation

-10 -5 0 5 10

Among children whose parents separate when child younger

Among children whose parents separate when child older

Marion Leturcq, Lidia Panico
Estimation strategy

- Study changes in probability to be poor or deprived around parental separation:

\[
y_{it} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_t + \alpha_i + \sum_{\tau} \left( \delta_{1\tau} 1\{Z_{1i} = 1, d_{it} = \tau\} + \delta_{2\tau} 1\{Z_{2i} = 1, d_{it} = \tau\} \right) + \gamma W_{it} + \beta X_{it} + \varepsilon_{it}
\]

- \(\alpha_t, \alpha_i\) time and individual fixed effects
- \(X_{it}\) time-varying demographic characteristics (age, country, sibship, occupation)
- \(\delta_{1\tau}, \delta_{2\tau}\) change in propensity of being poor around separation
- \(W_{it}\) potential recovery channels (repartnering, mother’s labor employment)
- Estimation: OLS, clustered standard errors
Result 1: increase in the risk of deprivation

- Graph showing the estimation of the risk of deprivation over time from separation.
- The x-axis represents time from separation in intervals: [0,1], [2,3], [4,7], [8,11].
- The y-axis represents the estimation (read as %) of the risk.
- Two lines are shown:
  - Blue line: Monetary
  - Red line: Overall
- The graph indicates a decrease in the estimation over time, with monetary estimation showing a steeper decline compared to the overall estimation.
Result 2: increase due to the increase in leisure deprivation and a decrease in parenting involvement
Results for children whose parents divorce when they are older

- Similar impact
- Impact on income poverty and material deprivation is slightly weaker on the short run
- Impact on parental involvement slightly stronger on the short run
Heterogeneity in the impact

- Educational levels (lower than A-level vs. A-level or higher)
- Mother’s age (50% younger vs. 50% older)
- Poor vs. non-poor at wave 1 (when cohort child is around 9 months old)
Heterogeneity in the impact: the headlines

- Educational levels: high educated mothers less impacted across all measures, a short term impact on leisure deprivation and medium term impact on leisure deprivation.

- Mother’s age: similar impact for monetary poverty, for older women no recovery from deprivation. Younger women potentially benefit in the long-term in material deprivation.

- Poverty at baseline: non-poor hhs more impacted financially by separation but less impacted in terms of deprivation.
Recovery channels

- We explore the effect of different recovery channels on children’s deprivation:
  - Re-partnering
  - Increase in the labor force supply of mothers
  - (Living with grand-parents)
  - (Child maintenance)
Recovery channel: labour force supply of mothers

![Graph showing the share among women who separate over time from separation.](graph.png)

- Red dots represent women who work more than 20 hours per week.
- Blue dots represent women who work less than 20 hours per week.
- Black dots represent inactive women.

The graph illustrates the share among women who separate, categorized by time from separation and labor force supply. The data points show trends over different time intervals post-separation.
Recovery channel: re-partnering

- Has a new partner
- Has a non working partner
- No partner
Results: change in income poverty around separation, with recovering channels

Changes in risk of income poverty around separation

- Without recovery channels
- With recovery channels: repartnering
- With recovery channels: labour supply
Results: change in overall deprivation around separation, with recovering channels
Results: change in leisure deprivation around separation, with recovering channels

Changes in risk of leisure deprivation around separation

Time from separation

Without recovery channels
With recovery channels: repartnering
With recovery channels: labour supply
Results: change in parenting around separation, with recovering channels

Changes in risk of parenting deprivation around separation

- Without recovery channels
- With recovery channels: repartnering
- With recovery channels: labour supply

Estimation (read as %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time from separation</th>
<th>Without recovery channels</th>
<th>With recovery channels: repartnering</th>
<th>With recovery channels: labour supply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[0,1]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>[2,3]</td>
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<tr>
<td>[8,11]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outline

Introduction

Data

Methodology

Deprivation and monetary poverty

Parental separation and child deprivation

Conclusions

What about in France?
Conclusions

- Detrimental effects of parental separation on financial resources appear to have a short term impact on material deprivation, and more pronounced and persistent impact on being able to afford normative, leisure activities.

- Using a child centered, age-relevant longitudinal measure of multi-domain deprivation shows that income alone does not fully capture children’s day-to-day experiences.
Outline

Introduction

Data

Methodology

Deprivation and monetary poverty

Parental separation and child deprivation

Conclusions

What about in France?
l’Etude Longitudinal Francais depuis l’Enfance (Elfe)

- Follow-up of 20,000 children, born in mainland France in 2011, from birth until adulthood
- Environment health (National biomonitoring plan)
- Social sciences
- Health
Parental separation and child deprivation

What about in France?

l’Etude Longitudinal Francais depuis l’Enfance (Elfe) - recruitment

- 4 periods of inclusion in 2011, in metropolitan France: (partial intersection with INSEE demographic panel): April (4 days); June-July (6 days); September-October (7 days); November-December (8 days)

- Sampling based on hospitals w maternity ward: 349 randomly drawn out of 544; 20 000 births targeted (1/40 births)

- 211 hospitals selected for biology collection; 8 000 births with biological samples targeted
Parental separation and child deprivation

What about in France?

l’Etude Longitudinal Francais depuis l’Enfance (Elfe) - inclusion

- More than 33 weeks gestation
- Single or twin birth
- Mother more than 18 and able to sign consent form
- Plan to live in metropolitan France for at least 3 years
- n= 18321, including 288 multiple births
Parental separation and child deprivation

What about in France?

l’Etude Longitudinal Français depuis l’Enfance (Elfe)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaires</th>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>Medical data</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Biology</th>
<th>Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical files</td>
<td>Down</td>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>Mother blood, urine, hair, milk - Cord blood / tissue</td>
<td>Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health insurance</td>
<td>Down</td>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>Dust collector</td>
<td>Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cancer registry</td>
<td>Down</td>
<td>3-10 months</td>
<td>GS air water radon</td>
<td>Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Questfamily doctor</td>
<td>Down</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive, visuo-motor</td>
<td>Academic skills</td>
<td>Down</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical exam</td>
<td>Down</td>
<td>3,5 years</td>
<td>Child urine, hair stool</td>
<td>Dust sampling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic skills</td>
<td>Down</td>
<td>5,5 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic skills, Psychomotor</td>
<td>Down</td>
<td>8,5 years</td>
<td>Child urine blood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic skills</td>
<td>Down</td>
<td>20 years</td>
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Parental separation and child deprivation

What about in France?

l’Etude Longitudinal Francais depuis l’Enfance (Elfe) - poverty and deprivation

None of these: 72.63%

- Monetary Poverty: 9.26%
- Extreme Living Conditions: 0.77%
- Housing Deprivation: 11.57%
Parental separation and child deprivation

What about in France?

l’Etude Longitudinal Francais depuis l’Enfance (Elfe) - inclusion


- Study page: www.elfe-france.fr

- Data platform www.pandora.vjf.inserm.fr/public
Merci !

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Risk of poverty around separation

Monetary poverty

- Among children whose parents separate when child younger
- Among children whose parents separate when child older