

# 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

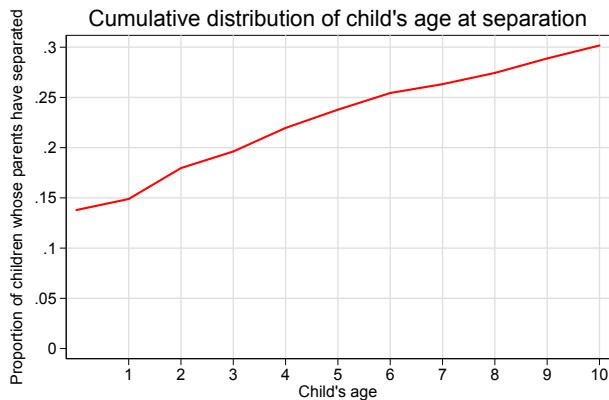
Conclusions

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

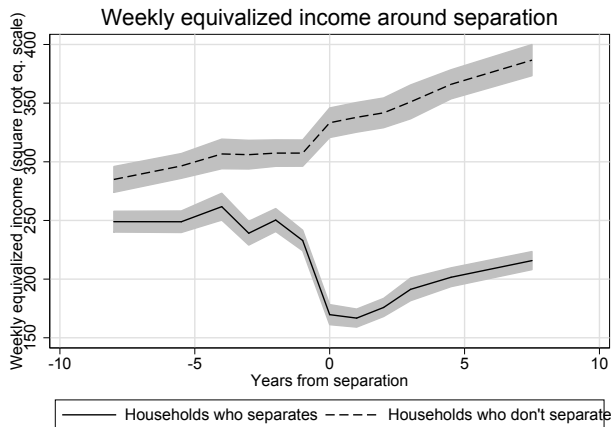


Data: Millennium Cohort Study  
Children born in 2000-2001 in the UK

## 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



## 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.

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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.

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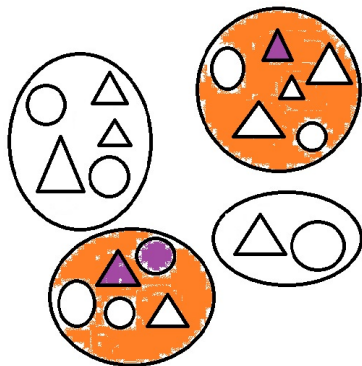
What about in France?





## 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

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**Deprivation and monetary poverty**

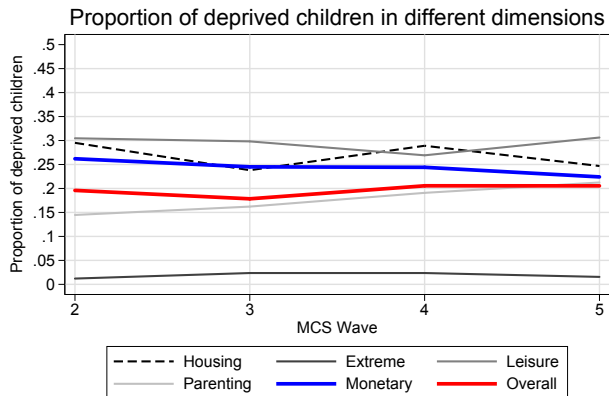
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# Deprivation and income poverty

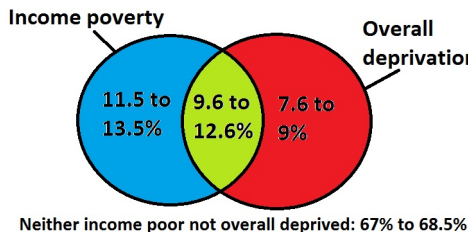
Similar evolution across time



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

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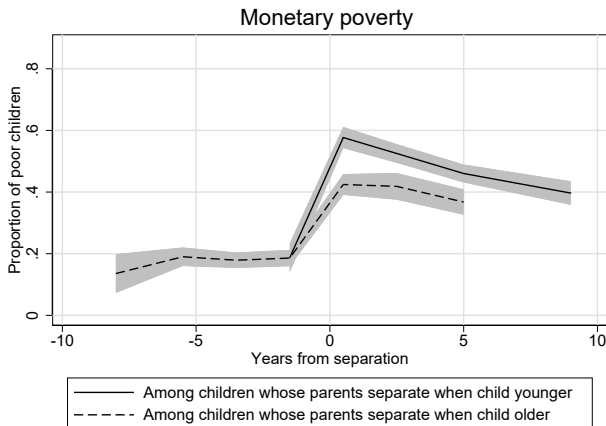
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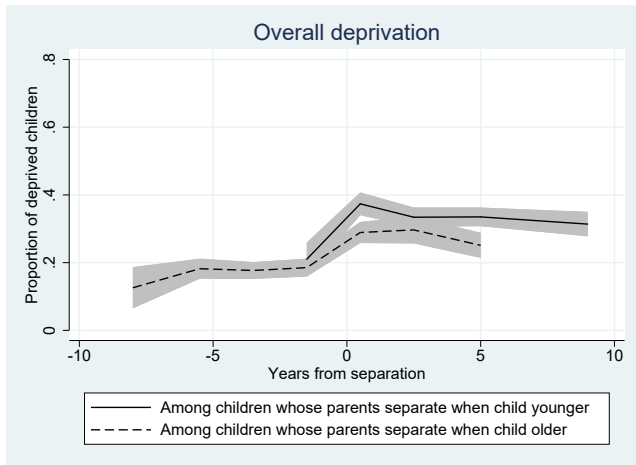
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## Descriptive



## Descriptive



## Estimation strategy

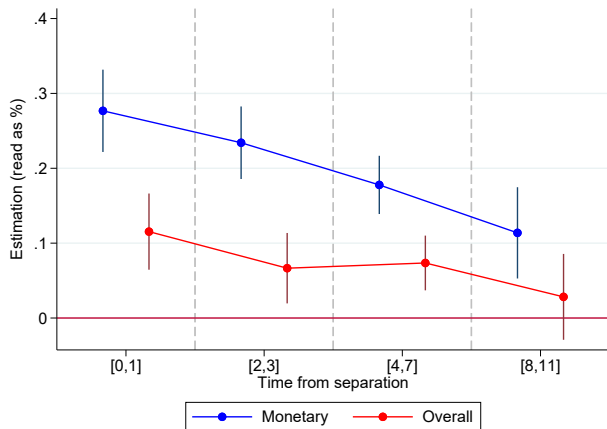
- ▶ Study changes in probability to be poor or deprived around parental separation:

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

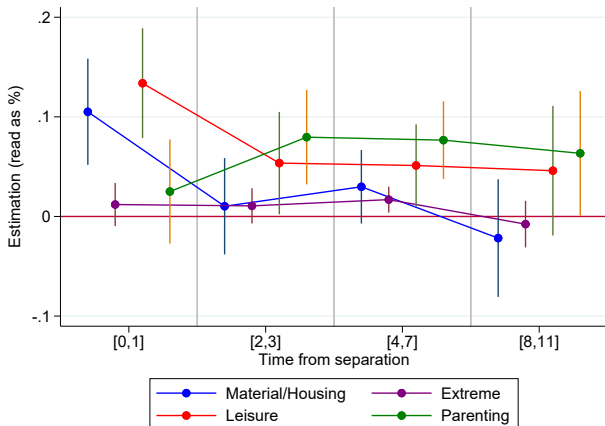
- ▶  $\alpha_t, \alpha_i$  time and individual fixed effects
- ▶  $X_{it}$  time-varying demographic characteristics (age, country, sibship, occupation)
- ▶  $\delta_{1\tau}, \delta_{2\tau}$  change in propensity of being poor around separation
- ▶  $W_{it}$  potential recovery channels (repartnering,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



## Result 1: increase in the risk of deprivation



## 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)

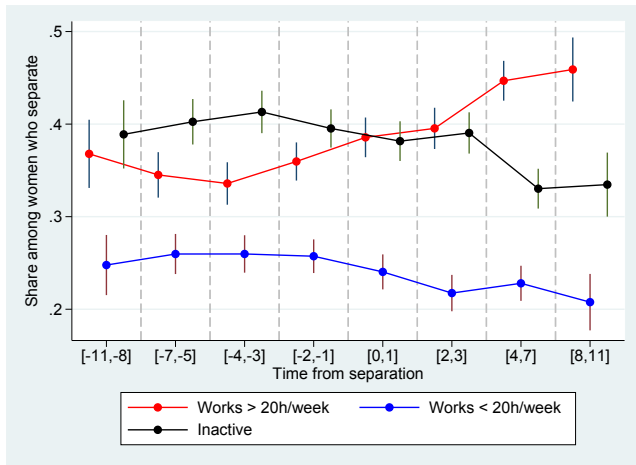
## Heterogeneity in the impact: the headlines

- ▶ 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.

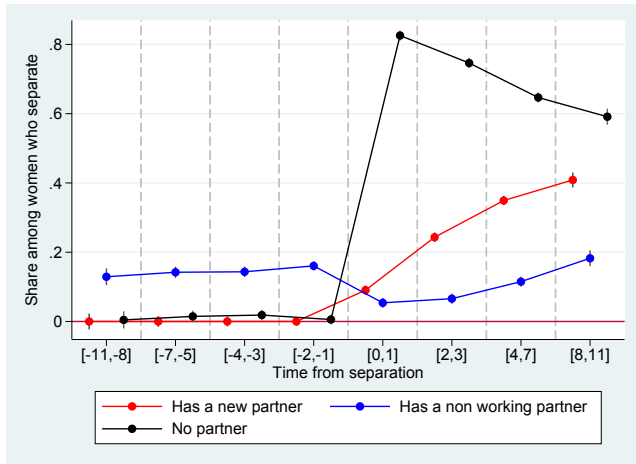
## Recovery channels

- ▶ 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

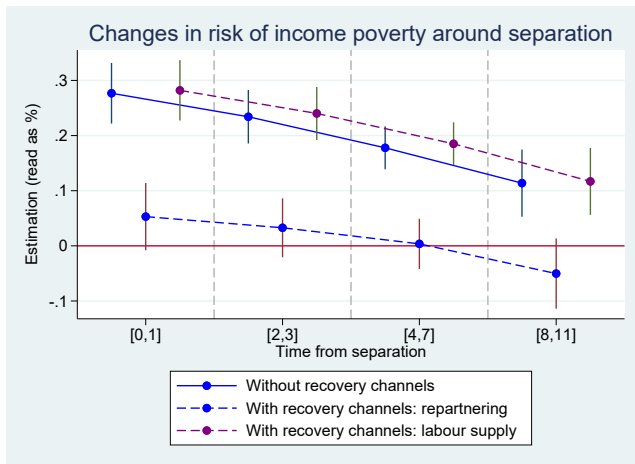


## Recovery channel: re-partnering

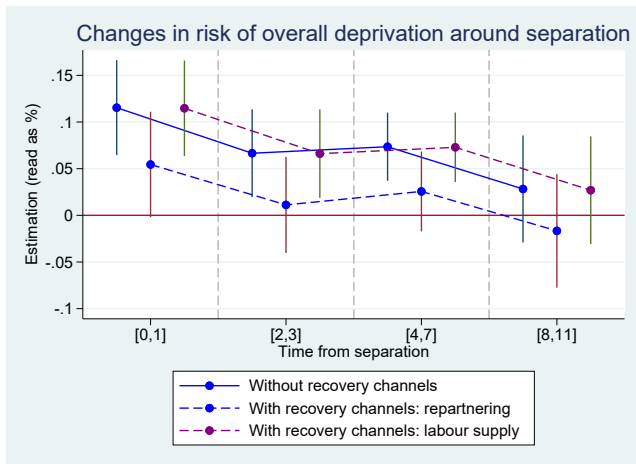




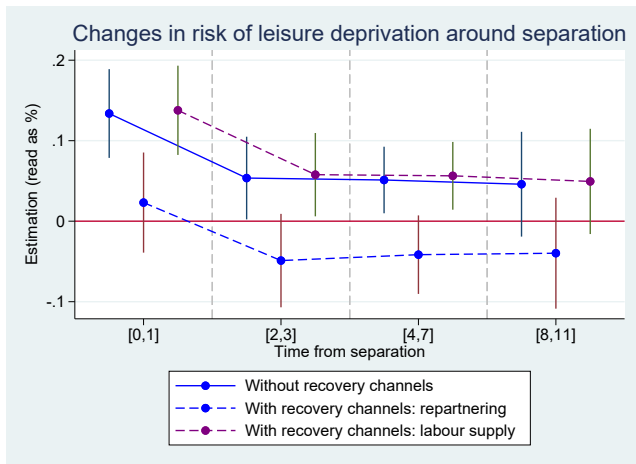
## Results: change in income poverty around separation, with recovering channels



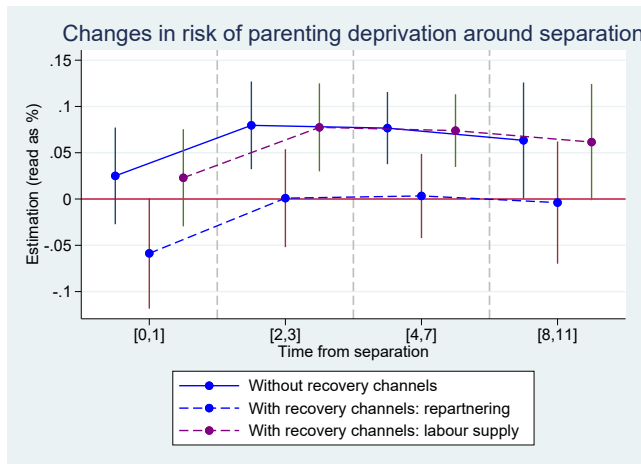
## Results: change in overall deprivation around separation, with recovering channels



## Results: change in leisure deprivation around separation, with recovering channels



## Results: change in parenting around separation, with recovering channels



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## 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.

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## 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



## 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

## 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

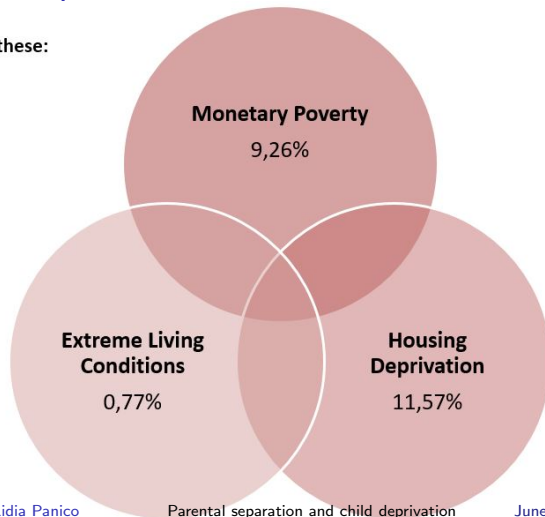
# l'Etude Longitudinal Française depuis l'Enfance (Elfe)

Questionnaires	Tests	Medical data	n	Biology	Environment
		Medical files	Birth	Mother blood, urine, hair, milk - Cord blood /tissue	↓
			2 months		↓
			3-10 months		↓
			1 year		↓
		Questfamily doctor	2 years		↓
	Cognitive, visuo-motor		3,5 years	Child urine, hair stool	↓
	Academic skills		5,5 years		↓
	Academic skills Psychomotor	Medical exam	(8,5 years)	Child urine blood	↓
	Academic skills		....		↓
			... 20 years		↓

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

**None of these:**

72,63%



## l'Etude Longitudinal Francais depuis l'Enfance (Elfe) - inclusion

- ▶ Pirus C., Bois C., Dufourg M.-N., Lanoe J.-L., Vandentorren S., Leridon H. et l'équipe Elfe. La construction d'une cohorte: l'expérience du projet français Elfe, Population 65(4) : 637-670, 2010.
- ▶ Study page: [www.elfe-france.fr](http://www.elfe-france.fr)
- ▶ Data platform [www.pandora.vjf.inserm.fr/public](http://www.pandora.vjf.inserm.fr/public)



# Merci !

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## Risk of poverty around separation

