

# Exploring persistent child poverty using longitudinal data

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- Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey (NIHPS)
  - Understanding Society (US)
- Content of NIHPS/US and potential for secondary analysis
- Using NIHPS to assess persistent child poverty in Northern Ireland (NI)

- NIHPS began in 2001 as an extension to the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS - 1991)
  - Extension samples Scotland and Wales (1999)
- NIHPS (and BHPS) now incorporated into US
- Datasets contain all 18 waves of BHPS and data for the 4 regions of the UK
  - Geographic variable to identify region
  - Wave specific file/variable prefix (e.g. 'K' in dataset indicates Wave 11 in BHPS and Wave 1 in NIHPS; 'L' Waves 12 and 2 etc.)

- Follows the same sample of individuals over a period of years
  - Random sample of addresses drawn from Land & Property Services Agency in 2001
  - Household-based, invites every adult member (16+) and each child aged 11-15 years (Wave 4 onwards) to participate
- ISER responsible for the technical aspects of the survey across the UK (e.g. questionnaire design, data cleaning, validation, weighting)
- Fieldwork in NI carried out by NISRA

- Household Interview – Household Reference Person (HRP)
- Individual Interviews (CAPI) - each member of the household aged 16+
- Self-completion questionnaire - each member of the household aged 16+
- Proxy interview
- Youth survey

- Core component - repeated every year
- Includes
  - Household and personal finances
  - Housing circumstances
  - Physical and mental health (GHQ)
  - Employment status and training
  - Caring responsibilities
  - Values and opinions

- Rotating core component
  - Usually repeated every 2/3 years (for topics Waves 1 to 8 see [http://www.ark.ac.uk/nihps/NIHPS\\_var\\_components.pdf](http://www.ark.ac.uk/nihps/NIHPS_var_components.pdf))
- Variable component
  - Asked once in the life of the panel study e.g. where born, age left school, race
- Youth Questionnaire includes:
  - Relationship with parents/bullying/self esteem/life satisfaction/attitudes to school/aspirations for future

- US began in 2009 (includes BHPS/NIHPS samples)
  - 40,000 households across UK
    - Wave 1 data available from ESDS
- US NI W1 achieved sample-eligible h/holds
  - 1298 households (62%)
  - 1989 individual (16+) full interviews (89%) in cooperating households
- Due to time constraints more use of questions asked regularly, but not every wave
- Move to mixed mode (face-to-face/internet/telephone) in later waves

## Includes:

- Initial conditions: e.g., place of birth, citizenship, qualifications, family background
- Ethnicity and national identity, language, religion, harassment
- History of marriage and cohabitation, fertility
- Health and disability, caring
- Employment and non-employment, discrimination
- Childcare, parents and children, family networks
- Unearned income and state benefits
- Household finances
- Political affiliation and values, environmental behaviour

## Includes:

- Use of social websites
- Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire
- Relationship with parents/family members
- Bullying at school and by/to siblings
- Education, truancy, misbehaviour etc
- Religion and ethnic group
- Illicit drug/alcohol use and perceived risk of harm (Wave 2)
- Cultural and sports participation (Wave 2)
- Homework (Wave 2)
- Money and work (Wave 3)
- Taking care of others (Wave 3)

- Possible to look at attitudes/behaviours/characteristics of adults
  - Over time
  - Between household members
  - Between different generations
- Possible to look at attitudes/behaviours/characteristics of children and track them into adulthood

- Can measure change at the individual level
- Follows all original sample members of a household over time regardless of family splits/reformations
- Enables causal relationships to be established
- Can examine issues such as persistent poverty not possible using cross-sectional studies

- Attrition
- Representativeness of sample
- Complexity of NIHPS data
  - Households
  - Respondents
  - Enumerated individuals
  - Youth survey
  - NIHPS within the BHPS/Longitudinal element
    - Weighting

- Complexity of NIHPS means that analysts need to have knowledge/experience of analysing longitudinal datasets
  - Advantage of ESRC secondary data analysis call is that partnerships can be established between practitioners/policymakers and researchers/academics with analytical expertise

- Example: Persistent Poverty using NIHPS/BHPS
  - Partnership project between Save the Children (funder) and ARK to measure persistent poverty in NI for the first time and compare figures for NI and Britain
- Policy input - Save the Children
- Secondary data analysis expertise - ARK

- To measure child poverty accurately need detailed income data
- To measure persistent child poverty need longitudinal data
- Point in time child poverty can be measured by continuous surveys with detailed income data – (e.g. Family Resources Survey)
- However, persistent poverty, and the long-term consequences of poverty, can only be measured using longitudinal data

- Data - NIHPS Waves 1-4; BHPS Waves 11-14
  - Constrained by availability of net income data files that are created by ISER when funding allows and lodged with ESDS separately from main files
- Only included households with full 4 years data
- Children defined as being aged 0-15 (at Wave 1)
- Poverty defined as children living in households with incomes below 60% of median
- Persistent poverty defined as children living in poverty for at least 3 out of the 4 years

- Data equivalised – household size
- Matched NIHPS household data/parental variables to child data
  - Able to estimate percentage of children in persistent poverty
  - Able to identify characteristics of households in persistent poverty
- Syntax files created for NI data were used to get comparable figures for Britain
  - Persistent poverty higher in NI than in Britain

- In addition to calculating persistent poverty NIHPS data allows more advanced statistical analysis to be carried out – event history/survival analysis
- Stata used to carry out analysis to examine
  - Entries into poverty/exits out of poverty
  - Events triggering entries and exits into and out of poverty

- Key findings document produced by Save the Children/ARK (can be accessed on web)
- Use of data – figures quoted in:
  - Media
  - Responses to OFMDFM consultation on Child Poverty Strategy
  - JRF policy document on child poverty
  - House of Lords/House of Commons Joint Committee on Human Rights – Child Poverty Bill

- Government has pledged to eradicate child poverty <sup>www.ark.ac.uk</sup> by 2020
- DWP report - US will be the source used to monitor the extent of persistent poverty in UK
- Child poverty also key issue for NI Government
  - Ensure policy decisions are based on best available evidence
- NIHPS/US data needed to measure persistent poverty and to identify long-term consequences of poverty
- NIHPS/US offers wealth of data for secondary analysis

- ISER
  - [www.iser.essex.ac.uk/survey/bhps](http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/survey/bhps)
  - [www.understandingsociety.org.uk/](http://www.understandingsociety.org.uk/)
- NIHPS – ARK (includes link to ISER presentation on US)
  - [www.ark.ac.uk/nihps](http://www.ark.ac.uk/nihps)
- Central Survey Unit -NISRA
  - [www.csu.nisra.gov.uk](http://www.csu.nisra.gov.uk)
- Understanding Society content plan
  - [http://research.understandingsociety.org.uk/files/esrc/Long\\_Term\\_Content\\_Plan\\_Nov2011.pdf](http://research.understandingsociety.org.uk/files/esrc/Long_Term_Content_Plan_Nov2011.pdf)
- Understanding Society User guide
  - <http://data.understandingsociety.org.uk/documentation/mainstage/user-guide>
- Persistent Child Poverty in Northern Ireland – Key Findings
  - [www.ark.ac.uk/events/childpoverty2008.pdf](http://www.ark.ac.uk/events/childpoverty2008.pdf)