

SHARING HOUSEHOLD RESOURCES LEARNING FROM NON-MONETARY INDICATORS



SARA CANTILLON, BRENDA GANNON AND BRIAN NOLAN

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Sharing Household Resources: Learning from Non-Monetary Indicators

by

Sara Cantillon, Brenda Gannon and Brian Nolan





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FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION

The Combat Poverty Agency is the statutory body working for the prevention and elimination of poverty and social exclusion in Ireland. One of its strategic objectives is to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of poverty and social exclusion, particularly child poverty, so as to inform and influence policy on tackling poverty. The National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS), *Building an Inclusive Society* (Government of Ireland 2002), highlights the importance of gathering comprehensive data on poverty and monitoring poverty trends. This research makes a pioneering contribution to this knowledge by exploring the extent of nonmonetary deprivation within households, both those that are and are not affected by poverty. In addition, it helps to address the general data deficit on the experience of childhood in Ireland, an issue identified in the National Children's Strategy (Government of Ireland 2000).

To date, the majority of poverty research has assumed that resources are shared equally between individuals within households and that all individuals within households have similar standards of living. However, some preliminary research has suggested that resources are not necessarily shared equally, and therefore there may be some concealed poverty within non-poor households (Rottman 1994). As a result, the risk of poverty for certain household members, in particular women and children, may be underestimated. If living standards within households are not equivalent, this has serious implications for income support policies aimed at eliminating poverty.

To examine this issue, the Combat Poverty Agency commissioned the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) to carry out a study looking at the following issues:

the allocation of resources within households;

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- the extent of poverty among women and children within both poor and non-poor households; and
- the use of non-monetary indicators in developing our understanding of poverty and social exclusion.

The methodology used in this study adapts the non-monetary indicators of deprivation approach to measure differences between household members. In the 1999 ESRI Living in Ireland Survey, 1,100 couples were asked about their consumption and deprivation levels, access to leisure activities and pastimes and about decision making and money management. The results were then analysed to examine any potential differences between spouses and partners. In addition, just over 800 mothers with children (defined as under 14) were asked whether their children had to go without a range of items because of a lack of money. These results were then compared with household characteristics to identify the households in which children are most at risk of poverty.

The study builds on a range of previously commissioned Combat Poverty Agency research reports, starting with the examination of income distribution within Irish households by Rottman (1994). It also complements specific studies on female poverty (Nolan and Watson 1999) and child poverty (Nolan 2000), which suggested that further investigation of intra-household allocation of resources was needed. This study takes these analyses to a new level by exploring issues of female and child poverty *within* both poor and non-poor households. Finally, the study builds on qualitative research on income-sharing within low-income families, such as Coakley (1998), Daly and Leonard (2002) and the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice (McMahon *et al.* 2001).

POLICY CONTEXT

This study is relevant to the NAPS, which identifies women and children as groups especially vulnerable to poverty. NAPS sets a policy target of reducing consistent poverty among these two groups to less than 2 per cent. While this target is set at a household level, it would also be important that poverty among women and children is SHARING HOUSEHOLD RESOURCES

reduced to similar amounts at an individual level. This study can help to indicate how extensive a problem poverty is at the individual level within non-poor households.

The treatment of households under the tax and welfare codes has been a recurring theme of recent government policy, both in terms of differences between types of households and also between men and women within households. Information about the distribution and management of household resources contained in this study is especially relevant to tax and social welfare policy, in particular the ongoing debate about the treatment of adult dependants under these codes.

This research is also relevant to the special initiative to end child poverty under Sustaining Progress. Central to this initiative is a review of existing mechanisms for child income support. Understanding the impact of different income support mechanisms on child poverty would be an important contribution to this review.

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Deprivation among Spouses/Partners

This initial set of results suggests that there is no systematic gender deprivation imbalance within households that is not being captured by conventional statistics. For some indicators, men have better access to the item or activity, while in others it is women. Summary indices of deprivation showed that over four-fifths of couples were not deprived and that most of the deprived couples reported similar scales of deprivation as their partners. Between 2 and 10 per cent of couples gave different answers when asked if they had a number of basic items,¹ i.e. one partner had the item and the other did not. For four of the six items it is most often the male partner who has the item and the female partner who does not. Most families shared the same meal, but in a significant minority of cases (almost one family in twenty) the female partner is skimping on her meal to ensure the rest

^{1.} The deprivation items are a warm, waterproof overcoat, two strong pairs of shoes, a good suit, a regular haircut, a regular dental check-up and visits to the doctor when needed.

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of the family has enough. The one situation where there is a gender difference is in having a regular pastime or leisure activity. Almost 30 per cent of partners gave differing responses, and in three-quarters of these cases, it is the male partner who has the pastime, while the female partner does not.

Control over Resources and the Burden of Coping

Couples were asked a range of questions about financial decision making within their household. The majority of both men and women said they would buy something they needed straight away, but a larger proportion of men gave this answer. Almost twice as many women as men said that they would save up for the item and four times as many women as men said they would ask their partner for the money. In the case of a large unexpected bill, approximately three-quarters of all respondents, male and female, said that they would decide with their partner how to meet it.

Women take responsibility for weekly budgeting in over half of all households interviewed and in 70 per cent of low-income households. Women also generally make decisions about weekly shopping and paying regular bills, while most other purchasing decisions, especially significant decisions such as buying large household items or a car, borrowing money and paying debts, were made jointly. About 60 per cent of couples said that they took joint responsibility for making resources stretch week to week. Amongst the other couples, the responsibility was more likely to be taken up by the female partner. This trend was more pronounced in lowincome households.

Non-Monetary Indicators and Children

Between 8 and 17 per cent of mothers stated that their children had to go without some basic items² associated with childhood because of a lack of money. The proportion of children going without these

^{2.} For the purposes of this study, children are defined as under 14 years of age. The items are a birthday party, school trips, having friends home to play, lessons/sports, three meals a day, pocket money, toys and bicycle/sports equipment.

Sharing Household Resources

items was particularly high in lone-parent households, even if the mother was in work. Children in two-adult households where the reference person is in work are much less likely to go without the deprivation items than those in families headed by someone who is unemployed, ill, disabled, inactive or retired. Children in families with three or more children are more likely to go without the deprivation items, except in the case of having friends home to play and having three meals a day. One of the most striking findings of this study is that despite a concentration of child deprivation in the groups outlined above, there was also a sizeable number of households that would traditionally be considered to be less at risk of poverty where children went without one or more of these items.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

From a policy perspective many of the issues raised by this research pertain to the structure of the welfare system and levels of service provision. While the main focus of this study is on the sharing of resources within households, an essential starting point for policy remains to ensure that welfare payments to households provide an adequate standard of living. This means ensuring the minimum welfare payment is raised to the target figure of \in 150 (2002 values) by 2007. In addition, payments for adult dependants should be increased from 66 per cent to 70 per cent of the personal rate, as recommended by a government review group (Government of Ireland 1999). There is also a need to provide adequate levels of income support for children, especially when they live in families fully dependent on social welfare. One way of doing this would be to introduce a higher payment for older children, who cost more.

The research also has implications for the way in which welfare payments are made. It encourages the move towards individual entitlements for adult men and women, as highlighted by the National Women's Council (Murphy 2003). Welfare policy needs to be sensitive to its impact on the distribution of income within households, through the source (the wage packet or direct payment), purpose (for specific cost) and delivery (who receives the payment) of income support. For example, recent studies, including Daly and

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Leonard (2002), have suggested that paying child benefit to mothers can maximise the benefits for children. The shift from childdependant allowance to child benefit has additional benefits for female budget control and this should be a key consideration in the review of the second tier of child income support, being undertaken as part of the initiative to end child poverty under Sustaining Progress.

Finally, the research has implications for improved service provision if the full extent of social exclusion is to be addressed. As well as direct income support, the welfare of adults and children is strongly influenced by social provision in the form of health care, education, play facilities, etc. Public policy should continue to put a stronger emphasis on improving these services.

ISSUES FOR RESEARCH

The availability of high-quality research and data on poverty through the Living in Ireland Survey has traditionally been a strength for researchers and policymakers. This research shows a number of additional strands of information that could be gathered to improve our understanding of poverty in Ireland, namely intra-household resource allocation, decision making and resource management within households and data on children's experience of poverty and deprivation. The development of these non-monetary indicators should be incorporated as part of the replacement EU statistical instrument for the Living in Ireland Survey (EU SILC), being developed in Ireland under the auspices of the Central Statistics Office. Further refinement of the methodology, looking at the measures of deprivation and the procedures for gathering information from different household members, should also be explored.

Indicators of child-specific deprivation provide a valuable insight into a key aspect of the well-being of Irish children. Children have no independent source of income and therefore it is particularly important that indicators are developed to identify deprivation for children. Non-monetary indicators can shed light on children's experiences, which should be built upon in the context of the SHARING HOUSEHOLD RESOURCES

National Children's Office's work in gathering statistics on childhood, through the National Longitudinal Study and the Child Well-being Indicators, and the publication of *The State of the Nation's Children Report*.

CONCLUSIONS

Previous Irish poverty research has assumed equal sharing of resources between individuals living in the same household. This ground-breaking study examines if differences exist between individuals within households by using non-monetary indicators. It found that while there were differences between adults within households, these did not systematically conceal female poverty. It also found that the burden of day-to-day financial responsibilities fell more heavily on women. The study identified significant levels of child deprivation, especially in lone-parent households, workless households and households with three or more children. These findings suggest that public policy needs to devote greater attention to issues relating to control over resources, such as welfare benefits and access to services within households, as well as to the actual rates of benefits and level of services.

Combat Poverty Agency June 2004

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIM OF THE STUDY

This study for the Combat Poverty Agency is focused on the distribution of resources within Irish households and the implications of that distribution for the living standards of different household members. In most research on living standards, income inequality and poverty, it is assumed that individuals living in the same household have the same standard of living. Where that is not actually the case, then the findings of such research could be misleading about the position of some individuals. Most often, concern is expressed that the position of women and children might be mis-measured and that some may be worse off than is reflected in conventional research.

Building on previous research on this topic by Cantillon and Nolan (1998, 2001), our aim is to develop a set of indicators specially designed for the investigation of differences in living standards within the household and to apply these indicators empirically to Ireland. Specifically, this study aims to examine differences in living standards between adults in the household, the living standards of children in the household and the implications of the findings for policy in addressing poverty among the specific sub-groups of women and children.

The study involved first designing a module of survey questions and refining them through focus group discussions with women experiencing poverty and social exclusion. The resulting set of questions was included in the 1999 round of the Living in Ireland Survey. Analysis of the responses to this innovative set of specially designed questions then focused on highlighting the scale and nature of differences within the household and teasing out the influences on the intra-household distribution of resources. The results are revealing, both in the specific Irish context and, more broadly, from a methodological and substantive point of view. SHARING HOUSEHOLD RESOURCES

1.2 THE HOUSEHOLD AS RESOURCE-SHARING UNIT

Conventional methods analysing poverty and income inequality take the household as the income recipient unit and assume resources are shared so that each individual in a given household has the same standard of living. Thus, in presenting a profile of those falling below an income poverty line, for example, households below that income level will be identified and all persons living in such households will be taken to be poor. If different individuals within households actually experience different levels of well-being, this could have major implications for our understanding of poverty and for the way anti-poverty policies are framed. In particular, conventional practice could lead to the extent and nature of gender differences in the experience of poverty being understated, to poverty for some children being obscured and to policy's capacity to improve living standards being seriously impaired.

Neither gender nor children have been ignored in recent poverty research, either in Ireland or internationally. Concern about the 'feminisation of poverty' over time has been a particularly important theme in US poverty research (Garfinkel and McLanahan 1986; McLanahan, Sørensen and Watson 1989). Goldberg and Kremen (1987) reviewed the evidence for seven industrialised countries and concluded that the recent feminisation of poverty is not uniquely American, but has been most pronounced in the US. However, in this research feminisation of poverty relates to the increasing proportion of poor households that are headed by a female or to the increasing proportion of women in poor households - with poverty status determined on the basis of household income. As far as children are concerned, the relatively high risk of poverty faced by households containing children in many industrialised countries has come to be seen as a major concern. This has received attention in the UK and the US, countries with particularly high child poverty rates (for example, see UNICEF 2000; Piachaud and Sutherland 2001).

In the Irish case, Nolan and Watson (1999) looked in depth at the position of households where the head or reference person is a woman, examining their risk of being in poverty and the factors underlying it. They also looked at the position of women in the labour market and the contribution made by their earnings to INTRODUCTION

household income. Nolan (2000) examined the position of Irish children,¹ once again investigating in some depth their poverty risk, how it had been changing over time and why it was higher in Ireland than in many other EU countries.

The position of both women and children in those studies was based on the household's situation in terms of income or nonmonetary indicators intended to capture the household's living standards. This conventional analysis of poverty and income inequality in effect treats the household as a 'black box' and has nothing to say about differences among household members in access to and control over resources. Several recent studies have sought to illustrate how substantial the bias in this equal-sharing assumption *could* be for our picture of poverty and income inequality, using data from the UK and Canada. This has involved adopting alternative sharing assumptions and recalculating conventional income poverty and inequality measures (Borooah and McKee 1994; Davies and Joshi 1994; Phipps and Burton 1995). Unsurprisingly, the results show that the assumption made about sharing can make a great deal of difference, particularly for the position of women and children. The crucial questions left open are just how much sharing actually does take place and consequently how great the differences in living standards among individuals within a household are. These questions constitute the focus of the present study.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The study is structured as follows. Chapter 2 discusses alternative analytical approaches to trying to open up the household 'black box', including the use of non-monetary indicators, and describes the type of indicators of deprivation most often used in looking at poverty at the household level. Chapter 3 summarises the results of our previous exploration, based on a household survey carried out by the ESRI in 1987, of employing those indicators to assess differences in living standards within the household. Those indicators naturally had limitations in that context, since they were designed to reflect

^{1.} For the purposes of this study, children are defined as under 14 years of age.

differences in living standards between rather than within households. Chapter 4 discusses the development of more satisfactory indicators specifically designed to reflect *individual* living standards and deprivation.

The remainder of the study analyses the responses to the module of questions on these indicators included in the 1999 Living in Ireland Survey. Chapter 5 looks at the relative position of spouses/partners within the household as far as living standards and deprivation levels are concerned. This entails an in-depth investigation of their responses to questions relating to levels of consumption/ deprivation, access to leisure activities and pastimes and to education and training. Chapter 6 examines access to and management of household resources, distinguishing between financial control and financial management, focusing in particular on the issue of the burden of responsibility for stretching scarce resources. Chapter 7 looks at the position of children within households. Children have little or no independent source of income and no real control over the management of family finances, thus making the development of direct indicators of deprivation for children especially important. Finally, Chapter 8 explores the implications of the findings, both for perspectives on the extent and nature of poverty and exclusion in Ireland and for the use of non-monetary indicators as a way of capturing key aspects of intra-household decision making and differences.

Chapter 2

Getting Inside the Household 'Black Box'

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As we have seen, an objection raised with increasing frequency to conventional analysis of poverty and income inequality is that it neglects what goes on within households, in effect treating the household as a 'black box'. In this chapter we discuss some alternative avenues of investigation aimed at shedding some light on the position of individuals within households, highlighting the role that non-monetary deprivation indicators can play. We then describe the type of indicators of deprivation most often used in looking at poverty at the household level as a prelude to developing ones more appropriate for the task at hand here.

2.2 OPENING UP THE HOUSEHOLD 'BLACK BOX'

A number of different avenues of research have begun to empirically explore the allocation of resources within households in industrialised countries.¹ One involves investigating how money and spending are managed within families. This research, usually applying qualitative approaches of investigation to small groups of households, has focused attention on differences in power and responsibilities between spouses, on the different allocative systems that operate and on control of resources and decision making (Pahl 1983, 1989; Vogler and Pahl 1994; Woolley and Marshall 1994). Another approach uses large-scale survey data on household expenditure patterns on different types of commodities to estimate husbands' and wives' expenditure shares (Browning, Bourguignon,

^{1.} The literature in this area dealing with developing countries has a different context and direction; interested readers are referred to Lawrence Haddad and Ravi Kanbur (1990) as a starting point.

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Chiappori and Lechene 1994). Another seeks to use expenditure data to test the pooling-of-resources hypothesis by looking at how UK expenditure patterns altered after policy switched some social transfers from husbands to wives (Lundberg, Pollak and Wales 1997).

An alternative and complementary approach, which can help to both assess the extent of differences in living standards within the household and directly inform anti-poverty policy, is to use nonmonetary indicators of living standards and deprivation to look at intra-household differences. While the development of direct measures of individual living standards faces a variety of challenges, it also has significant advantages compared with trying to draw inferences from small groups or from income or expenditure data for large samples. By helping to assess the extent of differences in living standards within households, they can make an important contribution, both in terms of the measurement of poverty and more broadly by providing a window into resource sharing within the household. To provide the necessary background, in the next section we describe the type of indicators of deprivation most often used in looking at poverty at the household level before going on in subsequent chapters to develop and implement ones more suitable for the individual level.

2.3 NON-MONETARY INDICATORS IN MEASURING HOUSEHOLD POVERTY

Poverty in industrialised countries has most commonly been defined in terms of exclusion from the ordinary life of one's society due to lack of resources (Townsend 1979). In measuring poverty, though, most studies rely on income (or expenditure) to distinguish 'the poor' from the non-poor, using a variety of methods to construct income poverty lines.² Dependence on income as a measure of living

^{2.} Amaryta Sen (1979) has emphasised that the 'direct method', focusing on consumption, and the 'income method' are not two alternative ways of measuring the same thing, but rather represent two alternative conceptions of poverty. The former identifies those whose actual consumption fails to meet (what are accepted as) minimum needs, while the latter identifies those who do not have the ability to meet those needs within the behavioral constraints, e.g. on expenditure patterns, typical in that community. Despite this clear distinction, many of the studies using income appear in fact to be taking it as a measure of living standards rather than of consumption 'possibilities'.

Getting Inside the Household 'Black Box'

standards assumes that it is a reliable indicator of the economic resources available to people and that economic resources largely determine living standards. However, current or annual household income as measured in surveys is not always a reliable indicator of household economic resources at a particular point for several reasons: income fluctuates, households at similar income levels may have quite different levels of savings and debts, there are differences in the availability of social-support networks and the resources in the form of non-cash income – benefits and services provided by employers or the state – differ across households. The fact that income may not adequately capture differences in living standards and may not always be a reliable measure of exclusion has led to attempts to develop other indicators that could be used along with, or instead of, income.

The use of non-monetary indicators of deprivation in measuring household poverty was pioneered in UK studies by Townsend (1979) and Mack and Lansley (1985).³ Other recent studies employing such indicators in measuring poverty include Mayer and Jencks (1988, 1993) with US data, Mayer (1993), using data from the US, Germany, Canada and Sweden, Muffels and Vrien (1991), using Dutch data, and Hallerod (1995) with data from Sweden. These studies most often use non-monetary indicators to construct a deprivation index, but then employ deprivation scores in measuring poverty in a variety of ways.⁴ Townsend (1979), for example, sought to derive an income poverty line from deprivation scores, while Mack and Lansley and Hallerod each used deprivation scores directly to identify the poor. Mayer and Jencks (1988) used data from a sample of Chicago households to construct an eight-item hardship index and to investigate the factors predicting scores on that index. The recent British study by Gordon et al. (2000) explored a variety of nonmonetary indicators and their relationship with household income and with the respondents' subjective well-being. Their findings are representative of a general pattern across these studies, showing that

^{3.} Freyman *et al.* (1991) and Gordon *et al.* (1995) have also developed the use of such indicators with British data.

^{4.} By taking a range of non-monetary indicators (clothes, heating, consumer durables, etc.), an overall index of deprivation may be specified.

current income, while of course important, is only one of the variables influencing deprivation levels. All these studies confront difficult questions, such as how to select the most satisfactory indicators for their purposes and how to best use them in exploring poverty.

This literature on the use of non-monetary indicators in measuring household poverty is reviewed in depth in Nolan and Whelan (1996), who go on to describe an approach developed in the ESRI that draws on both current experience of deprivation and low income to identify those excluded from the life of society due to lack of resources. This approach was first applied to Irish data from a household survey carried out by the ESRI in 1987. The survey obtained information on the set of 20 indicators of style of living listed in Table 2.1. Following the approach developed by Mack and Lansley (1985), respondents were shown a card listing these items/activities and asked:

- 1. Which of the things listed do you not have or cannot avail of?
- 2. Of the things you don't have, which ones would you like to have but must do without because of lack of money?
- 3. Which ones do you believe are necessities, that is, things that every household (or person) should be able to have and that nobody should have to do without?

This information was sought in order to have some basis on which to distinguish cases where absence of an item is due to differences in tastes rather than inability to afford it, however difficult that may be.

These indicators of style of living were primarily designed to complement income in assessing the living standards and poverty status of households and have proved extremely valuable for that purpose. The group of households characterised by both low income and by particular forms of deprivation have a distinct profile, and a range of evidence suggests that they are much more likely to represent people suffering exclusion due to lack of resources than those simply on low incomes (see Nolan and Whelan 1996). This is not primarily because of the (real) difficulties in measuring income accurately, but because a household's command over resources is affected by much more than its current income. Long-term factors, relating most importantly to the way resources have been Getting Inside the Household 'Black Box'

Table 2.1 Lifestyle Items/Activities in 1987 ESRI Survey

Refrigerator Washing machine Telephone Car Colour television A week's annual holiday away from home (not staying with relatives) A dry, damp-free dwelling Heating for the living room when it is cold Central heating in the house An indoor toilet in the dwelling (not shared with other households) Bath or shower (not shared with other households) A meal with meat, chicken or fish every second day A warm, waterproof overcoat Two pairs of strong shoes To be able to save some of one's income regularly A daily newspaper A roast meat joint or its equivalent once a week A hobby or leisure activity New, not second-hand, clothes Presents for friends or family once a year

accumulated or eroded over time, as well as current income play a crucial role in influencing the likelihood of current deprivation and exclusion.

The same approach to identifying those who are 'consistently poor' has been applied to data from surveys carried out in 1994 and subsequent years and a marked decline in consistent poverty has been observed from that date as deprivation levels fell (see Callan *et al.* 1999; Layte *et al.* 2000; Layte, Nolan and Whelan 2000). The term 'consistently poor' refers to the numbers below relative income poverty lines and experiencing basic deprivation. The National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS), adopted in 1997, included a global poverty reduction target framed in terms of this measure of household poverty, subsequently revised in 1999. The issues surrounding the use of non-monetary indicators in a target-setting context as well as in measuring household poverty are discussed in, for example, Layte, Nolan and Whelan (2000).

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2.4 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter we have discussed ways of trying to open up the household 'black box' and in particular the role non-monetary deprivation indicators can play in that context. We then described the type of deprivation indicators most often used in looking at poverty at the household level. In Chapter 3 we will summarise the results of previous work investigating what those indicators have to say about differences in living standards within the household before turning to the development of indicators specifically designed to reflect individual living standards and deprivation.

Chapter 3

MEASURING INTRA-HOUSEHOLD POVERTY USING NON-MONETARY INDICATORS – RESULTS FROM THE 1987 SURVEY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

If non-monetary indicators are to help in capturing the situation of individuals within households, the key question is which indicators best perform in doing so. The logical first step in investigating this is to see whether the indicators already available and used to assess poverty at household level also reveal intra-household differences. In this chapter we summarise the results of previous work, using such indicators in the ESRI household survey for 1987 to explore differences between spouses in deprivation levels. This serves as a point of departure for the development of a set of indicators specifically aimed at capturing intra-household differences.

3.2 A FIRST LOOK AT DIFFERENCES IN DEPRIVATION BETWEEN SPOUSES

The set of indicators available for 1987, which were presented in Table 2.1, allowed an initial exploration of differences among individuals within the household. Some of the items are clearly common to all members of a family or household, such as a bath or shower, fridge or indoor toilet, and therefore are not useful in comparisons between individuals. This would also be true of the indicators most frequently gathered in household surveys or censuses, i.e. ones relating to housing and consumer durables. However, some of the indicators relate more to the individual than the household, such as not having a second pair of shoes or a warm overcoat, while others, such as those relating to meals, are more difficult to categorise clearly as familial versus individual, as the discussion below illustrates.

Generally, surveys seek information on these types of indicators from one household member and this member's responses are treated as applying to the household as a whole. This was the practice adopted in the Living in Ireland Surveys, which began in 1994. Unusually, however, the questions about these indicators in the 1987 ESRI survey were asked of all adults in sample households. This created a rare opportunity to investigate whether the responses of different members could provide a basis for measuring differences in living standards among individuals in a household. (A summary of the findings was presented in Nolan and Watson 1999 and a complete description of the sample data and results are in Cantillon and Nolan 1998.)

To investigate the potential of the available indicators in measuring intra-household differences, the responses of spouses/ partners in the sample were compared. The sample of married persons where both spouses completed the individual questionnaire comprised 1,763 couples. For the 20 items or activities available, Table 3.1 shows the extent to which spouses gave the same response. Half the items – those in the bottom half of the table – appear by their very nature to be mostly relevant to the entire household rather than to the responding individuals within it. For these items, spouses gave different responses in less than 3 per cent of couples. For items such as 'a dry, damp-free dwelling', where 2.8 per cent had a difference, there could reasonably be varying opinions among the spouses. Up to 1 per cent of couples show a difference even for unambiguously familial items where there seems no scope for differing judgments, such as a washing machine, a fridge, a bath/shower or an indoor toilet - this probably reflects a random measurement error (at interviewing, coding or keying stages).

However, the other ten items, in the top half of Table 3.1, appeared to have some potential as indicators of individual rather than familial living standards. For these items, between 5 per cent (for a meal with meat, etc. every second day) and 23 per cent (for a hobby or leisure activity) of couples gave differing responses.¹ Deciding whether

^{1.} These are significantly different from the 1 per cent which random error might produce at the 5 per cent significance level.

Item	Per cent both say lacking	Per cent neither say lacking	Per cent spouses differ
A week's holiday away from home	27.2	62.2	10.6
A meal with meat, chicken or fish every			
second day	87.9	7.2	5.0
A warm, waterproof overcoat	82.1	6.8	11.1
Two pairs of strong shoes	77.3	9.5	13.2
To be able to save	34.8	49.6	15.5
A daily newspaper	56.3	37.2	6.5
A roast meat joint or equivalent			
once a week	80.7	11.5	7.8
A hobby or leisure activity	55.6	21.6	22.8
New, not second-hand, clothes	88.5	4.5	6.9
Presents for friends or family once a year	77.1	11.5	11.5
Refrigerator	97.8	1.9	0.3
Washing machine	89.7	9.2	1.2
Telephone	56.3	42.5	1.2
Car	74.5	23.5	2.1
Colour TV	85.2	13.6	1.2
A dry, damp-free dwelling	90.3	6.8	2.8
Heating for the living rooms	97.1	1.0	1.9
Central heating in the house	62.0	35.0	3.0
An indoor toilet	96.4	3.4	0.3
Bath/shower	95.8	3.9	0.2

Table 3.1 Spouses' Responses on 20 Style of Living Items, 1987²

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some of these items are personal or familial is not always clear-cut *a priori*. A roast once a week and a meal with meat, chicken or fish every second day could be counted as potentially personal, for example, because small-scale studies have suggested that women sometimes limit their own consumption of food, particularly meat, so that the rest of the family can have more (Delphy and Leonard 1992). However, whether respondents actually interpret these questions as applying to their own consumption is an open question. Given how often spouses give differing responses, it seems worth exploring whether they could plausibly be interpreted as reflecting differences in individual living standards rather than simply differing judgments about household living standards.

^{2.} Totals may not equal 100 per cent due to rounding here and in subsequent tables.

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The next question was whether the differences arose from the wives lacking an item possessed by their husbands or vice versa. Focusing on each item for which the couples gave different responses, Table 3.2 shows how often the wife said the item was lacked and the husband said it was not. For eight out of the ten items the woman was disadvantaged more often than the man (the exceptions being ability to save and presents for friends or family once a year).³

Table 3.2 Extent to which Spouses are Disadvantaged vis-à-vis One Another,1987

Item	Per cent of cases where the husband has the item and the wife does not
A week's holiday away from home	51.6
A meal with meat, chicken or fish every second day	52.3
A warm, waterproof overcoat	59.0
Two pairs of strong shoes	56.2
To be able to save	48.2
A daily newspaper	57.0
A roast meat joint or equivalent once a week	59.4
A hobby or leisure activity	61.9
New, not second-hand, clothes	66.4
Presents for friends or family once a year	32.1

These ten items were then used to construct summary deprivation indices for each individual, with a score of one being added to the index for each item which he or she lacks. Subtracting the husband's score on the ten-item index from that of his wife gave a measure of the 'gap' between them. About 46 per cent of couples were found to have a zero gap – husband and wife had identical scores on their individual indices. About 29 per cent had gaps greater than zero – the wife had a higher deprivation index score than the husband – and 25 per cent had a negative gap, in which the husband had a higher index

^{3.} In each case this percentage is significantly different from 50 per cent at the 5 per cent significance level.

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score than the wife. Thus, the wife was more likely to be the one experiencing greater deprivation, but the husband did so in a substantial minority of the cases. This gap measure effectively assumed that all the items are equally important, so that lack of one item by either spouse can be compensated by possession of another. Alternative weighting schemes were explored, such as using the proportion of couples possessing an item or the proportion regarding it as a necessity as weight, but did not alter the results.

Since for some of the items one might be particularly unsure that differing responses represent divergences in the living standards of the spouses rather than different perceptions about the family's situation, a more restricted set of the five items that appear to be strictly personal in nature was also used to construct a summary index. These items were an overcoat, two pairs of shoes, a hobby or leisure activity, new clothes and a holiday. On this index about 58 per cent of couples showed no gap, 17 per cent had a gap in favour of the wife and 25 per cent had a gap in favour of the husband.

Some of these differences between spouses could arise from differences in tastes rather than be enforced by resource constraints. For this reason, differences between spouses not simply in whether they lack the ten items but rather in whether they attributed the absence to lack of money were investigated. A ten-item deprivation index was again constructed for each individual, with a score of one now being added for each item which the individual lacks and states this is because they cannot afford it. Subtracting the husband's from the wife's score, about 54 per cent of couples now had a zero gap, 21 per cent had the husband with a higher index score than the wife and 26 per cent had wives with higher scores than husbands. Thus, slightly fewer spouses had diverging scores than when we just looked at having/lacking the items, but again more wives than husbands were relatively disadvantaged. This remained true for the corresponding indices for the five 'unambiguously personal' items in that case the gap was zero for 65 per cent of couples, favoured the wife for 14 per cent and favoured the husband for 21 per cent. Where there was a gap it was most often small.

The way these gaps between the wife's and the husband's scores on the different summary deprivation indices varied with a range of individual and family characteristics was also analysed. Any such

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differences could reflect an independent effect these variables have on the experiences of wives versus husbands or the impact of household allocative systems, which themselves differ systematically across, for example, income groups and social classes. The three gap measures, based on the ten items, did vary with household equivalent income decile. For all three measures, the mean gap peaked in decile three but displayed no consistent pattern thereafter as one moves up the income distribution. In relation to social class, the mean gaps varied across the six social classes employed by the Irish Central Statistics Office, but there was no consistent trend as one moves down the class hierarchy, peaking in the semi-skilled class. The mean gaps by husband's age showed more variation across the three indices, but no very clear pattern emerged. The indices constructed using only the five 'unambiguously personal' items revealed a similar pattern. These results did not suggest the gap between the wife's and husband's deprivation scores was systematically related to household income, social class or age.

A consistent theme of the literature on distribution of resources in the family is the role that the wife's own income may play. When this variable was examined, the mean gap between the wife's and the husband's deprivation index scores was consistently narrower when the wife had an income of her own. The gap was narrower still when the wife's income was at least IR£25 pounds a week (in 1987 terms). However, the standard deviation of these means was quite large, with very little of the overall variation in the gap measures being explained by the differences between the groups. Alternative models were also estimated, treating cases where the husband experienced more deprivation as random (just to take the polar case as one benchmark) and setting the gap measures for those couples to zero, but once again the explanatory power of these equations was quite limited.

3.3 CONCLUSIONS

As this chapter has highlighted, research using 1987 data went as far as possible in exploring the role indicators employed in poverty research at household level could play in investigating intra-

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household issues. The quite limited overall imbalance found in measured deprivation in favour of husbands suggests that such indicators would not reveal a substantial reservoir of hidden poverty among wives in non-poor households, nor much greater deprivation among women than men in poor households. However, the items themselves were not chosen with intra-household differences in living standards and deprivation as the primary focus, nor was the way the data was collected or structured with that issue to the forefront. More sensitive indicators might still reveal greater differences between spouses in deprivation experience having an important bearing on gender inequalities within the household. In addition, the indicators employed so far have related to adults, but children's position within households is also of great importance and we need to be able to assess whether household-level poverty measures are adequately capturing their situation. To investigate these issues, we need to develop more sensitive indicators of deprivation designed to reflect individual living standards for adults and children, the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Developing Individual-Level Deprivation Indicators – The 1999 Living in Ireland Survey

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we discuss the development of a set of indicators designed to capture living standards at the level of the individual rather than the household, but suitable for use in large household surveys rather than qualitative investigation of much smaller numbers (Cantillon and Nolan 2001). These were then included in the 1999 wave of the large-scale Living in Ireland Survey and the results will be analysed in subsequent chapters.

4.2 DEVELOPMENT OF SUITABLE INDICATORS

Development of these indicators involved combining the lessons drawn from earlier analysis of large-scale survey data described above with insights derived from small-scale qualitative studies. As part of this exercise we conducted a number of focus group sessions to discuss the exercise and to examine the potential of this general approach to assessing intra-household differences. The two focus groups, of 17 and 14 women, respectively, were comprised of participants in various training courses under the Community Development Program.¹ While the focus group exercise supported our belief that the issue was worth exploring and that the areas in which we expected to find the biggest gender differentials were the appropriate ones, it also brought out the many subtle ways in which differences in living standards and burdens of coping within a

^{1.} The Community Development Program was set up in 1990 to fund projects and organisations in communities experiencing economic and social disadvantage.

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household may occur. This underscored the difficulties involved in developing appropriate indicators, particularly in framing the questions, so as to ascertain the extent of such intra-household differences.

In developing the deprivation indicators we tried to address four distinct, though inter-related, areas:

- 1. Differences between adults in the household, including spouses/partners, in consumption/deprivation levels.
- 2. Differences between adults in access to and expenditure on leisure activities.
- 3. Differences between adults in control and management of resources.
- 4. Living standards and deprivation levels of children within households.

4.3 DIFFERENCES IN CONSUMPTION/DEPRIVATION AMONG ADULTS

In choosing indicators designed to explore differences in consumption, we focused on areas in which such differences seemed most likely to occur. In this context we did not limit ourselves to items that might be classified as personal or individual, since several small-scale studies have indicated differences in the way familial or household items are distributed or consumed. In regard to the latter, we chose three items (food, heating and use of a car) as indicators of familial living standards that previous studies have suggested may be problematic in terms of assuming fairly equal access or consumption. The important issue here was that the questions be phrased so as to ensure that the respondent understood they related to his or her *own* individual consumption, rather than that of the household as a whole, and answered accordingly.

A car is a good example of how differences between spouses in familial or household items can relate to perceived ownership of an asset. Previous research shows that even when a household buys its own car (as opposed to a company car) there is a marked tendency for the car to be seen as belonging to the husband. When there is only one car in the family men often take it work, so that despite the household's possessing a car the wife may in fact have little real access to it (Delphy and Leonard 1992). With this in mind we formulated the question as follows.

Do you *generally have the use of a car for:*

- going to work
- *doing the shopping*
- going out in the evenings/weekends
- bringing the children on outings?

A number of small-scale studies have shown that another potentially problematic familial or household indicator of deprivation is heating. Graham (1992) cites personal fuel consumption as an item in which women facing budget constraints felt there was scope for savings. Here we designed the following question to try to capture the extent of these personal cost-cutting measures.

Have you ever had to go without heating during the last year through lack of money? I mean, have you had to go without a fire on a cold day, go to bed early to keep warm or light the fire late because of a lack of coal/fuel?

If yes, would this have affected the whole family or just yourself?

The consumption of food, especially meat, has been shown to be sensitive to gender differentiation by a number of studies (Charles and Kerr 1987; Land 1983; Delphy and Leonard 1992). These suggest that the distribution of food within families reflects differences in the status of family members and that there is gender (and age) differentiation in the quality and quantity consumed. Another aspect of this is self-denial, where a woman may 'choose' a smaller portion, or none at all, in a situation when there is not enough for everyone. We therefore formulated a number of questions on food consumption that try to capture these nuances, including:

Does the whole family usually have the same meal?

If no, is that because of lack of money? If yes, who has the less costly meal? • Self • Spouse

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- Children
- Others

Does the family have a meal with meat, chicken or fish at least every second day?

If no, is that because of lack of money?

Do you ever find yourself skimping on your own meal so the rest of the family can have enough?

If yes, is that because of lack of money?

During the last two weeks was there ever a day when you did not have a substantial meal at all (I mean from getting up to going to bed) due to lack of money?

If yes, would this have affected the whole family or just yourself?

In relation to items of personal or individual consumption we included first the following list of six items.

Do you have, or can you avail of, the following:

- a good raincoat/overcoat
- two good pairs of shoes
- a new good suit or outfit
- a hair-do or haircut (regularly)
- a regular dental check-up
- visit to the doctor when needed?

In each case if no, is it something you would like but can't afford?

In addition, we have included some specific questions on clothes. Again, small-scale studies (Land 1983) have indicated that wives may go longer without new clothing than their husbands when resources are stretched. Another issue arises in relation to purchasing secondhand clothes rather than new clothes insofar as this affects a person's self-confidence or esteem and, in turn, their role as the family's public representative in dealings with outside institutions (schools, doctors, etc.).
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Have you bought any new clothes for yourself in the last three months? If no, is that because of lack of money?

Have there been times in the last year when you had to buy second-hand rather than new clothes?

If yes, was this for yourself? For your spouse? For your children (if any)?

4.4 LEISURE ACTIVITIES OR PASTIMES

Previous studies in Ireland (Rottman 1994; Cantillon and Nolan 1998) and elsewhere have shown differences between husbands and wives in access to leisure activities or pastimes. Free time and personal spending money are considered significant factors in this difference, with both acting as a constraint on women's leisure activities. The literature in relation to time poverty, or time deprivation, and the sharing of household work is especially relevant in this regard (Bittmann and Pixley 1998; Vickery 1977). Here we have approached the question of less time and spending on leisure activities in a number of ways, asking each spouse, separately, about leisure activities pursued and the amount of money spent on the activity, as well as the availability of personal spending money and the sums involved. We also wished to investigate the possibility of how other constraints, such as disapproval or lack of support from a spouse, might curtail participation in activities outside of the home. The questions include:

Do you have a regular pastime or leisure activity?

If no, is this because of lack of time, e.g. childcare, household responsibilities? Is this because of lack of money?

Most weeks, do you have some money to spend on yourself, for your own pleasure or recreation?

If yes, about how much would you have available to spend?

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Did you have an afternoon or evening out in the last fortnight, for your entertainment, that cost money?

If no, was the main reason because:

- didn't want to
- full social life in other ways
- couldn't afford to
- can't leave the children
- illness
- other?

Have you been involved in any mainstream education or in any vocational training since the beginning of 1998?

If no, would you have liked to do so?

If yes, was the main obstacle:

- lack of money
- lack of childcare
- other?

4.5 CONTROL OVER RESOURCES/BURDEN OF COPING

The second aspect that we have sought to capture in formulating the set of indicators is control over resources. Several UK studies, using both small-scale surveys (Pahl 1989) and large, nationally representative samples (Volger and Pahl 1994), have explored different allocative systems for managing household resources and their implications for the living standards of individual members. Rottman (1994) used Irish data for 1987 to examine this issue and also identified a number of distinct approaches to managing resources. Our focus here is on the relationship between management and control of finances within the household and patterns of spending/deprivation. We therefore included the following questions.

If you needed, for example, a coat or a pair of shoes for yourself, would you normally:

a) buy it straight away

- *b)* save up for it yourself and then buy it
- *c)* ask your spouse for the money
- d) budget for it with your spouse/partner
- *e)* borrow for it
- *f) do without until money became available?*

If a large unexpected bill arose, such as a medical or repair bill, who do you think would decide how to meet it? Respondent, spouse/partner, both/joint decision, other.

Who does the budgeting on a weekly basis? Respondent, spouse/partner, both.

Would you, your spouse or both of you generally make the decisions about:

- *a) spending on regular shopping (groceries, etc.)*
- *b)* paying the electricity and gas bills
- *c) paying the rent/mortgage*
- *d)* buying large household items (such as a TV)
- *e)* buying a car
- f) borrowing money
- *g) paying debts?*

Another aspect of control over resources is the distinction between financial management and financial control. Specifically we were interested in examining the proposition that women in poor households have the added burden of responsibility for stretching scarce resources:

When money is tight, who takes the main responsibility for trying to make sure it stretches as far as possible from week to week? Respondent, spouse/partner, both.

4.6 CHILDREN

We also wished to extend the analysis beyond adults and investigate children's position. While children can be more easily classified as dependents, with no independent source of income and with no real

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control over the management of family finances, the intra-household allocation systems and spending patterns employed in a particular household or family may affect their individual living standards and poverty status. An interesting exploration of the value of non-monetary indicators for children using British data is in Gordon *et al.* (2000). In our survey, all mothers with children under 14 years of age were asked:

Over the last year or so, has lack of money meant that the children have had to do without:

- *a) a party on their birthday with friends*
- *b)* school trips
- *c)* having friends home to play
- *d) doing lessons in, for example, music or dancing, or playing sports*
- *e) three meals a day*
- *f) pocket money*
- g) toys, such as dolls or models
- *h) a bicycle or sports equipment?*

4.7 COLLECTION OF DATA

Finally, it is worth noting that if one is trying to capture intrahousehold differences, this will have implications for the way the data is collected. Small-scale intensive studies have shown the sensitivity and subtlety required to tease out differences between spouses in activities and attitudes (Graham 1987; Pahl 1989). While it was not possible to ensure that each person was interviewed alone in the 1999 survey, interviewers did note whether the partner or other family members were present when each respondent was completing the questionnaire. It turned out that the spouse/partner was present for about half the responding husbands when they completed this section of the interview, but only 36 per cent of wives had their partner present. For 54 per cent of wives they were the only one present, while for about 10 per cent another adult or child was present. Interviewers were also carefully instructed on the need for clarity about questions focusing on the individual's own situation versus that of the family/household.

Chapter 5

DEPRIVATION AMONG SPOUSES/PARTNERS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

We now turn to the results found when the module of questions described in the previous chapter was included in the 1999 wave of the Living in Ireland Survey. (A detailed description of the design of the Living in Ireland Survey is given in Callan et al. (1996).) The pattern of household poverty shown by that survey in various years, including the extent of deprivation, has been analysed in Callan *et al.* (1996, 1999) and Layte et al. (2000). Here we turn directly to the nonmonetary indicators designed to capture the situation of individuals within the household, looking in turn at distinct areas on which these indicators can shed some light. We focus in this chapter on the relative position of spouses/partners within the household as far as living standards and deprivation are concerned. This entails an indepth investigation of their responses to questions relating to levels of consumption/deprivation, access to leisure activities and pastimes and to education and training. The next chapter then turns to an examination of responses relating to the management of household resources, while Chapter 7 focuses on children.

5.2 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SPOUSES ON INDIVIDUAL DEPRIVATION ITEMS

The sample available for analysis in the context of a comparison of spouses/partners comprises 1,124 couples for which both partners completed the module in the 1999 questionnaire on intra-household items.

We look first at the responses of spouses/partners as to which of a list of six indicators of individual living standards they had/did not have/could not afford. Table 5.1 shows for each item the percentage DEPRIVATION AMONG SPOUSES/PARTNERS

of couples where both spouses say they do not have the item, the percentage where both say they do have it and the percentage where the spouses differ in their responses about lack/possession of the item.

Item	Per cent both partners report having item	Per cent both partners report not having item	Per cent one partner reports having item and other reports not having it
A warm, waterproof overcoat	96.2	1.8	2.0
Two pairs of strong shoes	94.0	1.5	4.5
A new good suit/outfit	92.3	4.4	3.3
A regular hair-do/haircut	91.4	0.8	7.9
A regular dental check-up	81.9	7.4	10.6
Visits to doctor when needed	97.8	0.0	2.2

Table 5.1 Responses o	f Spouses/Partners on	Six Deprivation Items
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We see that in the overwhelming majority of couples both the spouses/partners say that they have the item – this is the case for over 90 per cent of couples, with the exception of a regular dental check-up, where it is true for 82 per cent. We are particularly interested, however, in cases where the spouses give different responses, and we see that in general this is uncommon. For a warm, waterproof overcoat, two pairs of shoes, a new good suit or outfit or a visit to the doctor when needed, it occurs in less than 5 per cent of couples. For a regular haircut or a regular dental check-up, on the other hand, the percentage where spouses give differing responses reaches 8 per cent and over 10 per cent, respectively.

Focusing on the cases where one spouse says he or she has the item and the other says not, Table 5.2 then examines whether it is most often the husband who has the item and the wife who does not or vice versa. We see that for four of the six items – a warm coat, two pairs of shoes, a regular dental check-up and a visit to the doctor when needed – it is in fact more common for the wife to have the item and the husband not. For the other two items – a new suit and a regular hair-do or haircut – it is more often the husband who has and the wife who has not.

Item	Per cent where husband has, wife has not	Per cent where wife has, husband has not
A warm, waterproof overcoat	0.5	1.5
Two pairs of strong shoes	1.6	2.9
A new good suit/outfit	1.8	1.5
A regular hair-do/haircut	6.4	1.5
A regular dental check-up	4.9	5.7
Visits to doctor when needed	0.6	1.6

Table 5.2 Cases Where Spouses/Partners Differ on Six Deprivation	Items
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If they said they did not have one of these items, respondents were also asked whether this was because they did not want it or could not afford it. These subjective assessments have to be treated with some caution, in that someone may be socialised into feeling that they do not want something that they effectively cannot have in their situation. Nonetheless, one might be particularly concerned about those cases where one spouse has the item and the other does not and says that this is because of lack of money. Table 5.3 shows how frequently this occurs for each of the six items.

We see that the number of cases involved is often very small and that for most of the items it is as common for the wife as the husband to be the one who has the item while the other does not but would like to. It is only in the case of the hair-do/haircut item that a significant number of couples are in the situation that the husband has the item and the wife says she does not because she cannot afford it. This item is clearly also distinctive in that it is likely to be more expensive for women than men, which may help to explain the observed difference between spouses/partners.

Item	Per cent where husband has, wife cannot afford	Per cent where wife has, husband cannot afford
A warm, waterproof overcoat	0.4	0.6
Two pairs of strong shoes	1.2	1.3
A new good suit/outfit	1.3	0.8
A regular hair-do/haircut	5.2	0.2
A regular dental check-up	2.0	1.8
Visits to doctor when needed	0.4	1.0

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Two other deprivation items included in the questionnaire were heating and clothes. When asked whether they ever had to go without heating during the last year through lack of money, only about 1 per cent of husbands and the same number of wives said that they had done so. When probed as to whether this affected the whole family or just themselves, all those saying they had gone without heating said the whole family was affected. When questioned about buying second-hand clothes in the previous 12 months, most couples (94 per cent) both said they had not done so. However, about 3 per cent both said they had and 2.5 per cent of couples gave different responses. Most often this related to buying second-hand clothes for oneself rather than spouse or children.

We now turn to responses with respect to meals, presented in Table 5.4. The first interesting finding here is that in 93 per cent of couples, both spouses/partners said the whole family usually had the same meal – a higher proportion than might perhaps be commonly expected, given changes in living patterns and increasing participation by women in the paid labour force. In about 3 per cent of couples both said the whole family did not have the same meal and in 4 per cent of couples the partners gave a different response. Taking the cases where both said they have a different meal or where their responses differed, very few indeed said that this was because of lack of money (and of these about the same number of men and women said they had the less costly meal).

	Per cent both partners replied yes	Per cent both partners replied no	Per cent partners gave different responses
Does family have the same meal?	93.0	3.0	4.0
Do you have a meal with meat, chicken or fish every second day?	95.4	0.7	3.9
	Per cent both partners replied no	Per cent both partners replied yes	Per cent partners gave different responses
Have you skimped on your own meal?	91.8	1.7	6.5

Table 5.4 Responses of Spouses/Partners on Items Relating to Meals

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When asked if they have a meal with meat, chicken or fish at least every second day, we see that in about 95 per cent of couples both said they did, but for 4 per cent the responses of the two spouses/partners diverged. Among the latter, there was a fairly even divide between cases where the man had and the woman did not (46 per cent of the differing cases) and vice versa (54 per cent).

When asked whether they ever skimped on their own meal so the rest of the family had enough, we see that again over 90 per cent of couples both said they did not. Over 6 per cent of couples differed when asked about skimping on their own meal, though, and in almost three-quarters of those cases it was the woman who said she sometimes did and the husband said he did not. Thus, in about 4.5 per cent of all couples the woman is skimping on her meal and the man is not to try to ensure the rest of the family has enough.

Table 5.5 shows that quite a high percentage of spouses (21 per cent) both said they did not have a regular pastime or leisure activity, but fully 29 per cent of couples gave different responses to that question. In two-thirds of those couples, this was because the husband had a pastime or hobby and the wife did not. The extent to which this may be attributed to lack of time rather than lack of money

DEPRIVATION AMONG SPOUSES/PARTNERS

was explored in a follow-up question. The responses showed that a very high proportion of wives said lack of time was the reason they did not have a pastime or hobby.

	Per cent both partners replied yes	Per cent both partners replied no	Per cent partners gave different responses
Has regular pastime or leisure activity?	50.0	20.8	29.2
	Per cent both partners replied no	Per cent both partners replied yes	Per cent partners gave different responses
Would have liked education or training?	84.0	3.2	12.8

Table 5.5 Responses	of Spouses/Partners	on Items	Relating to	Hobbies and
Education/Training				

Table 5.5 also shows that most respondents not involved in education or vocational training over the last year or so said they would not have liked to do so. However, about 13 per cent of spouses gave different responses when asked this question. The extent to which not being involved in education/training was attributable to lack of time rather than lack of money was once again explored in a follow-up question. The responses showed that for wives who would have liked education or training, lack of money was said to be the main obstacle for one-quarter and lack of childcare was the main obstacle for a further quarter, with 'other reasons' being selected by the rest. For husbands, on the other hand, lack of money was identified as the main obstacle by 9 per cent, lack of childcare by only 4 per cent and 'other reasons' by 87 per cent.

Table 5.6 shows the pattern of response when respondents were asked about whether they usually had the use of a car for different purposes. While a substantially higher proportion of husbands than

wives said they had the use of a car to go to work, there was little or no difference in the proportion who said they had the use of a car for going out in the evenings or weekends or for bringing the children on outings.

Generally have use of car for	Per cent of husbands	Per cent of wives
Work	59.1	37.0
Shopping	79.0	87.0
Weekend/evenings	89.0	86.4
Children's outings	53.0	51.7

Finally, respondents were also asked whether they had some money 'to spend on yourself, for your own pleasure or recreation' most weeks and those who did were asked the amount. Most men and women said that they did, but the figure was slightly higher for husbands than wives at 87 per cent versus 83 per cent, respectively. On average, the men who said they did also had slightly more to spend, at about IR£31 per week on average versus IR£26 for women.

It is also interesting to look at variation in responses within the couple. Where husbands had some spending money, 91 per cent of their partners also had some, but 9 per cent said they did not. Among wives with some spending money only 5 per cent of their partners said they had none. Of all husbands with no spending money, one-third of their wives had some, but almost half the husbands of wives without spending money had some.

5.3 SUMMARY INDICES OF DEPRIVATION AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SPOUSES

We now seek to bring together the information provided by the various indicators discussed in the previous section to construct summary measures of the extent of deprivation experienced by husbands and wives and of the differences between spouses/

Deprivation among Spouses/Partners

partners in this regard. Focusing first on the six items included in Table 5.1 (a raincoat, two pairs of shoes, a new suit, haircut, dental care and doctor visits), we can construct a summary deprivation index where one is added for each item lacked. We find that almost the same proportion of husbands and wives reported no deprivation in terms of these six items – about 83 per cent. Similarly, among those reporting deprivation there is little difference in the scale of reported deprivation, with about 4 per cent of husbands and of wives lacking three or more of the items. Constructing a deprivation index with the same items but concentrating on 'enforced lack', so a score is added to the index only for those items lacked and regarded as not affordable, shows a similar picture.

We also have the option of including more items in constructing the index of deprivation. We can incorporate a hobby or leisure activity, ability to pursue education/training, skimping on meals, buying second-hand clothes, having a cheaper meal and not having a meal with meat, chicken or fish every second day. There is then a gap in reported enforced deprivation scores for 13 per cent of couples, evenly divided between cases where the wife reports greater deprivation than their husband and vice versa.

Finally, it is of interest to examine the relationship between reported deprivation for spouses/partners and the income and poverty status of the household. Table 5.7 shows first that about half the husbands reporting enforced deprivation in terms of the 12-item index are in households below the 60 per cent relative income line and the corresponding figure for women is similar. The finding that a substantial proportion of those reporting some enforced deprivation are above this (relatively high) income poverty threshold may appear surprising at first. However, it must be recalled that some of the households reporting deprivation in terms of some 'basic' items have been seen in previous research to be above that income threshold, for a variety of reasons. This is precisely why, in seeking to identify those unable to participate in ordinary living patterns due to lack of resources, the measure of 'consistent' poverty developed at the ESRI and used in previous studies adopts the stringent criterion that the household both falls below the 60 per cent relative income threshold and reports

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experiencing basic deprivation (for example, see Nolan and Whelan 1996; Callan *et al.* 1999). Secondly, some of the items included in the 12-item index here would be expected to affect a broader group than the 'basic' set, for example, including doctor and dentist visits, where those just above the income threshold for qualification for free care under the medical card scheme may be particularly seriously affected.

Table 5.7 Location of Husbands and Wives Reporting Enforced Deprivation on12-Item Scale vis-à-vis Relative Income Poverty Lines

	Per cent of husbands with 1+ deprivation score	Per cent of wives with 1+ deprivation score
Below 40 per cent of mean	18.6	23.0
Between 40–50 per cent of mean	16.2	16.8
Between 50–60 per cent of mean	12.3	8.4
Above 60 per cent of mean	52.9	51.8
Per cent of total	13.9	13.5

Table 5.8 Location of Husbands and Wives Reporting Different Levels of	
Enforced Deprivation on 12-Item Scale vis-à-vis Relative Income Poverty Line	s

	Per cent of wives with higher deprivation score than husband	Per cent of husbands with higher deprivation score than wife
Below 40 per cent of mean	19.6	12.3
Between 40–50 per cent of mean	14.5	10.7
Between 50–60 per cent of mean	8.2	19.1
Above 60 per cent of mean	57.7	57.9
Per cent of total	7.0	5.7

Deprivation among Spouses/Partners

For the small minority where there are differences between spouses in enforced deprivation on the 12-item index, it is also worth seeing where these couples are located in the income distribution. Table 5.8 shows that a majority of the couples where there were such differences were in households above the 60 per cent relative income threshold. Once again, the pattern is similar whether it is the wife who reports greater deprivation than the husband or vice versa. Although not shown in the table, it may be noted that only a small minority of these couples were in households in 'consistent poverty', i.e. both below 60 per cent of average equivalised income and experiencing basic deprivation.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has focused on the relative position of spouses/partners within the household as far as living standards and deprivation are concerned. This was explored using responses from about 1,000 couples to questions relating to levels of consumption/deprivation, access to leisure activities and pastimes and to education and training included in the 1999 wave of the Living in Ireland Survey. A total of 12 separate indicators were covered. The results showed that most husbands and wives (or partners) reported that they did not have to do without any of these items due to lack of money. Comparing the responses of partners, these generally agreed. Where they disagreed, across the items there was no pronounced consistent imbalance in favour of either husbands or wives. Constructing a summary deprivation index reflecting enforced lack for the 12 items, there is a gap in reported enforced deprivation scores for only 13 per cent of couples. This is evenly divided between cases where the wife reports greater deprivation than her husband and those where it is the husband who reports greater deprivation.

Employing a set of indicators specifically designed to capture deprivation at the level of the individual has thus not revealed differences in deprivation between spouses within households missed by previous Irish research. This does not mean, of course, that there are no imbalances in the way resources are controlled and managed within the household, but rather that these do not appear

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to manifest themselves in substantial numbers of households where the wife is much more deprived than the husband. We turn to the management and control of household resources in the next chapter.

Chapter 6

CONTROL OVER RESOURCES/ BURDEN OF COPING

6.1 INTRODUCTION

As well as differences in living standards between spouses/partners, differences in control over household resources are also important, both in their own right and for the role they may play in producing differences in living standards. Several UK studies, using both small-scale surveys (Pahl 1989) and large, nationally representative samples (Volger and Pahl 1994), have explored different systems for managing household resources and their implications for the living standards of individual members. Rottman (1994) used Irish data for 1987 to examine this issue and also identified a number of distinct approaches to managing resources.

Our focus here is on the relationship between management and control of finances within the household and patterns of spending/deprivation. The results we present show that joint financial decision making is common among Irish couples. However, in a significant proportion of couples the husband retains control in terms of major decisions while the wife has the responsibility of managing resources on a week-to-week basis to make ends meet.

6.2 PATTERNS OF FINANCIAL DECISION MAKING

We look first in Table 6.1 at how husbands and wives responded when asked how they decide on purchasing an item such as a coat or a pair of shoes for themselves, designed to elicit the decision-making process in relation to buying a specific personal item. The table shows the responses of all couples in the sample and of those whose household income is below 60 per cent of average (equivalised) income.

	All respondents		All respondents Below 60 cent mean i		0 per income
	Per cent of husbands	Per cent of wives	Per cent of husbands	Per cent of wives	
Buy it straight away	60.2	52.7	30.7	27.5	
Save up and buy Ask spouse/partner for	10.1	19.8	18.4	28.5	
money	1.1	4.3	0.9	3.3	
Budget with spouse/partner	18.2	13.0	28.8	23.0	
Borrow Do without until money	0.8	0.2	3.3	0.7	
available	9.6	10.1	17.8	17.0	

Looking first at the answers of all respondents, we see that the majority of both husbands and wives said they would buy the item straight away. However, there is a difference between them insofar as 60 per cent of husbands compared to 53 per cent of wives buy it straight away. Among low-income households, a much lower percentage of both husbands and wives said they would buy it straight away and the gap between them is narrower.

It is possible that wives may tend to be more budget conscious, as the response to the second option of the question suggests. Here we see that 20 per cent of wives compared to 10 per cent of husbands said they would save for the item. This difference is also seen among low-income households.

The issue of control is explicit in the third option of the question, where the respondent is asked whether they would ask their spouse or partner for money. The percentage of all respondents who do so is very low, at about 2.5 per cent of the total sample, but nonetheless it is interesting to note that it is predominantly wives who ask their spouse for money (4.3 per cent) rather than husbands asking their wives (1.1 per cent).

In relation to joint budgeting, 18 per cent of husbands compared to 13 per cent of wives said that that they budget together to purchase the item. In relation to borrowing, less than 1 per cent of the total

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sample seems to borrow for such an item and the corresponding figure is not much higher for low-income households, although there is then a difference between husbands and wives, with 3 per cent of husbands and less than 1 per cent of wives giving this response. Finally, about 10 per cent of the total sample said they would do without until money becomes available and this is evenly divided between husbands and wives. Among low-income households the corresponding figure is higher at 17–18 per cent, but again there is little difference between husbands and wives.

Tables 6.2 and 6.3 focus on decisions about other types of expenditure. These questions tried to capture the division of responsibilities in relation to day-to-day running of the household budget and in relation to rainy-day scenarios. A number of interesting findings emerge.

	All respondents		Below 6 cent mean	0 per income
	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
	of husbands	of wives	of husbands	of wives
Respondent	14.4	13.1	11.4	14.0
Spouse/partner	10.0	10.8	11.9	12.7
Both/joint decision	75.2	75.8	76.6	72.9
Other	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.4

Table 6.2 'If a large unexpected bill arose, such as a medical or repair bill, who do you think would decide how to meet it?'

When asked how they would meet unexpected bills, Table 6.2 shows that about three-quarters of all couples say it would be a joint decision. Of the remainder, a roughly equal number of husbands and wives say that they make the decision themselves. The pattern among low-income households is similar.

Table 6.3 'Who does the budgeting on a weekly basis?'					
	All respondents		Below 60 p mean in	oer cent come	
	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	
	of husbands	of wives	of husbands	of wives	
Respondent	9.0	54.8	6.4	69.3	
Spouse/partner	54.6	8.7	72.8	9.1	
Both	36.4	36.5	20.8	21.6	

Table 6.3 looks at who does the weekly budgeting for the household. In about 55 per cent of sample households this is the wife's responsibility and in most of the remainder it is said to be a joint responsibility, with less than one in ten husbands responsible for the day-to-day running of the household budget. It is interesting to note again the consistency of the answers of husbands and wives, with about the same percentage of wives saying they do the budgeting on a weekly basis as husbands who say their spouses or partners do and vice versa. Among households below the 60 per cent relative income threshold, we see that the percentage of wives reporting sole responsibility for budgeting on a weekly basis is higher, at about 70 per cent.

Table 6.4 shows the responses of couples on the decision-making process across a range of household financial activities, from weekly grocery shopping to the purchasing of a car and borrowing and repaying debts. There is quite a variance in procedure depending on the purchase being made. For example, in buying a large household item, a car or borrowing money, about 80 per cent of couples said they make the decision jointly. Within the remaining 20 per cent or so, the husband is the one who generally makes the decision in relation to buying a car and is also more likely to decide about borrowing money. In other areas of household financial activity we see it is the woman who is more prominent. In over 70 per cent of the total sample she makes decisions about spending on regular shopping. In relation to paying utility bills about 47 per cent of wives make the

	Per cent of husbands			Р	er cent of wives	
	Respondent	Spouse/ partner	Both	Respondent	Spouse/ partner	Both
Spending on regular						
shopping	5.5	70.9	23.6	73.8	4.3	21.9
Paying electricity						
and gas bills	22.4	47.1	30.5	48.3	20.5	31.1
mortgage Buying large	24.5	30.1	45.4	29.3	27.7	43.1
household items	10.0	10.3	79.7	9.9	10.9	79.3
Buying a car	17.0	4.0	79.1	2.9	20.1	77.0
Borrowing money	12.4	5.4	82.2	5.8	12.0	82.2
Paying debts	13.6	8.6	77.8	10.2	12.5	77.3

Table 6.4 'Would you, your spouse or both generally make decisions about...' – All Respondents

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decision, whereas in paying rent or the mortgage about 45 per cent of the sample say they make the decisions together.

When we look in Table 6.5 at the respondents whose income is below the 60 per cent line, the same pattern holds. Again, the majority of couples, around 70 per cent, make joint decisions in relation to purchasing large items, buying a car and borrowing and repaying money. In other households, the husband generally decides on buying a car, borrowing money and paying debts. In relation to other areas of financial activity the wife is predominant – spending on regular shopping and paying electricity and gas bills. As in the total sample, decisions in relation to paying rent/mortgage are made together by over 40 per cent of the sample and by the wife in under 40 per cent, with the husband making the decision in about 20 per cent of cases.

	Per cent of husbands			P	er cent of wives	
	Respondent	Spouse/ partner	Both	Respondent	Spouse/ partner	Both
Spending on regular						
shopping	6.5	74.5	19.0	79.5	4.1	16.5
Paying electricity						
and gas bills	17.3	55.0	27.7	52.6	16.6	30.8
Paying rent/						
mortgage	19.4	37.7	42.9	37.9	20.5	41.7
Buying large		47.0				4
household items	12.3	13.9	/3.8	8.6	16.4	/5.1
Buying a car	21.9	5.4	72.7	1.6	30.2	68.1
Borrowing money	14.5	8.3	77.2	6.3	15.7	78.1
Paying debts	16.9	11.6	71.5	14.5	15.8	69.7

Table 6.5 'Would you, your spouse or both generally make decisions about...' – Responses of Husbands and Wives in Households below 60 per cent of Mean Income

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In Table 6.6 we turn our attention explicitly to the issue of coping with the burden of scarce resources. Here we can see that 32 per cent of wives say they take the responsibility of making money stretch from week to week, whereas 27 per cent of husbands say their wives take that responsibility. Conversely, 12 per cent of husbands say it is their responsibility, whereas 9 per cent of wives say their spouse does so. For the sample as a whole, we see that about 60 per cent of couples manage the responsibility jointly. Among low-income households that figure is lower, with just over 50 per cent of couples managing the responsibility jointly. While 45 per cent of wives in low-income households stated that they took responsibility for ensuring that money stretches from week to week, only 35 per cent of husbands stated that their spouse or partner took this responsibility. Similarly, while 12 per cent of husbands stated that they took on this responsibility themselves, only 5 per cent of wives stated that their spouse/partner did so.

Table 6.6 'When money is tight, who takes the main responsibility for trying to make sure it stretches from week to week?'					
	All respo	ndents	Below 6 cent mean	w 60 per ean income	
	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	
	of husbands	of wives	of husbands	of wives	
Respondent	12.4	32.3	12.3	44.6	
Spouse/partner	26.7	9.5	34.8	4.6	
Both	60.9	58.1	53.0	50.8	

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6.3 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has looked at management and control of finances within Irish households, based on responses to a set of questions included in the 1999 Living in Ireland Survey. Among other things, we were interested in assessing the extent to which women in poor households have the added burden of responsibility for stretching scarce resources. The results showed a complex pattern where patterns of management varied not only across households but across different areas of spending.

Joint decision making was common among both low-income and other households for the purchase of most large household items, for borrowing and repaying money and for dealing with large, unexpected bills. For example, about three-quarters of men and women said that if a large bill arose both partners would decide how to meet it, which was also true in low-income households. Among the remainder, about the same number of men and women said they would decide themselves.

However, a clear division in financial responsibility was evident in relation to regular grocery shopping and in relation to weekly budgeting. The wife took on the weekly budgeting role in more than half of sample couples, with both partners doing so in most of the remainder, and in about 70 per cent of cases she made decisions about spending on regular shopping. This may reflect the household allocation system employed and the fact that up until relatively

recently female labour force participation was low by international standards, particularly for married women.

The results clearly suggest that the burden of managing scarce resources falls disproportionately on women. When asked who takes the main responsibility for trying to make sure money stretches from week to week when it is tight, this is seen as a joint responsibility in about 60 per cent of couples and as the responsibility of the wife in most of the remainder. In low-income households, joint responsibility was less common and about 45 per cent of wives said they took responsibility for making resources stretch. It is also interesting that while only a small proportion of husbands say they take the main responsibility for making money stretch when it is tight, even fewer wives think that their husband does so.

Chapter 7

NON-MONETARY INDICATORS AND CHILDREN

7.1 INTRODUCTION

We now turn from a focus on adults to investigate the position of children. The way resources are allocated within households or families may have a significant impact on children's living standards. Children most often have little or no independent source of income and no real control over the management of family finances and are thus particularly vulnerable. While children in households with inadequate resources are likely to experience poverty, some children in other households may also experience deprivation because household resources are not sufficiently directed to meeting their needs. This highlights the importance of going beyond household income or non-monetary indicators aimed at capturing the situation of the household as a whole or its adult members to also attempt to directly measure deprivation and well-being among children. In this chapter we discuss the issues that arise in trying to do so and present results for a set of indicators specially designed to focus on children and included in the 1999 Living in Ireland Survey.

7.2 DEPRIVATION INDICATORS FOR CHILDREN

In concluding a recent study on child poverty for the Combat Poverty Agency, Nolan (2000) emphasised that a key priority in terms of monitoring and tackling child poverty was the incorporation of measures of deprivation relating directly to children themselves into data and analysis. Most often, indicators are designed to measure the extent and nature of deprivation at the level of the household and tell us about the living standards of households containing children – they do not serve as direct measures of living standards or

deprivation for the children themselves. The assumption is made that pooling of resources within the household equalises living standards and poverty risk for all household members. The situation where children are in poverty because of insufficient sharing of resources within the household will not be captured, either with conventional income measures or with the deprivation indicators we have available.

Direct indicators of deprivation for children are particularly difficult to obtain for a variety of reasons. Most obviously, household surveys on which research most often relies usually interview adults, not children, and a host of difficult ethical and practical issues must be faced if one does aim to interview children directly. While these can be addressed when focusing on specific small groups, such as children using certain services or diagnosed as having certain conditions or problems, large-scale household surveys seeking representative samples of the population as a whole are not well placed to do so. Thus, even when information is sought specifically about children, it is usually obtained in such surveys from adults.¹ This clearly constrains the nature of the information which can be sought - for example, the parent may not accurately perceive the child's feelings or preferences. Parents may also be unlikely to give responses to questions seen as implying that they themselves act irresponsibly or uncaringly towards their children.

When non-monetary indicators for children are included in general household surveys, they thus tend to focus on concrete items or activities and whether the children have or participate in them. The recent UK Millennium Survey on Poverty and Social Exclusion, for example, contains a particularly extensive set of non-monetary indicators of deprivation, including some relating to children (Gordon *et al.* 2000). In the Irish case, the 1987 ESRI household survey included four such indicators relating specifically to children. These were analysed in Nolan and Farrell's (1991) study of child poverty for the CPA and related to being unable to afford:

^{1.} However, innovative approaches have been investigated for obtaining information from teenage children, including providing them with tape recorders to tape responses – an approach explored in the British Household Panel Survey.

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- toys or leisure equipment for children;
- separate bedrooms for different sexes for children over ten years of age;
- three meals a day for the children; and
- education up to age 20 for all children.

Only a very small proportion of respondents in the survey said they could not afford three meals a day for the children – 1 per cent of all those with children, 3 per cent of those with children and below the 60 per cent relative income poverty line. A significantly higher proportion, about 6 per cent of all those with children and 9 per cent of those below the 60 per cent income line, said they could not afford separate bedrooms. The corresponding figures for not being able to afford toys were higher, at 7 per cent and 13 per cent, respectively. Finally, about 17 per cent of all those with children, 23 per cent of those below the 60 per cent relative income line, said they could not afford education up to age 20 for all children.

As outlined in Chapter 4, a more extensive set of indicators relating to children has been developed in the course of the current project and included in the 1999 Living in Ireland Survey. Where there were children (aged under 14) in the household, the mother (only) was asked:

Over the last year, has lack of money meant that the children have had to do without:

- *a) a party on their birthday with friends*
- *b)* school trips
- *c)* having friends home to play
- *d) doing lessons in, for example, music or dancing, or playing sports*
- *e) three meals a day*
- *f) pocket money*
- *g*) toys, such as dolls or models
- *h) a bicycle or sports equipment?*

By including direct reference in the question to lack of money, this sought to ensure that as far as possible it was financial rather than other constraints, such as lack of time, or preferences that was giving rise to the child or children 'doing without'. In the next section the pattern of responses found in the survey is presented and analysed.

7.3 DEPRIVATION INDICATORS FOR IRISH CHILDREN IN 1999

In the 1999 Living in Ireland Survey, a total of just over 800 mothers with children aged under 14 responded to this question. The percentages of mothers who responded that their children had to do without the various items are shown in Table 7.1.

Item	Per cent doing without
A birthday party	13.1
School trips	10.6
Having friends home to play	9.6
Lessons/sports	12.9
Three meals a day	7.7
Pocket money	13.9
Toys	12.5
Bicycle/sports equipment	17.3

Table 7.1 Percentage of Mothers Reporting Children Doing without EightDeprivation Items

We see that for each item, quite substantial numbers said that their children had to do without. This ranges from 8 per cent for three meals a day up to 17 per cent for a bicycle or sports equipment. It is striking then that even for items as basic as three meals a day, having friends home to play or a birthday party, about one in ten mothers said that their children had to do without because of lack of money.

Lone parents are likely to face particular problems in providing adequately for their children, so in Table 7.2 we distinguish between responding mothers who were living with a spouse or partner and those who were not. (For most of the latter group, the responding mother was the only adult in the household.) We do indeed see substantially higher levels of deprivation affecting children being reported by the mothers not living with a spouse or partner. About

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one-fifth of lone mothers said that their children had to do without a birthday party and toys and one-quarter or more said they had to do without lessons in music/sports, pocket money and bicycle or sports equipment. For mothers living with a spouse or partner, the corresponding figures were only half as high.

Item	Mother living with spouse/ partner	Mother not living with spouse/partner	All
A birthday party	11.4	21.4	13.1
School trips	9.9	14.6	10.6
Having friends home to play	9.0	12.7	9.6
Lessons/sports	11.0	24.7	12.9
Three meals a day	6.3	14.9	7.7
Pocket money	11.7	25.4	13.9
Toys	11.1	19.2	12.5
Bicycle/sports equipment	15.1	28.1	17.3

Table 7.2 Percentage of Mothers Reporting Children Doing without Eight	
Deprivation Items	

In addition to whether the mother is living with a spouse or partner, both labour force status and the number of children seem likely to influence the possibility that the children are experiencing deprivation. We therefore look at these factors first for mothers who are living with a spouse or partner and then for those who are not.

Table 7.3 shows the percentages of mothers living with a spouse or partner reporting deprivation for their children categorised by the labour force status of the household reference person. The household reference person as defined by Eurostat is the owner or tenant of the accommodation or the oldest of two or more people equally responsible for the accommodation. In the majority of cases for this group the reference person is the spouse/partner rather than the mother. We see from the table that across all the items the extent of reported deprivation for the children is consistently highest where the reference person is unemployed, ill or disabled. It is lowest where the reference person is working as an employee or self-employed,

and for the cases where the reference person is inactive or retired deprivation is at an intermediate level. Once again it is worth highlighting the scale of deprivation for some children – in the households where there are two parents but the reference person is unemployed or ill, one-third or more of the mothers reported that their children had to do without a birthday party with friends, school trips, pocket money, toys or a bicycle or sports equipment.

Item	Reference person is employee/ self-employed/ farmer	Reference person is unemployed/ ill/disabled	Reference person is inactive/ retired
A birthday party	8.5	31.6	21.1
School trips	7.6	33.1	8.5
Having friends home to play	7.1	19.8	18.9
Lessons/sports	9.9	20.4	13.5
Three meals a day	5.9	6.3	11.4
Pocket money	7.4	38.8	12.6
Toys	8.0	39.1	12.2
Bicycle/sports equipment	10.8	35.1	26.8
Per cent of total	83.6	9.2	7.2

Table 7.3 Percentage of Mothers Living with Spouse/Partner ReportingChildren Doing without Eight Deprivation Items by Labour Force Status

In Table 7.4 we look again at the group where both parents were in the household, but categorise by number of children. This shows that the extent of child deprivation is not in fact systematically higher for larger families for this group, but for certain items it is relatively high for families with three or more children. This is the case for lessons, pocket money and a bicycle or sports equipment. Reported deprivation levels are generally lowest for two-child families.

We now turn to the smaller but important group where the mother is not living with spouse or partner. Table 7.5 categorises this group by the labour force status of the mother (who in most cases is the household reference person). We see that deprivation levels for the

School trips

Lessons/sports

Pocket money

Per cent of total

Toys

Three meals a day

Having friends home to play

Bicycle/sports equipment

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Item	1 child	2 children	3+ children
A birthday party	12.6	9.3	12.9
School trips	9.4	8.3	12.0
Having friends home to play	11.9	8.1	8.0
Lessons/sports	9.9	8.0	15.0
Three meals a day	8.5	7.3	3.5
Pocket money	6.4	8.8	18.3
Toys	12.5	8.1	13.5
Bicycle/sports equipment	12.3	9.2	23.4
Per cent of total	26.2	38.8	34.9

Table 7.4 Percentage of Mothers Living with Spouse/Partner Reporting Children Doing without Eight Deprivation Items by Number of Children

Children Doing without Eight Deprivation Items by Labour Force Status					
Item	Mother is employee/ self-employed/ farmer	Mother is unemployed/ ill/disabled	Mother is inactive/ retired		
A birthday party	7.1	15.9	34.1		

26.6

6.7

32.8

6.6

23.7

12.7

27.4

38.6

11.9

0.6

39.1

0.0

15.0

5.2

18.2

17.9

7.5

22.4

14.2

27.1

31.6

29.8

32.4

43.4

Table 7.5 Percentage of Mothers Not Living with Spouse/Partner Reporting Children Doing without Eight Deprivation Items by Labour Force Status

children now tend to be relatively high even where the mother is at work, though for a majority of the items they are highest where she is inactive. The number of cases in the sample does not allow too much weight to be placed on detailed cross-tabulations within what is already a relatively small group – for example, the unemployed/ill lone mothers category contains only 18 cases. However, the results do suggest not only that deprivation levels are very high indeed for children living with lone parents who are inactive, but also that it cannot be assumed that the situation for these children is at all satisfactory even where the mother is in work.

Still focusing on this group, Table 7.6 shows the way reported deprivation varies with number of children. Deprivation levels tend to be higher where there is more than one child, although since almost 60 per cent of the lone mothers had only one child the number of cases in the other categories is relatively small.

Item	1 child	2 children	3+ children
A birthday party	10.9	30.4	44.8
School trips	19.8	11.4	8.9
Having friends home to play	9.2	25.3	1.1
Lessons/sports	21.5	29.1	24.0
Three meals a day	7.6	23.7	25.8
Pocket money	16.6	42.3	18.6
Toys	10.3	31.8	28.5
Bicycle/sports equipment	14.6	45.2	43.7
Per cent of total	58.6	28.2	13.3

Table 7.6 Percentage of Mothers Not Living with Spouse/Partner ReportingChildren Doing without Eight Deprivation Items

7.4 A SUMMARY DEPRIVATION INDEX FOR IRISH CHILDREN

So far we have presented results for the extent of reported deprivation for children across the eight items. While this clarifies the extent to which each of the items is lacked, it does not capture the inter-relationships between the items – most importantly, whether it is the same families that are doing without many of the items. For this reason it is also valuable to construct a summary deprivation index, where one is added to the score for each item the children in the family in question are doing without. Scores on this index will then vary from zero for families that are not doing without any of the items to eight for those who say they are doing without all eight. NON-MONETARY INDICATORS AND CHILDREN

Table 7.7 shows the distribution of the families across this eight-item summary index, distinguishing those with two versus one parent.

We see from the results for all respondents that this reveals child deprivation to be quite heavily concentrated in certain households. Almost 78 per cent of families report no deprivation in terms of the eight items, with another 8 per cent reporting having to do without one or two of the items. Child deprivation is very serious for the 6 per cent who report having to do without from three to five items and extreme for the further 8 per cent who say the children are doing without six or more of the items.

Score on 8-item deprivation index	Mother living with spouse/partner	Mother not living with spouse/partner	All
0	81.6	54.7	77.8
1	4.5	8.0	5.0
2	3.0	2.0	2.9
3–5	3.6	20.5	6.0
6+	7.3	14.8	8.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 7.7 Distribution of Scores on Eight-Item Deprivation Scale for Children

We can once again relate the extent of deprivation, now as reflected in scores on this summary index, to the presence or absence of a spouse/partner. The table shows that scores are much higher for lone mothers, with 45 per cent reporting some child deprivation and 35 per cent having scores of three or more on the index. By contrast, under 20 per cent of two-parent families reported some deprivation and only 11 per cent had scores of three or more on the summary index.

Focusing on the two-parent families, Table 7.8 shows how the mean score on the summary deprivation index varied with labour force status of the household reference person and number of children. As indicated by the discussion of the individual items, the extent of deprivation is seen to be most pronounced where the

	Mean score on 8-item deprivation index
Reference person is employee/self-employed/farmer	0.58
Reference person is unemployed/ill	2.22
Reference person is inactive	1.03
1 child	0.58
2 children	0.64
3 children	0.90

Table 7.8 Mean Scores on Eight-Item Deprivation Scale for Children, Mother Living with Spouse/Partner

reference person is unemployed or ill and is highest where there are three or more children.

The corresponding results for lone mothers are shown in Table 7.9. Again as reflected in the individual items, child deprivation is now seen to be highest where the mother is inactive but still high where she is in work, and is higher where there is more than one child.

Table 7.9 Mean Scores on Eight-Item Deprivation Scale for Children, MotherNot Living with Spouse/Partner

	Mean score on 8-item deprivation index
Mother is employee/self-employed/farmer	1.65
Mother is unemployed/ill	1.42
Mother is inactive	2.30
1 child	1.50
2 children	2.50
3 children	2.00

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7.5 DEPRIVATION INDICATORS FOR IRISH CHILDREN AND HOUSEHOLD POVERTY

Having seen the levels of deprivation across a range of items experienced by Irish children as reported by their mothers, we now want to relate that to the household's situation as regards poverty. In particular, we are interested in exploring both the way child deprivation varies with household income and the extent to which children experiencing high levels of deprivation are living in what would be identified as 'poor' households. The answer to the latter question will of course depend in part on how poverty at the level of the household is itself measured. Here we will present results using both relative income poverty lines and the approach to identifying 'consistently poor' households, both on low income and experiencing basic deprivation, developed at the ESRI (Callan, Nolan and Whelan 1993; Nolan and Whelan 1996).

In Table 7.10 we look at the percentage reporting child deprivation across the eight items categorised by the position of the household vis-à-vis relative income poverty lines. This shows that the extent of reported deprivation for children is much lower for households above 60 per cent of mean income than it is for households below that threshold. Among those below the threshold, however, child deprivation levels do not consistently rise as income falls. For some of the items the extent of reported deprivation is higher among those between 50 per cent and 60 per cent of mean income than it is among those between 40 per cent and 50 per cent or those below 40 per cent. This is not as surprising as it might seem at first, since it is consistent with the broad pattern shown in previous ESRI research using deprivation indicators for adults/households that reflects the fact that current low income on its own is not a comprehensive measure of household resources, which will be affected by incomes and accumulation or run-down of savings over a long period.

This provides the central rationale for honing in on households which are both on low income and manifesting serious deprivation, as reflected in non-monetary indicators. The approach to doing so developed at the ESRI allows a set of 'consistently poor' households to be distinguished, that are both below the 60 per cent of mean income threshold and experiencing what has been termed 'basic

Deprivation Items by Household Relative Income Poverty Status				
Item	Below 40 per cent of mean income	Between 40–50 per cent of mean income	Between 50–60 per cent of mean income	Above 60 per cent of mean income
A birthday party	31.2	17.7	30.2	7.4
School trips	27.5	10.2	13.6	7.6
Having friends home to play	18.1	10.4	25.8	6.1
Lessons/sports	19.6	20.8	26.4	9.3
Three meals a day	8.0	7.2	22.8	5.8
Pocket money	31.3	30.8	32.3	7.2
Toys	31.8	12.9	25.0	7.3
Bicycle/sports equipment	36.2	35.3	33.2	9.9
Per cent of total	12.4	7.2	8.6	71.8

deprivation', with the latter measured via a set of non-monetary indicators relating to adults. Trends in this measure over time have been presented and discussed in detail in Layte et al. (1999, 2001a) and the issues involved in framing the measure are re-examined in Layte et al. (2001b). For present purposes, the most important point to make is that by the late 1990s this measure distinguished a smaller percentage of all households as 'poor' than the 40 per cent relative income line, but that the households involved were spread over the income ranges up to the 60 per cent threshold rather than concentrated below the lowest relative line.

Table 7.11 now shows how the percentage of mothers reporting deprivation for their children varies with the 'consistent poverty' status of the household. We see that reported deprivation levels were very high indeed for children in households below the 60 per cent line and experiencing basic deprivation. As many as 40 per cent or more of the mothers in these households reported that their children had to do without a birthday party, pocket money or toys, while more than half had to do without a bicycle or sports equipment. With only 10 per cent of responding mothers living in such households, they represent a highly selective group. It is worth noting, though, that deprivation levels for children in these households are a good deal

Item	Below 60 per cent of mean and basic deprivation	Not below 60 per cent of mean and basic deprivation
A birthday party	45.7	9.8
School trips	34.2	8.2
Having friends home to play	27.6	7.8
Lessons/sports	30.2	11.2
Three meals a day	9.2	7.5
Pocket money	43.7	11.2
Toys	41.5	9.4
Bicycle/sports equipment	57.9	12.9
Per cent of total	9.7	90.3

Table 7 11 Percentage of Mothers Reporting Children Doing without Fight

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higher than for the (similarly-sized) group below the 40 per cent relative income threshold seen in Table 7.10.

These tables have answered our first question – how child deprivation varies with the household's poverty status. We now turn to our second question, which is to what extent children are experiencing high levels of deprivation living in 'poor' households. Table 7.12 shows the distribution of respondents relative to the income poverty thresholds, distinguishing mothers who reported no deprivation for their children and those who reported some deprivation. Among the latter, those with a score of three or more on the eight-item summary index are also shown separately.

We see that most of those reporting no deprivation are above the 60 per cent threshold, but so are a substantial proportion – 41 per cent – of those reporting that their children had to do without at least one of the items. Indeed, over one-third of those with scores of three or more are in households above 60 per cent of mean income, so a substantial proportion of the families with children reporting high levels of deprivation would not be counted as poor even by the most generous relative income line.
	Per cent of those with no deprivation	Per cent of those with 1+ deprivation score
Below 40 per cent of mean	7.4	26.7
Between 40–50 per cent of mean	6.0	15.1
Between 50–60 per cent of mean	6.6	16.9
Above 60 per cent of mean	79.9	41.3

Table 7.12 Distribution of Mothers Reporting Children Doing without Eight Deprivation Items by Relative Income Poverty Status

Table 7.13 shows the corresponding results when we distinguish between 'consistently poor' households and all others. We see that very few of the respondents reporting no child deprivation are below the 60 per cent relative income line and experiencing basic deprivation. However, this is also true of most of those reporting some such deprivation – less than one-third of those with a score of one or more on the summary child deprivation index are 'consistently poor'.

Table 7.13 Distribution of Mothers Reporting Children Doing withoutDeprivation Items by 'Consistent' Poverty Status

	Per cent of those with no deprivation	Per cent of those with 1+ deprivation score
Both below 60 per cent of mean income and experiencing basic deprivation	4.1	29.0
Not both below 60 per cent of mean income and experiencing basic deprivation	95.9	71.0

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7.6 DEPRIVATION AND CHILD WELL-BEING

Here our focus has been on deprivation and poverty among Irish children and on what can be learned from non-monetary indicators specifically designed to capture such deprivation. As Nolan (2000) emphasised, however, as well as being very valuable in themselves it helps to see these as key indicators of the broader concept of child well-being and it would be enormously valuable to also be able to place them in that broader setting in the Irish case. This would entail developing a battery of indicators relating to various aspects of children's well-being and monitoring them over time. Costello's (1999) review of the literature on children's well-being for the Combat Poverty Agency highlights the range of areas and indicators of well-being one would wish to be able to monitor, and a great deal can be learned from recent developments elsewhere, as brought out in that review and in Nolan (2000).

A valuable benchmark and illustration of what can be done in this context is the limited but broad set of official indicators of child wellbeing on which an annual monitoring report is now produced by the US federal government, entitled America's Children: Key Indicators of Well-Being. The process of developing this set of indicators began with an intensive examination of the data actually available on a regular basis across the areas of health, education, economic security, the family and neighbourhood and child development (see Hauser, Brown and Prosser 1997). The central criterion applied for inclusion was availability of regular, consistent, up-to-date information and the central focus is on directions of change rather than levels. The indicators are grouped into four broad dimensions. Income poverty (using the official US poverty line) is a key indicator of economic security and other indicators of this aspect of child well-being are also used, but the more fundamental broadening out is the coverage of health, education, behaviour and social environment.² This range of indicators provides a much more comprehensive, complex and varied picture of recent developments in child well-being than a

^{2.} Another example of recent efforts to monitor trends in child well-being, this time in a comparative context, is the study for UNICEF by Micklewright and Stewart (1999) of child welfare in the European Union.

single measure of child poverty or even a set of non-monetary deprivation indicators focused on children.

Monitoring the well-being of Irish children was among the issues addressed by the National Children's Strategy (2000), which stated that a set of child well-being indicators would be developed by an expert committee and a biannual report, entitled *The State of the Nation's Children*, will be produced under the aegis of the Minister for Children. The intention is that this will provide both a general source of information on trends in children's well-being and a report on progress in achieving the goals of the Strategy.

One important gap in data on children in Ireland reflects the fact that there has been no national survey following the development of a cohort of children from birth, tracking the development and wellbeing of a representative sample over time. Such cohort studies have been highly influential in other countries, particularly in stressing the complex interactions between different factors that can adversely affect children's development. The Commission on the Family, among others, recommended that a longitudinal survey of a child birth cohort be carried out in Ireland. The National Children's Strategy also contains a commitment to initiate such a survey to examine the progress and well-being of children at crucial periods from birth to adulthood, and a design brief is currently being prepared.

7.7 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has focused on children's position. Children most often have little or no independent source of income and no real control over the management of family finances, which makes it especially important to develop direct indicators of deprivation for them. However, these are particularly difficult to obtain, not least because household surveys usually interview only adults.

A set of eight indicators relating to children, to be asked of mothers, was developed and included in the 1999 Living in Ireland Survey. Mothers with children aged under 14 in the household were asked whether their children had to do without these items due to lack of money. Just over 800 mothers responded. The results revealed substantial numbers saying that their children had to do without the

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items in question – even for items as basic as three meals a day, having friends home to play or a birthday party, about one in ten mothers said that their children had to do without because of lack of money.

Substantially higher levels of deprivation affecting children were reported by lone mothers than by those living with a spouse or partner. Among two-parent families, the extent of reported deprivation for children was consistently highest where the reference person was unemployed, ill or disabled and lowest when he or she was working. For the smaller group where the mother was not living with a spouse or partner, deprivation levels were highest where the mother was inactive but were still relatively high even where she was in work.

Using responses on the eight items to construct a summary deprivation index showed that child deprivation was quite heavily concentrated in certain households. Almost four-fifths of families reported no deprivation in terms of the eight items, while 8 per cent had to do without one or two of these items. However, 6 per cent reported having to do without between three and five items and a further 8 per cent were doing without six or more.

The percentage reporting child deprivation was seen to be much lower for households above 60 per cent of mean income than for households below that threshold. Among those below the threshold, however, child deprivation levels did not consistently rise as income fell. Reported deprivation levels were very high indeed for children in households below the 60 per cent line and experiencing basic deprivation – the 'consistently poor'. As many as 40 per cent or more of the mothers in these households reported that their children had to do without a birthday party, pocket money or toys, while more than half had to do without a bicycle or sports equipment.

A significant minority of those reporting some child deprivation are in households above even the 60 per cent relative income threshold and so would not be counted as poor even by the most generous relative income line. Less than one-third of those with a score of one or more on the summary child deprivation index were 'consistently poor'.

The results presented here demonstrate the value of having information on non-monetary deprivation indicators specifically

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designed for and targeted at children. It would also be enormously valuable to place these in a broader setting, with a range of indicators relating to other aspects of children's well-being and how these have been changing over time. As part of the National Children's Strategy (2000), a regular monitoring report on the state of Irish children is to be produced biannually to provide a general source of information on trends in children's well-being and report on progress in achieving the Strategy's goals. The Strategy also includes a commitment to initiate a child birth cohort to examine the progress and well-being of Irish children at crucial periods from birth to adulthood.

Chapter 8

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Conventional methods of analysing living standards, income inequality and poverty assume that resources are shared so that each individual in a household or family has the same standard of living. Non-monetary indicators of living standards and deprivation are increasingly being used in measuring household poverty, but this study has sought to demonstrate that they can also be used to explore differences in living standards within households. Cantillon and Nolan (1998) employed non-monetary indicators to assess the extent of differences between spouses in lifestyle and levels of deprivation and found a quite limited imbalance in measured deprivation in favour of husbands. However, the indicators available at that point were designed to reflect differences in living standards between rather than within households. The central aim of the present study has been to develop a set of indicators more suitable for the investigation of living standards within the household - both differences between adults in a given household and the situation of children - and to empirically apply these indicators to Ireland.

8.2 DEVELOPING NON-MONETARY INDICATORS FOR INDIVIDUALS

To investigate differences between spouses/partners in access to and control over resources and the position of children within households, suitable indicators of deprivation were required. This involved first designing a module of survey questions relating to individual living standards and control over resources and then refining them through focus group discussions with women experiencing poverty and social exclusion. The resulting set of questions was then included in the 1999 round of the Living in Ireland Survey. SHARING HOUSEHOLD RESOURCES

8.3 DEPRIVATION AMONG SPOUSES/PARTNERS

The analysis of the responses to this set of specially designed questions focused on the scale and nature of differences between spouses/partners in living standards, using the responses of about 1,000 couples to questions relating to levels of consumption/ deprivation, access to leisure activities and pastimes and to education, where a total of 12 separate indicators were available. The results showed that most husbands and wives (or partners) reported that they did not have to do without any of these items due to lack of money. Comparing the responses of partners, these generally agreed. Where they disagreed, across the items there was no pronounced consistent imbalance in favour of either husbands or wives. Constructing a summary deprivation index reflecting enforced lack for the 12 items, there was a gap in reported enforced deprivation scores for only 13 per cent of couples, evenly divided between cases where the wife reported greater deprivation than their husband and those where it is the husband who reported greater deprivation.

These results suggest that a set of indicators specifically designed to capture deprivation at the level of the individual did not reveal differences in deprivation between spouses within households missed by previous Irish research. This does not mean that there are no imbalances in the way resources are controlled and managed within the household, but rather that these do not appear to manifest themselves in substantial numbers of households where the wife is much more deprived than the husband (or vice versa).

8.4 CONTROL OVER HOUSEHOLD RESOURCES

The specially designed questions in the 1999 Living in Ireland Survey also allowed management and control of finances within Irish households to be examined, building on Rottman's (1994) earlier research on this topic. The results showed a complex pattern where patterns of management vary not only across households but across different areas of spending as well.

When asked what they would do when they needed a coat or a pair of shoes, men were more likely than women to say that they would buy the item straight away or budget for it with their spouse

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or partner. Women were more likely than men to say they would save up to buy it. In low-income households it was more common for both spouses to say that they would save up to buy the item, but women were still more likely to give this response than men. About threequarters of men and women said that if a large bill arose both partners would decide how to meet it, and this was also true in lowincome households. Among the remainder, about the same number of men and women said they would decide themselves.

When it came to the weekly budgeting, the responses of husbands and wives were consistent in that each showed the wife taking this role in about 55 per cent of cases. Most of the remainder said that both partners did so, with less than 10 per cent of husbands taking this role. In low-income households the proportion where the wife took this responsibility was higher and there were fewer cases where both partners did so. When the decision-making process with respect to spending on a variety of items was examined, there proved to be considerable differences across the items. Women took responsibility for regular bills such as electricity and gas in about half the sample couples, whereas when it came to large household items, a car and borrowing money or paying debts about 80 per cent said it was a joint decision. Where these were not joint decisions, the man took the decision more often than the woman. A similar pattern was seen in low-income households.

Finally, responses about who takes the main responsibility for trying to make sure money stretches from week to week when it is tight showed that this is seen as a joint responsibility in about 60 per cent of couples. Where this is not the case, responsibility was taken by the wife much more often than by the husband. In low-income households, joint responsibility was less common and about 45 per cent of wives said they took responsibility for making resources stretch.

8.5 DEPRIVATION AMONG CHILDREN

Children most often have little or no independent source of income and no real control over the management of family finances, so it is particularly important to develop direct indicators of deprivation for children. In the 1999 survey, mothers with children aged under 14

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were asked whether their children had to do without eight specified items due to lack of money. The results revealed substantial numbers doing without – even for items as basic as three meals a day, having friends home to play or a birthday party, about one in ten mothers said that their children had to do without because of lack of money.

Among two-parent families, the extent of reported deprivation for children was highest where the household reference person was unemployed, ill or disabled and lowest when he or she was working. For the smaller group where the mother was not living with a spouse or partner, deprivation levels were much higher, particularly where the mother was inactive but also even where she was in work. A summary deprivation index constructed from the eight items showed that child deprivation was quite heavily concentrated in certain households. Almost 78 per cent of families reported no deprivation in terms of the eight items, while child deprivation was particularly pronounced for the 6 per cent who reported having to do without from three to five items and extreme for the 8 per cent doing without six or more.

The percentage reporting child deprivation was much lower for households above 60 per cent of mean income than for households below that threshold, but among the latter deprivation levels did not consistently rise as income fell. Deprivation levels were very high indeed for children in households below the 60 per cent line and experiencing basic deprivation – the 'consistently poor'. As many as 40 per cent or more of the mothers in these households reported that their children had to do without a birthday party, pocket money or toys, while more than half had to do without a bicycle or sports equipment. A significant minority of those reporting some child deprivation were in households above even the 60 per cent relative income threshold and so would not be counted as poor even by the most generous relative income line.

8.6 IMPLICATIONS

While the empirical results presented here are based on data for Ireland, the methodology is equally relevant outside the Irish context. Carefully designed non-monetary indicators in large-scale surveys provide a potentially fruitful approach to tackling sensitive and

analytically difficult issues relating to the allocation and control of resources within the household. The results also demonstrate the value of having information on non-monetary deprivation indicators specifically designed for and targeted at children. These would be even more valuable if combined with a range of indicators relating to other aspects of children's well-being and included in the regular monitoring report on the state of Irish children, to be produced on a regular basis as part of the National Children's Strategy.

From a policy perspective, the results show in particular that we cannot assume that the needs of children are being met simply because the household in which they live is currently above a specific income threshold. Recent studies in Ireland and elsewhere suggest that channeling resources such as child benefit through the mother can maximise the benefits to the children. More broadly, though, the important message is that much more than current income matters for child well-being. Both the income of their household over the medium to long term and the quality of the social provision available (in the form of health care and education in particular) are critical to the current well-being and future prospects of Irish children. Household Resources · art 28/4/08 7:05 pm Page 68

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Research on household income frequently assumes that resources are shared equally within households and that all individuals within households have similar standards of living. This study questions such assumptions by examining how resources are distributed within households and by measuring differences in living standards between individuals in the same household. The study addresses three key issues:

- the allocation of resources within households;
- the extent of poverty amongst women and children within both poor and non-poor households; and
- the use of non-monetary indicators in developing our understanding of poverty and social exclusion.

The report has implications for both policy and how data on poverty is collected. The findings of this research will be of interest to a wide range of readers, including those interested in family and child poverty, the structure of the social welfare system and the types and levels of public services provided in Ireland.





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