



Changing patterns of anti-social behaviour among 13-year-olds

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Fás Aníos in Éirinn
Growing Up in Ireland

Why does anti-social behaviour at 13 matter?

- Negative effect on communities and victims
- Risks for the young person:
 - Physical risks (e.g. fighting)
 - Educational risks (e.g. suspension from school)
 - Risk of criminal record
- Indicator of underlying issue? ('acting out')
- Potential for escalation

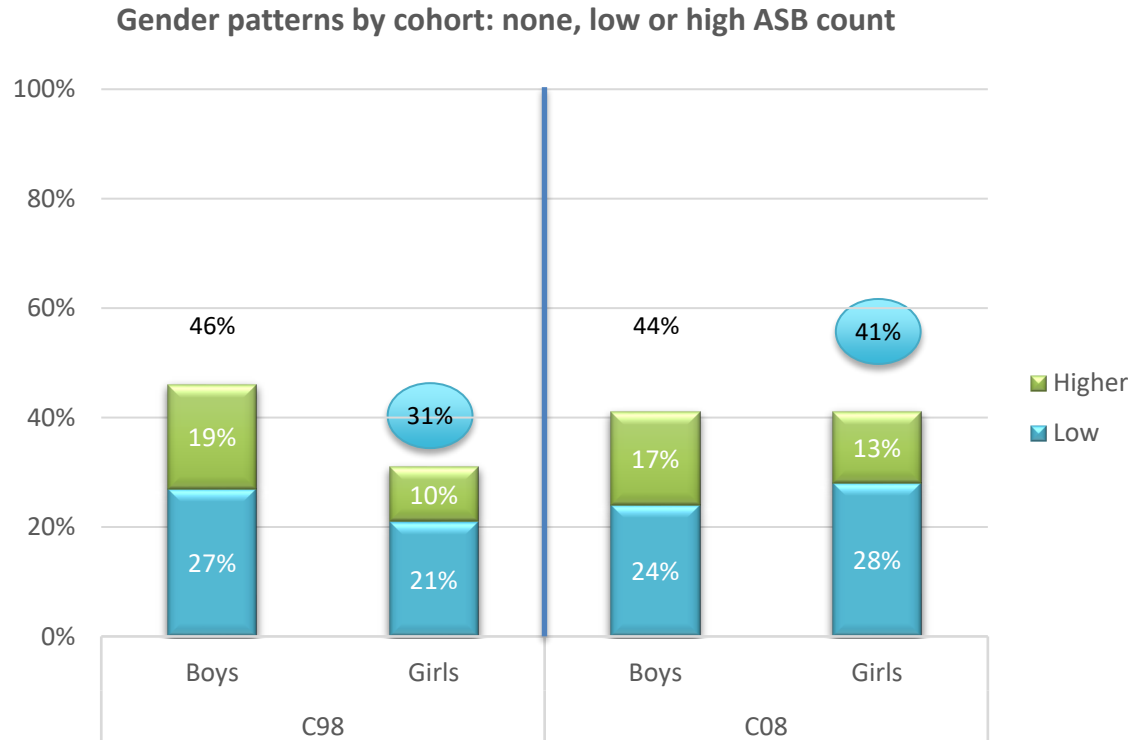
About Growing Up in Ireland

- Irish national longitudinal study of children and young people
 - Main objective is to provide evidence to inform Government policy
- Started in 2006 with two cohorts (Cohort 98 and Cohort 08)
 - Both cohorts surveyed at age 13 (2011 and 2021)
- Multi-disciplinary study
 - Includes info on family and community context
- Usually, interviews are face-to-face in the home with self-complete for sensitive questions
 - But pandemic restrictions for Cohort 08 at 13 meant fully remote

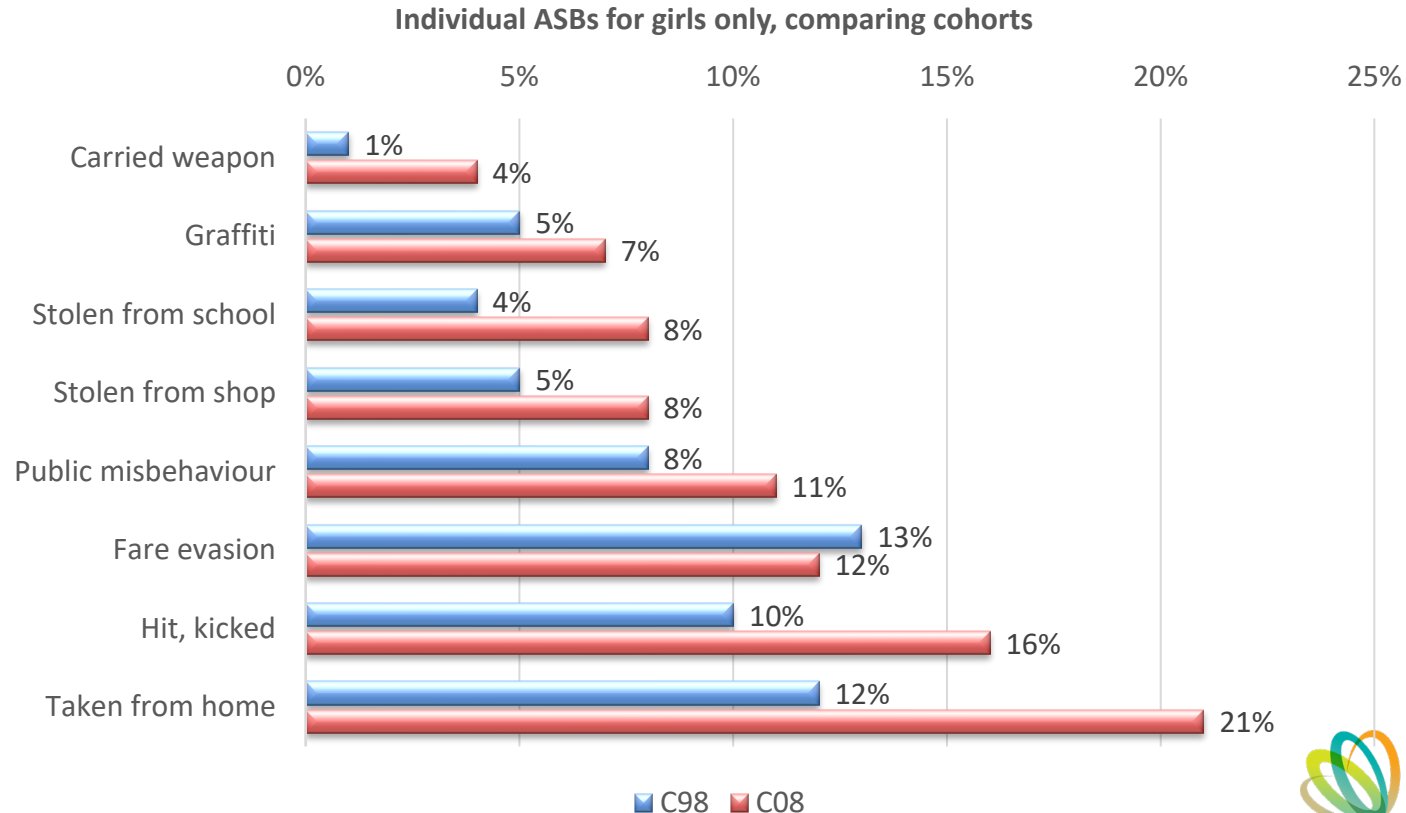
Measuring ASB in GUI

- 13-year-olds self-reported ASB on ‘sensitive’ part of questionnaire
 - Self-completed on an interviewer laptop in the home for Cohort 98; web survey for Cohort 08
 - Note: fewer C08 participants completed web survey
- A common set of eight behaviours
 - Range from ‘not paying correct fare’ to ‘carrying a weapon’
 - Additional items at Cohort 98 excluded from this analysis
 - Never/once/more than once ‘in the last year’
- For this analysis: ‘low’ = two ASBs ‘once’ or one ASB multiple times
- Final n included: C08=2487; C98=7120 (pooled total = 9607)

Frequencies for any ASB by gender and cohort

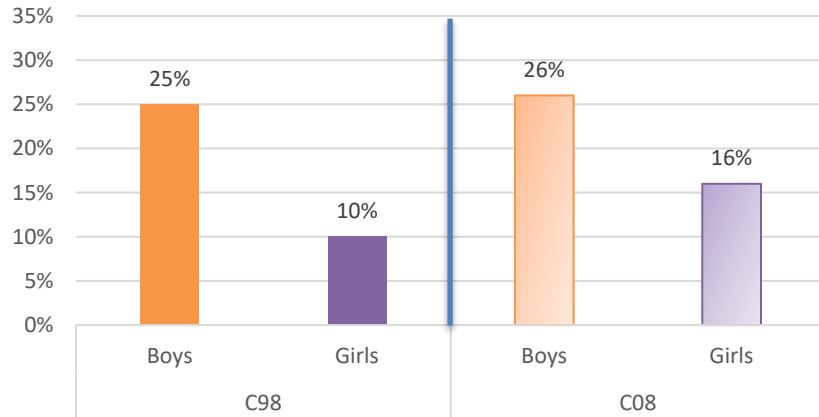


Increased engagement for girls in specific ASBs

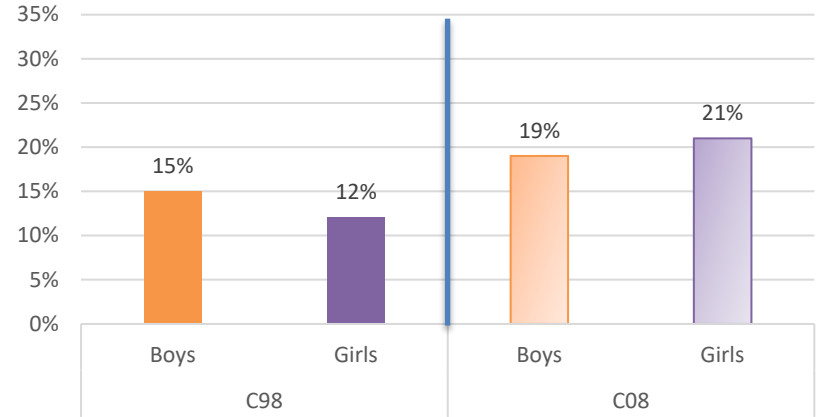


Female-specific increases in some ASBs

Hit, kicked, punched



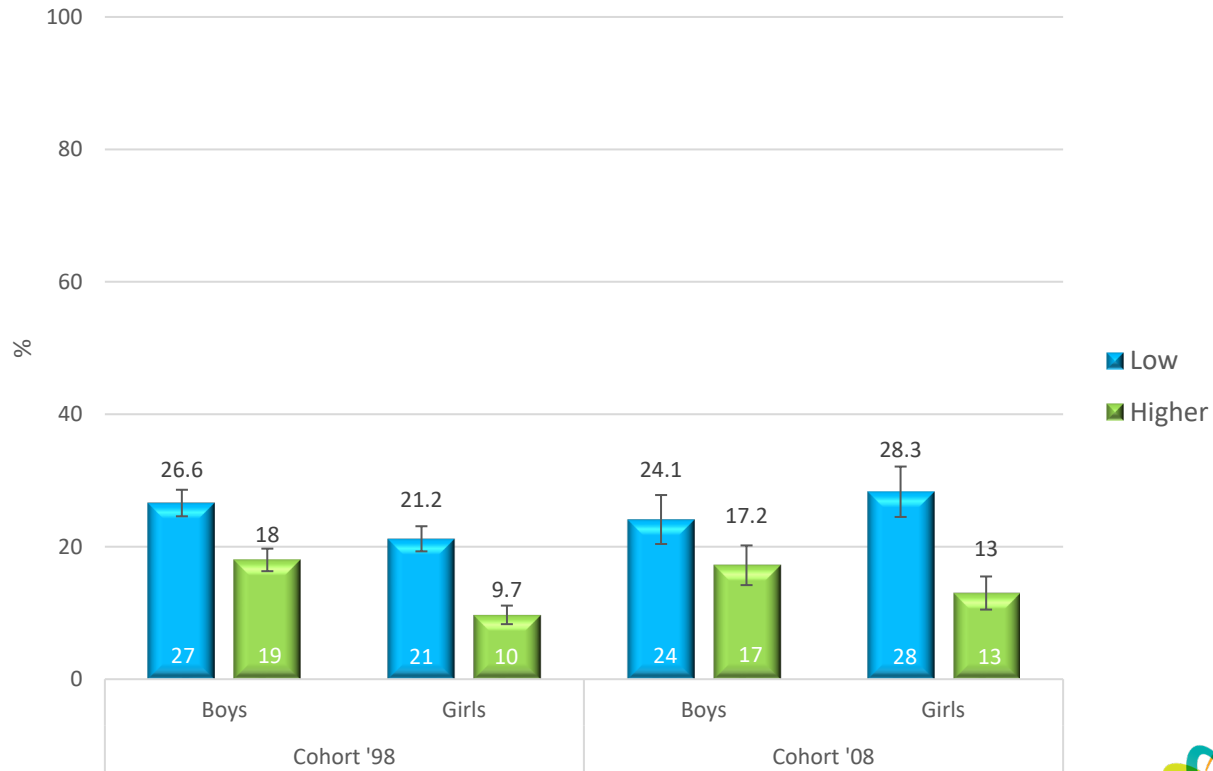
Taken from home



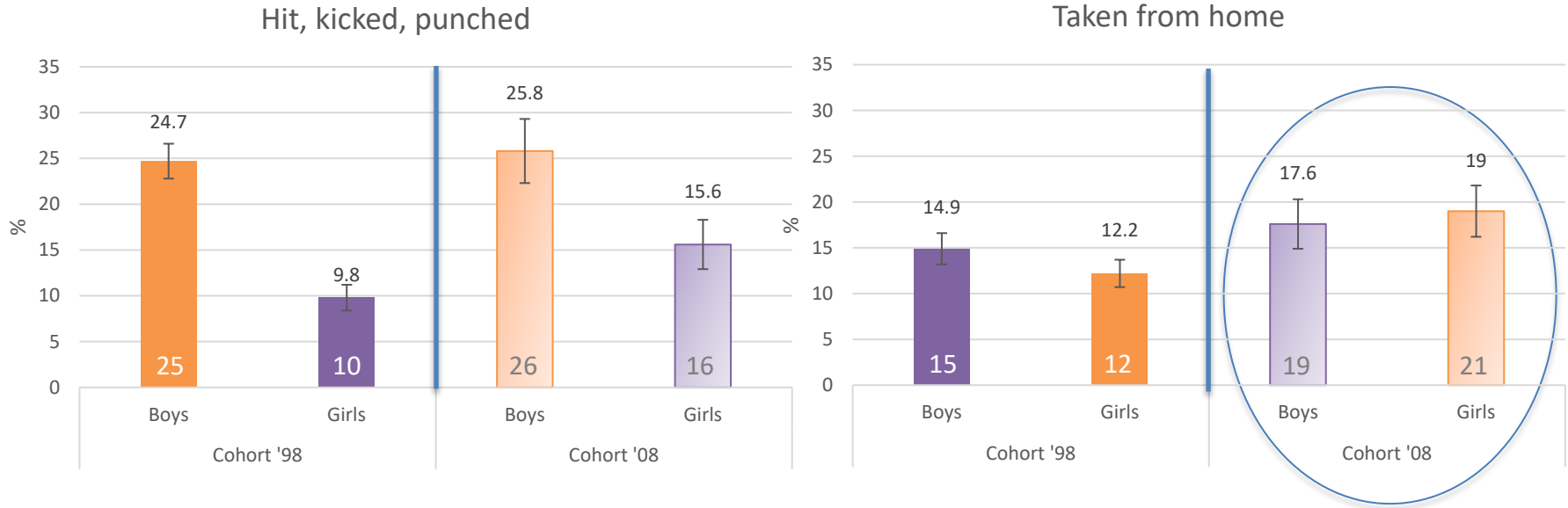
Modelling

- Variables:
 - **Cohort and gender**
 - Family social class
 - Migrant status
 - One/two parent families
 - School characteristics (fee-paying; designated 'disadvantaged')
 - Neighbourhood quality (litter, not safe at night, etc)
- 'Any ASB' – none vs low, none vs high (multinomial logistic)
- Specific ASB – yes/no (logistic regression)
- Will cohort and gender effects remain?

Predicted values for any ASB from model



Predicted values for specific ASB from model



Effects of control variables – any ASB

- ‘Low’ or ‘higher’ vs ‘none’
 - Greater risk: One-parent family; fee-paying school; neighbourhood disorder
 - Greater risk for professional class families in low vs none only
 - Lower risk: Female, but gap narrows over time
 - No significant effect: Cohort; migrant status; ‘disadvantaged’ school status;

Effects of control variables – specific ASB

- Hit/kicked/punched (yes/no)
 - Greater risk: Cohort '08; neighbourhood disorder
 - Lower risk: Female
 - No significant effect: Social class; migrant status; one-parent family; school characteristics
- Taking something from home (yes/no)
 - Greater risk: Cohort '08; professional class; fee-paying school
 - No significant effect: Female; migrant status; one-parent family; 'disadvantaged' school status; neighbourhood disorder

Conclusions

- Girls in Cohort '08 much more likely to engage in ASB than girls in Cohort '98
 - Increase in physical fighting particularly noteworthy
- But patterns for boys relatively stable over time
- Controls for family, school and community variables have only a modest effect
 - Engagement in ASB evident at both ends of social spectrum

But why is there an increase for girls?

- Noteworthy that mental health measures for girls considerably worse for Cohort 08 – connected??
- Pandemic restrictions still in place or just lifted for Cohort '08
- Modes were slightly different (self-complete at home vs online) – but why would girls be affected more than boys?
- Greater prevalence of social media participation for Cohort '08 – greater peer pressure to engage in ASB for 'likes'?
- Cultural shift such that ASB and aggression more socially acceptable for girls?

Acknowledgments

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