CULTURE AND THE SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF FAMILIES:

IRISH EXCEPTIONALISM AS A ROUTE TO THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

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ON THE SOCIOECONOMICS OF THE FAMILY - I

 EXTENSIVE HISTORY IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES – MAYBE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT STRAND OF RESEARCH IN FAMILY STUDY

- INCREASED SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE DUE TO CHANGING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS ASSOCIATED
 WITH NEOLIBERAL GLOBALIZATION
 - ECONOMIC DOWNTURNS MORE FREQUENT AND MORE CYCLICAL
 - CONDITIONS OF MODERN EMPLOYMENT MORE FRAGILE AND ECONOMICALLY TENUOUS (I.E., PRECARITY)

ON THE SOCIOECONOMICS OF THE FAMILY (CONT'D)

- RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY STRUCTURE AND RELATIONS AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT IS MORE COMPLICATED
 - HUMAN CAPITAL DIFFERENTIALS ACROSS PARTNERS HAVE DISSIPATED
 - "START UP" COSTS FOR CHILDREN HAVE INCREASED
 - FAMILIES DEPENDENT UPON DUAL EARNINGS
- MAKES STUDY OF FAMILIES IN RELATION TO SOCIOECONOMIC DYNAMICS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN THE CONTEMPORARY ERA

STATE OF FAMILY IN THE 21° CENTURY

NO TOPIC DOMINATES BOTH POPULAR DISCOURSE AND SOCIAL SCIENCE AS MUCH AS THE IDEA
THAT FAMILIES ARE INCREASINGLY FRAGILE, EMPHEMERAL, AND LESS EFFECTIVE IN DOING WHAT
FAMILIES ARE SUPPOSED TO DO

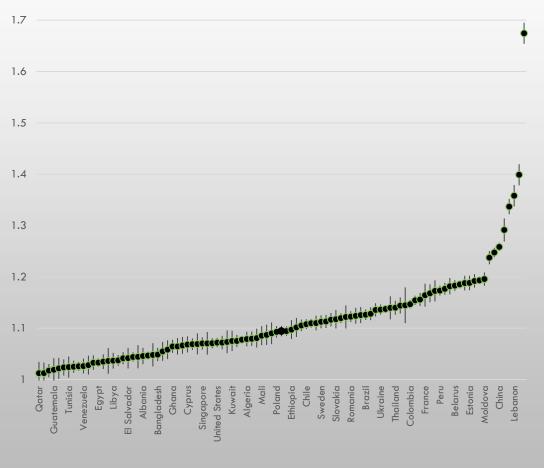
- WORK ASSOCIATED WITH THE SECOND DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION ELABORATES ALL THE DIFFERENT WAYS IN WHICH THE FAMILY AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION IS IN DECLINE
 - POSTPONEMENT OF MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN
 - RISE OF ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS COHABITATION, LIVING APART TOGETHER (LAT), OTHER
 - INCREASES IN SEPARATION, DIVORCE, ESTRANGEMENT



THE CULTURAL: ARE FAMILIES IN DECLINE?

- 1 = VERY IMPORTANT
- 2 = RATHER IMPORTANT
- 3 = NOT VERY IMPORTANT
- 4 = NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL

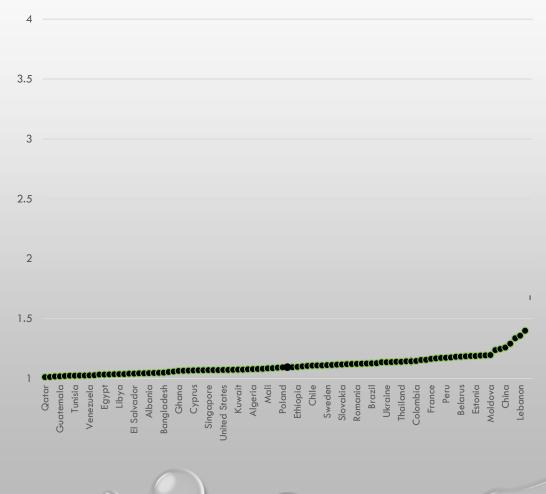
Figure 1. Cross-national variation in perceived "importance" of family, World Values Survey 1981-2014



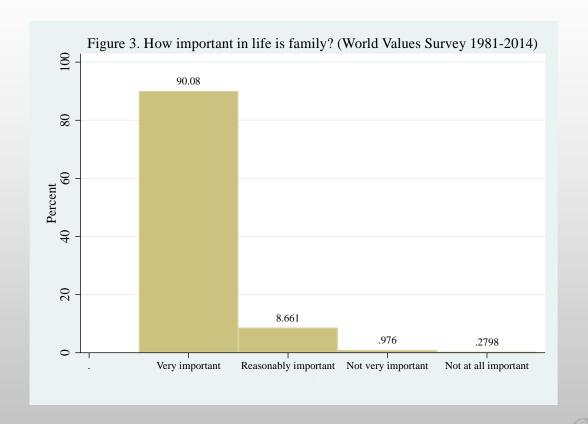


THE CULTURAL: ARE FAMILIES IN DECLINE?





THE CULTURAL: ARE FAMILIES IN DECLINE?





CONUNDRUM

- HOW DO WE RECONCILE THESE TWO OBDURATE FACTS?
 - 1) STRUCTURALLY, FAMILIES APPEAR QUITE FRAGILE AND PERHAPS IN DECLINE
 - 2) CULTURAL SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES APPEARS HEGEMONIC
- HOW DO WE EXPLAIN CONTEMPORARY FAMILY DYNAMICS AGAINST THIS BACKDROP?

BECKER AND THE ECONOMICS OF FAMILY

- THEORY AND RESEARCH ASSOCIATED WITH THE "FAMILY ECONOMICS" MODEL OFFERS ONE POSSIBLE EXPLANATION
- ASSOCIATED WITH THE WORK OF GARY BECKER OFFERS, A FULLY ECONOMIC MODEL OF THE FAMILY INVOLVES THREE FOUNDATIONAL ASSUMPTIONS
 - MAXIMIZING BEHAVIOR
 - MARKET EQUILIBRIUM
 - STABLE PREFERENCES
- "THE ECONOMIC APPROACH...ASSUMES THAT INDIVIDUALS MAXIMIZE THEIR UTILITY FROM BASIC PREFERENCES THAT DO NOT CHANGE RAPIDLY OVER TIME, AND THAT THE BEHAVIOR OF DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS IS COORDINATED BY EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT MARKETS (BECKER 1981, P IX.)

BECKER AND ECONOMICS OF FAMILY (CONT'D)

- BECKER PROVIDES A RATHER ELEGANT EXPLANATION FOR OUR CONUNDRUM
 - FAMILY IS NOT IN DECLINE; FAMILY PROCESSES EBB AND FLOW IN RESPONSE TO
 - PREFERENCES (THAT MAY NOT BE A STABLE AS BECKER INITALLY ARGUED) (POLLACK 2003)
 - MAXIMIZATION DYNAMICS
 - THE FORM AND FUNCTION OF EQUILIBRIA
 - IN THE BACKGROUND IS DIFFERENCES IN PRODUCTION WITHIN AND ACROSS COUPLES THAT LOOSELY TRANSLATES INTO ECONOMIC VALUE AND RESOURCES

BECKER AND ECONOMICS OF FAMILY (CONT'D)

- HOW DOES THIS DEAL WITH OUR CONUNDRUM? IT SIDELINES CULTURE
 - IN HIS STOCKHOLM PRIZE ADDRESS, CULTURE GETS NOTHING MORE THAN A PASSING REFERENCE (BECKER 1996)
 - LESTHAEGHE (2014) DESCRIBES BECKER'S VIEW OF CULTURE AS «ENDOGENOUS» OR A FORM OF «ADDICTION»
 - EPIPHENOMENAL AND LARGELY UNIMPORTANT

BECKER AND ECONOMICS OF FAMILY (CONT'D)

- FAMILIES AND WHAT THEY DO BECOMES A FUNCTION OF TWO INTERCONNECTED PROCESSES.
 - MICRO-FOUNDATION IS THE RELATIVE CONTRIBUTION OF AGENTS TO THE COLLECTIVE ENTERPRISE
 - DIVISION OF LABOR IS "RATIONAL" GIVEN VARIATION IN MARKET VALUE
 - MACRO-CONTEXT IS FAMILIES ADJUSTING OR REACTING TO BROADER SOCIOECONOMIC
 CONDITIONS THAT RECONFIGURE THE INDIVIDUAL VALUE OF FAMILY MEMBERS

THE FAMILY ECONOMICS OF MACRO-ECONOMIC SHOCKS

- FAMILY ECONOMICS PROVIDES AN EXPLANATION FOR OFTEN OBSERVED PHENOMENON OF FAMILY DISSOLUTION IN THE FACE OF MACRO-ECONOMIC DECLINE
 - CULTURAL PROCLIVITIES THAT BIND FAMILIES ARE ANEMIC
 - "BETTER TOGETHER"> STRATEGIES BUTT UP AGAINST DECREASING VALUE OF INDIVIDUAL ACTORS
 - ULTIMATELY, THE CHANGING VALUE OF ACTORS MAY MAKE DISSOLUTION A "RATIONAL" STRATEGY
 OF CONSOLIDATING RESOURCES AND VALUE



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

 HOW DO RISKS OF FAMILY DISSOLUTIONS CHANGE IN RELATION TO SOCIOECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES?

WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT AMPLIFY OR MINIMIZE SUCH RISKS?

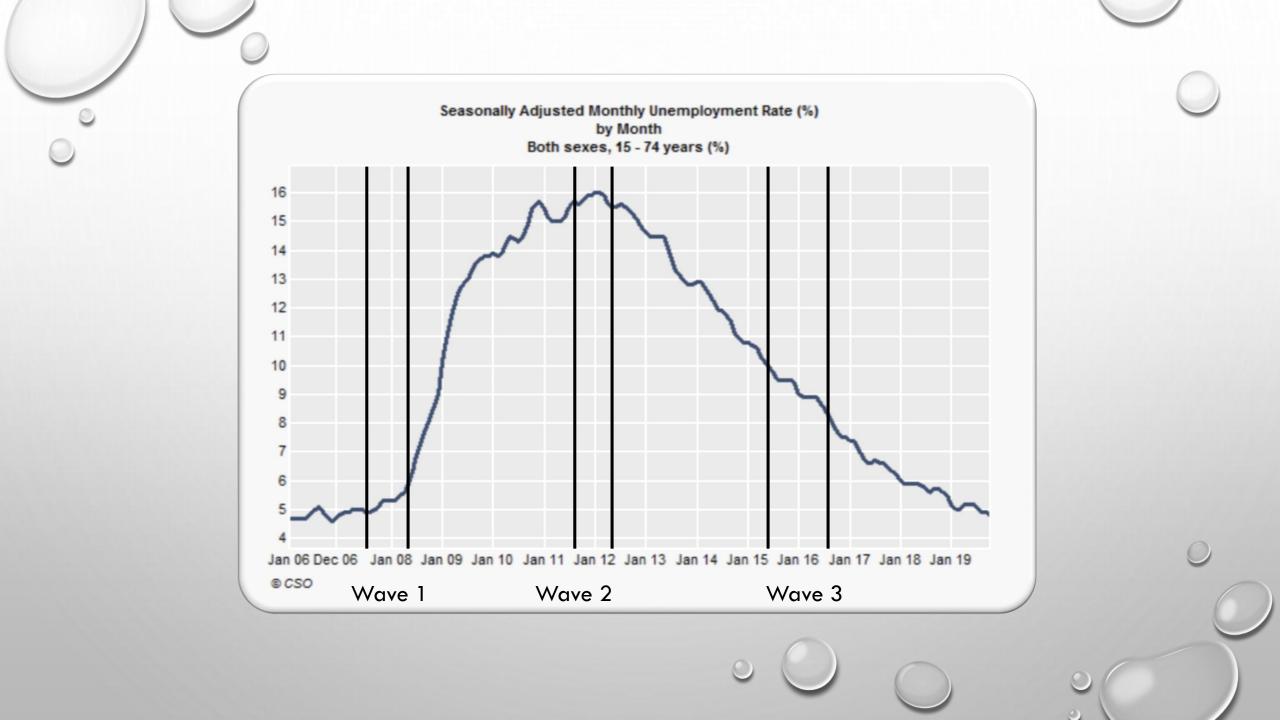
WHAT DOES THIS TELL US ABOUT THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF FAMILY?



EMPIRICAL SET UP

 THE GUI PROVIDES AN INTERESTING LENS INTO THE EFFECTS OF EXOGENOUS ECONOMIC CHANGE ON FAMILY STRUCTURE

• ECONOMIC RECESSION WAS PARTICULARLY PROFOUND IN IRELAND AND CORRESPONDS TO ROLL OUT OF THE GUI





EMPIRICAL SET UP (CONT'D)

- THE GUI DATA COLLECTION CORRESPOND TO PRE-RECESSION, PEAK RECESSION, AND (ALMOST) RETURN TO PRE-RECESSION LEVELS
- THE GUI WINDOW ALSO CAPTURES THE ENTIRETY OF THE ADOLESCENT PERIOD
 - MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCING OF CHILDREN BECOMES INCREASINGLY "PUBLIC" AND RESOURCE INTENSIVE



EMPIRICAL SET UP (CONT'D)

- APPENDED (NOT MERGED!) THE PUBLIC RELEASE GUI LONGITUDINAL FILE WITH CORRESPONDING COHORT DATA FROM THE UK MILENNIUM COHORT STUDY
 - FIVE POPULATIONS ENGLAND, WALES, SCOTLAND, NORTHERN IRELAND, AND IRELAND
 - MAP ECONOMIC CHANGE AT THE FAMILY LEVEL BETWEEN 2008 AND 2011 AND ITS IMPACT ON FAMILY DISSOLUTION BETWEEN 2008 AND 2015 AND BETWEEN 2011 AND 2015
 - DO SO ACROSS COUNTRIES TO ASSESS GENERALITY OF SOCIOECONOMIC EFFECTS AND EVALUATE

 EXPLANATORY CONTINGENCIES



PEEKING UNDER THE HOOD...

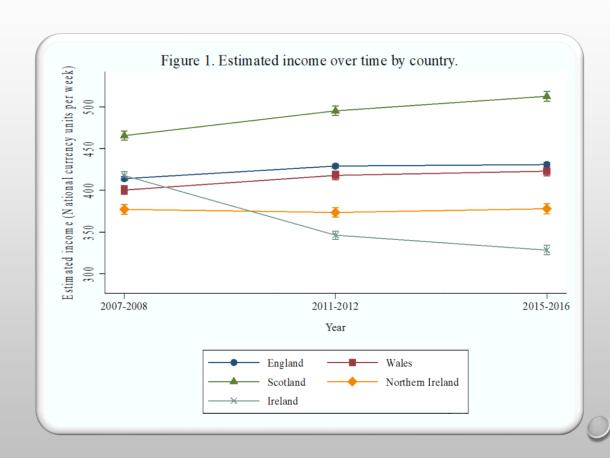
- INCOME HAD TO BE HARMONIZED ACROSS DATA SOURCES.
 - PERIOD
 - GUI COLLECTED ANNUAL INCOME; UKMC COLLECTED WEEKLY INCOME
 - MISSING DATA WERE NMAR IN SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT WAYS
 - SELECTIVE ATTRITION AT TOP END
 - DIFFERENT THRESHOLDS WERE USED
 - RECALIBRATED FOR WEEKLY EARNINGS RANGING FROM 100 TO 1200

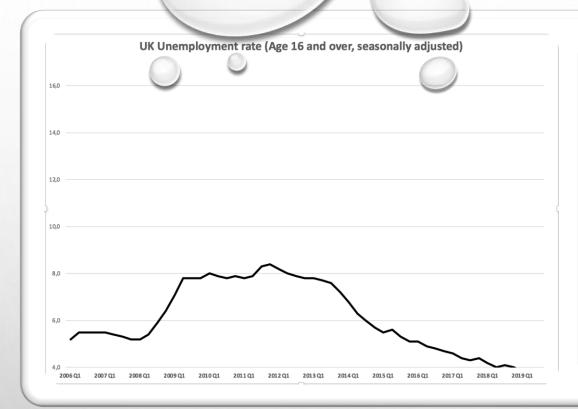
PEEKING UNDER THE HOOD (CONT'D)

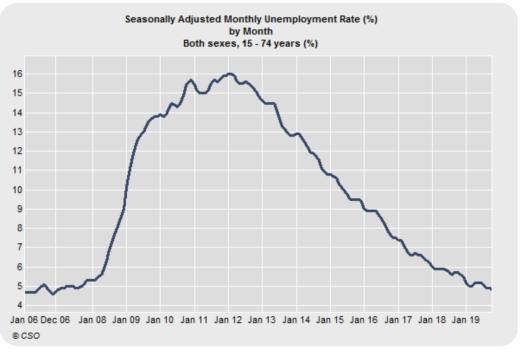
 WITHIN TIME, INCOME AND FAMILY STRUCTURE ARE CORRELATED DUE TO A BUILT IN ASSOCIATION BETWEEN NUMBER OF POSSIBLE WORKERS AND INCOME

- USE THE PANEL STRUCTURE TO MITIGATE THIS:
 - INCOME AND INCOME CHANGE IS MEASURED FROM WAVE 1 TO WAVE 2
 - FAMILY DISSOLUTION IS MEASURED AT WAVE 3
 - DIFFERENT MODELS EXAMINATION CHANGE WAVE 1 TO WAVE 3 AND WAVE 2 TO WAVE 3

INCOME DECLINE WAS GREATEST IN ROI



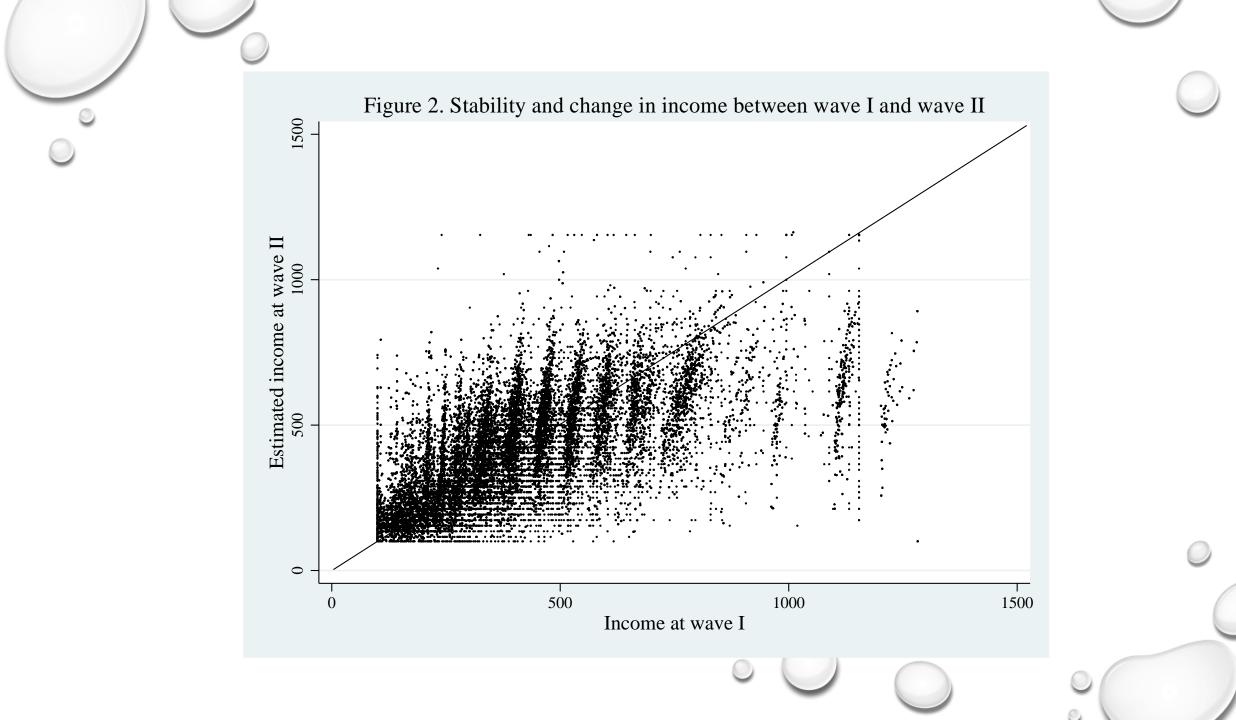




UNEMPLOYMENT MUCH MORE EXTENSIVE IN ROI



ASSESSMENT OF INCOME CHANGE





Stability and change in relative income across panels - Sample

	Income tetrile, wave 2		2	
	Lowest	Moderate	High	Total
Income tetrile, wave I				
Lowest	11,921	3,438	935	16,294
	73.16	21.10	5.74	100.00
Moderate	3,726	8,184	4,346	16,256
	22.92	50.34	26.73	100.00
High	982	4,763	10,527	16,272
	6.03	29.27	64.69	100.00
Total	16,629	16,385	15,808	48,822
	34.06	33.56	32.38	100.00



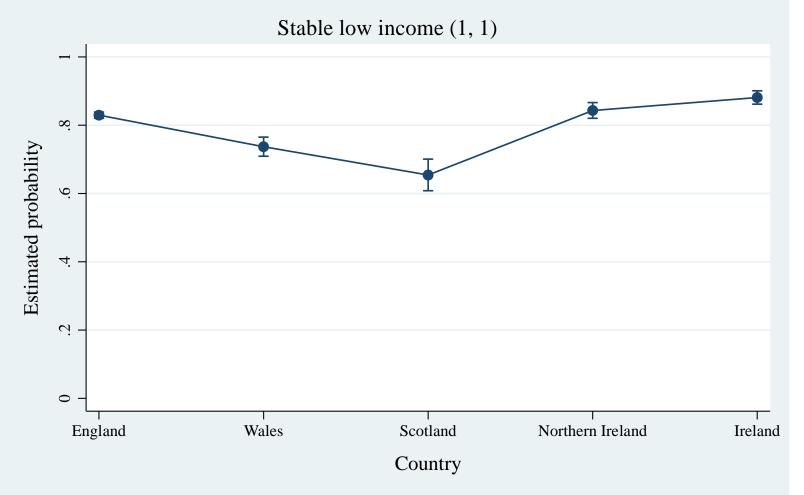
EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS I

WHAT MATTERS FOR PREDICTING FAMILY DISSOLUTION? BIC VALUES

• 6 – FULL THREE-WAY	82257	-8410
• 5 – MODEL 3 + COUNTRY DUMMIES	83572	-7095
• 4 – INCOME AT BOTH WAVES – CONTINGENCIES	83715	-6952
• 3 – INCOME AT BOTH WAVES	84045	-6622
• 2 – INCOME AT WAVE 2	84100	-6567
• 1 – INCOME AT WAVE 1	90667	
MODEL	BIC	ΔBIC

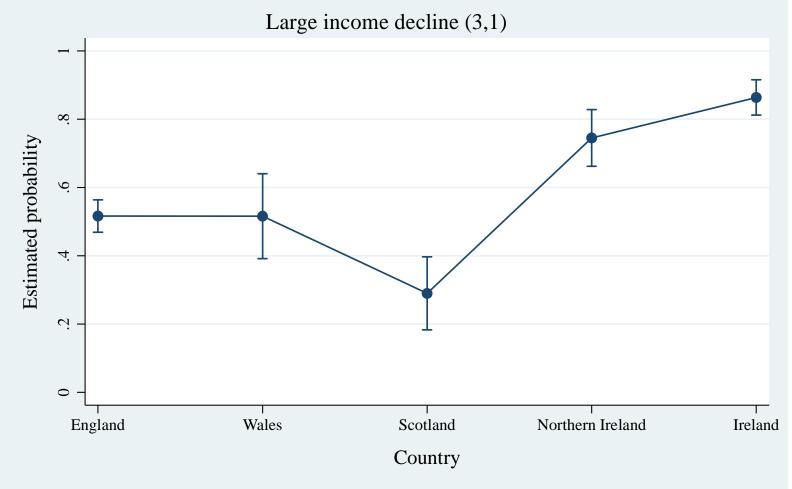
Figure 3. Probability of having both parents in child's household at wave III Stable high income (3, 3) ∞ Estimated probability 9. 4 0 Northern Ireland England Wales Scotland Ireland Country Note. Number in brackets in title indicate income quantiles at wave I and II, respectively.

Figure 4. Probability of having both parents in child's household at wave III



Note. Numbers in brackets in title indicate income quantiles at wave I and II, respectively.

Figure 5. Probability of having both parents in child's household in wave III



Note. Numbers in brackets in title indicate income quantiles at wave I and II, respectively.

Figure 6. Probability of having both parents in child's household in wave III Increasing high income (1, 3) ∞ Estimated probability 0 Northern Ireland England Wales Scotland Ireland Country Note. Numbers in brackets in title indicate income quantiles at wave I and II, respectively.

Figure 7. Probability of having both parents in child's household at wave III Stability and change: High-Low High income, wave I Low income, wave I Estimated probability ∞ 4 Scotland Northern Ireland Ireland England Wales Scotland Northern Ireland Ireland Wales England Country High income, wave II Low income, wave II

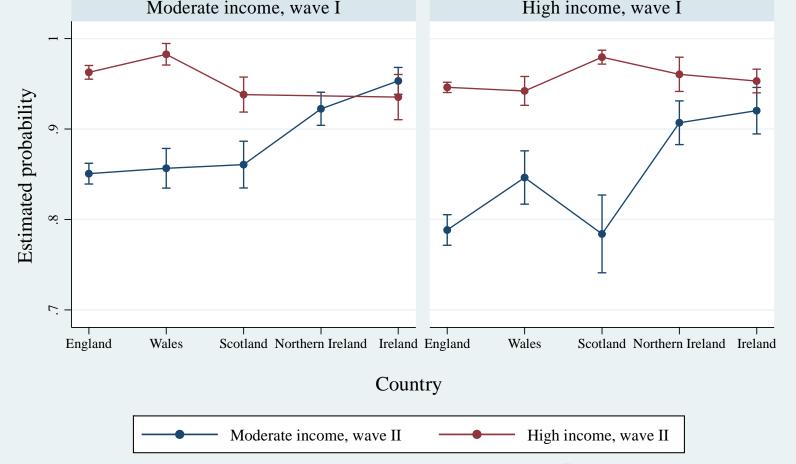
Figure 8. Probability of having both parents in child-s household at wave III Stability and change: Low-moderate Moderate income, wave I Low income, wave I Estimated probability ∞ 3 Scotland Northern Ireland Ireland England Scotland Northern Ireland Ireland Wales Wales England Country Moderate income, wave II Low income, wave II

Figure 9. Probability of having both parents in child's household at wave III

Stability and change: Moderate-high

Moderate income, wave I

High income, wave I





SOME PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

- INCOME DIFFERENCES IN LATE CHILDHOOD CLEARLY INFLUENCE DISSOLUTION RISK THROUGH ADOLESCENCE
 - RISK INCREASES BY 10 TO 20% IN GENERAL
 - LARGELY EXPECTED IF ONE ADOPTS AN INDIVIDUALIST-MAXIMIZATION MODEL
- INCOME CHANGE HAS MORE VARIED EFFECTS
 - INCREASES IN INCOME TO A HIGH LEVEL ERASES ANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LOW AND HIGH INCOME GROUPS AT WAVE I
 - INCREASES IN INCOME TO A MODERATE LEVEL MAY EVEN REDUCE RISKS BEYOND THOSE SEEN FOR THOSE WITH STABLE, MODERATE INCOMES
 - DECREASES IN INCOME, REGARDLESS OF LEVEL, PRODUCES LARGE INCREASES IN RISK OF FAMILY DISSOLUTION
 - RISK INCREASES BY 20 TO 50% IN GENERAL

SOME THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

 HOW WELL DOES AN ECONOMIC MODEL DO IN ACCOUNTING FOR THE INCOME-DISSOLUTION DYNAMICS?

- DEPENDS UPON HOW MUCH FLEXIBILITY YOU ACCORD THE THEORY
 - UTILITY MAXIMIZATION?
 - WHEN CONFRONTED WITH AN ESTABLISHED FAMILY, WHO BENEFITS FROM DISSOLUTION?
 - WHO BENEFITS IN THE FACE OF SIGNIFICANT INCOME LOSS?
 - BUT IT SEEMS CONSISTENT WITH DATA



EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS II

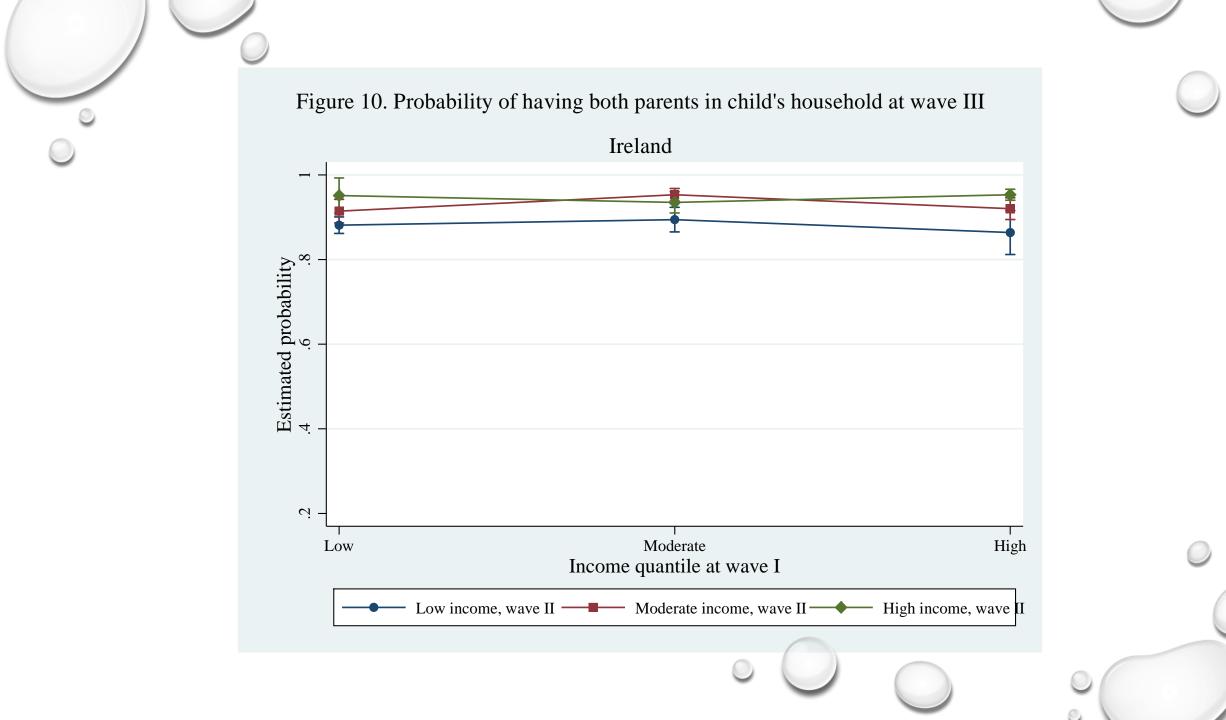
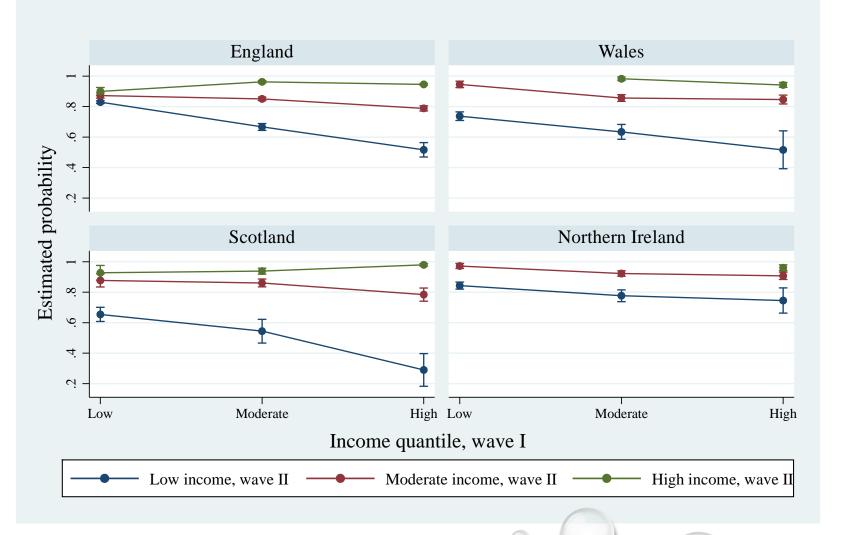


Figure 11. Probability of having both parents in child's household at wave III





SOME PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

 INCOME DIFFERENCES AND CHANGES IN INCOME, POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE, HAVE NO IMPACT WHATSOEVER ON THE LIKELIHOOD OF FAMILY DISSOLUTION IN IRELAND

 ALL OTHER COUNTRIES ARE HIGHLY RESPONSIVE TO INCOME DIFFERENCES AND PARTICULARLY INCOME LOSS

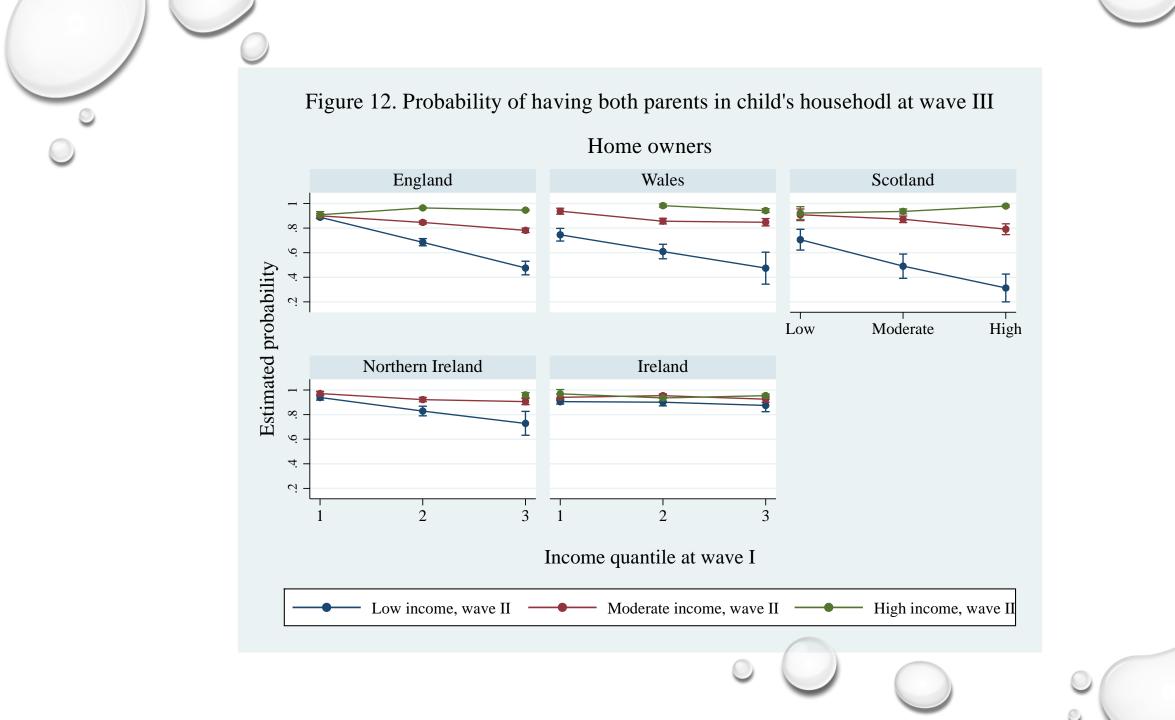
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IS IT A WEALTH/ASSETS EFFECT?

THESIS: THE COSTS OF FAMILY DISSOLUTION INCREASES IN THE FACE OF FIXED ASSETS

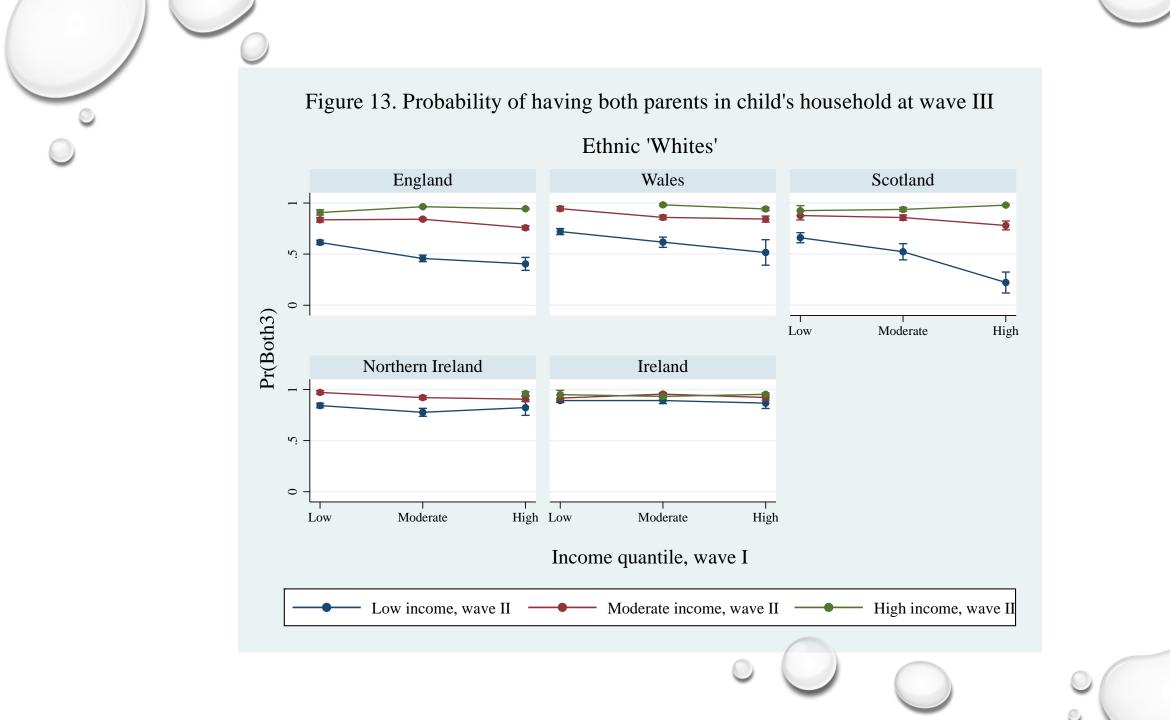
HOME OWNERSHIP IS PRIMARY DETERMINANT OF WEALTH





IS IT AN ETHNICITY EFFECT?

THESIS: IRELAND IS A MORE ETHNICALLY HOMOGENEOUS COUNTRY AND THIS MAY MITIGATE FAMILY DISSOLUTION





IS IT A RELIGION EFFECT?

THESIS: IRELAND IS A MORE TRADITIONALLY RELIGIOUS COUNTRY AND THIS MAY BUFFER INCOME LOSS

Figure 14. Probability of having both parents in child's household at wave III 'Christians' Wales Scotland England Estimated probability Low High Moderate Northern Ireland Ireland 0 High Low Moderate Moderate High Low Income quantile, wave I Low income, wave II Moderate income, wave II High income, wave II



FURTHER ANALYSIS



SET UP

 EUROPEAN SOCIAL SURVEY INCLUDES DETAILED MEASURES OF DENOMINATION FOR 31 COUNTRIES SPANNING 2004 TO 2016

 CAN CREATE A PSEUDO-GUI SAMPLE OF RESPONDENTS UNDER THE AGE OF 40 WITH A CHILD IN HOUSEHOLD

• EVALUATE THE PROBABILITY OF BEING DIVORCED/SEPARATED

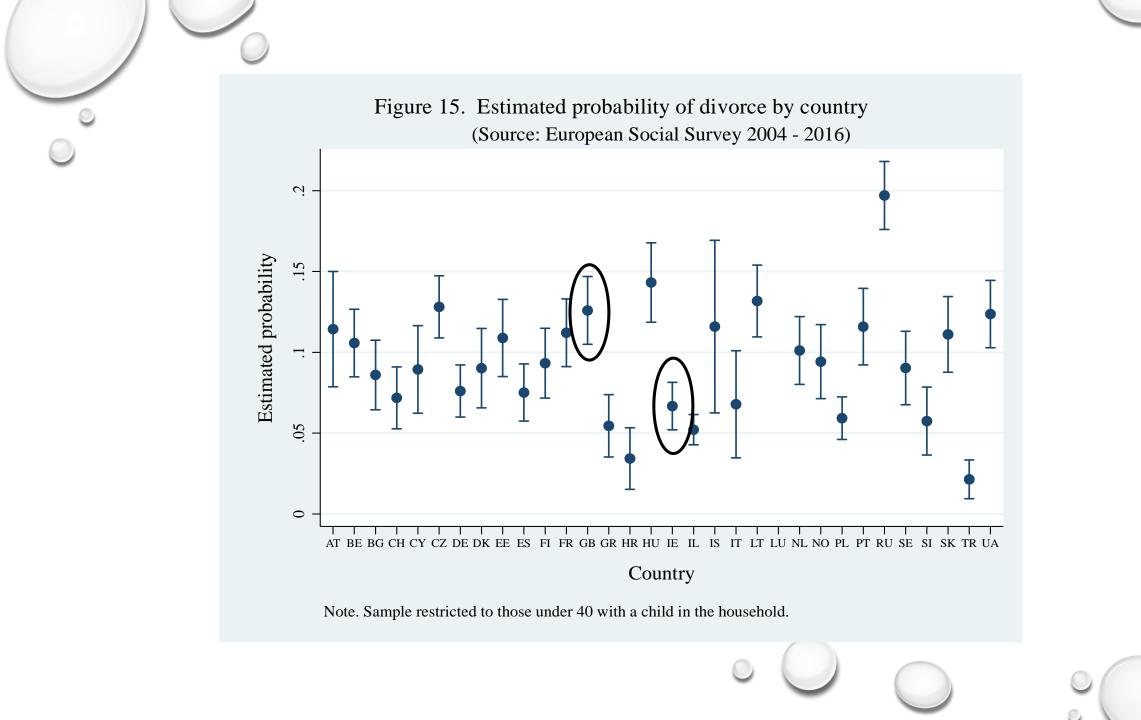
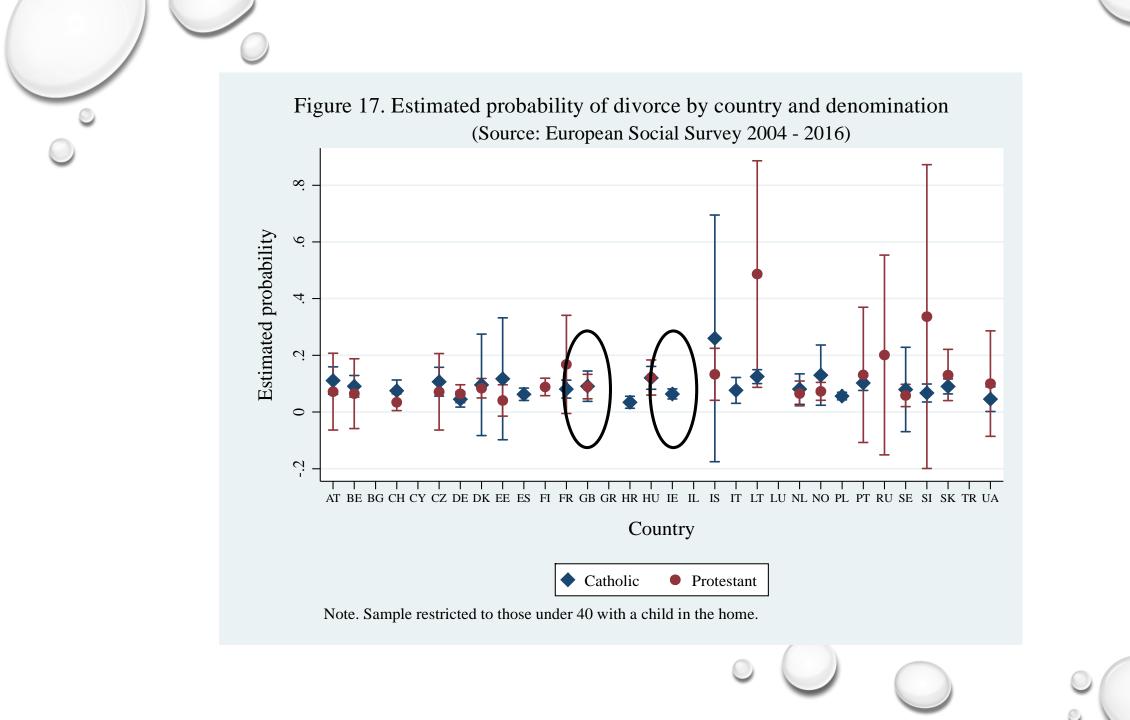


Figure 16. Estimated probability of divorce by denomination (Source: European Social Survey 2004 - 2016) .15 .13 Estimated probability 60: .07 .05 None Catholic Protestant Other Religious denomination Note. Sample restricted to those under 40 with a child in the household.





SUMMARY

- UK FAMILIES ARE HIGHLY RESPONSIVE TO INCOME LOSS WITH SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED RISK OF FAMILY DISSOLUTION
 - NI, WALES & ENGLAND, AND SCOTLAND IN ORDER OF INCREASING RISK
- IRISH FAMILIES ARE *LARGELY IMMUNE* FROM THE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF INCOME LOSS

NOT A FUNCTION OF WEALTH, ETHNICITY, RELIGIOSITY, OR RELIGION



IRISH EXCEPTIONALISM?

- IRISH EXCEPTIONALISM IS NOT ABOUT AGGREGATE RISK OR LACK THERE OF FOR FAMILY DISSOLUTION
 - IRELAND IS QUITE SIMILAR TO MANY OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES
 - IRELAND IS QUITE SIMILAR TO UK COUNTRIES WHERE RESOURCES ARE MODERATE TO HIGH

- IRISH EXCEPTIONALISM IS ABOUT RESILIENCE TO SUSTAINED INCOME DEFICITS OR TO SHARP INCOME DROPS
 - ALL UK COUNTRIES ARE QUITE REACTIVE TO INCOME DEPRIVATION
 - ALL UK COUNTRIES ARE HIGHLY REACTIVE TO INCOME LOSS.



RECENTERING CULTURE?

 TRADITIONAL VIEWS OF CULTURE ASSUME THAT CULTURE SHAPES ACTIONS BY SUPPLYING ULTIMATE ENDS AND VALUES TOWARD WHICH ACTION IS DIRECTED

- IN FAMILY STUDIES, WORK HAS EMPHASIZED VARIATION IN WHAT CONSTITUTES FAMILY, THE PERCEIVED VALUE OF FAMILY, AND THE »RULES» OF FAMILY FORMATION, PRACTICE, AND DISSOLUTION
 - TRADITIONAL ANTHROPOLOGY, STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM, FEMINIST CRITIQUE



RECENTERING CULTURE

• SWIDLER (1986) OFFERS AN ALTERNATIVE

- CULTURE PROVIDES A "TOOL KIT" OF HABITS, SKILLS, AND STYLES FROM WHICH PEOPLE CONSTRUCT "STRATEGIES OF ACTION"
 - HERE THE TOOL KIT REFLECTS CULTURAL LOCATION IN ALL ITS COMPLEXITY AND EMPOWERS/CONSTRAINS AGENTS IN HOW THEY CAN ACT IN PARTICULAR SITUATIONS
 - HERE, THE OUTCOMES IS NOT A UNIT ACT BUT A COLLECTIVE PACKAGE OF ACTIONS



RETURNING TO FAMILIES

- FAMILIES MAY INDEED BE UNIVERSALLY DEEMED AS IMPORTANT, PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT SOCIAL INSTITUTION, BUT
 - AGENTS ARE DIFFERENTIALLY EMPOWERED TO «DO» FAMILY
 - DOING FAMILY IS A COLLECTIVE OF ACTIVITIES THAT OPERATE OVER LONG PERIODS OF TIME
 - HOW ONE DOES FAMILY REFLECTS CULTURAL ACCUMULATION OF HABITS, SKILLS, ETC
 - FAMILIES AS SOCIAL STRUCTURES ARE QUITE DIVERSE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE
 - WHAT FAMILIES ARE AND WHAT FAMILIES MEAN BECOMES PART OF THE TOOL KIT



RETURNING TO CULTURE

CULTURE OPERATES QUITE DIFFERENTLY IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS

- CULTURE ACCOUNTS FOR CONTINUITIES IN «SETTLED LIVES»
 - CULTURE AND STRUCTURAL CIRCUMSTANCES REINFORCE ONE ANOTHER
 - "CULTURE IS A MODEL OF AND A MODEL FOR EXPERIENCE; AND CULTURAL SYMBOLS REINFORCE AN
 ETHOD, MAKING PLAUSIBLE A WORLD VIEW WHICH IN TURN JUSTIFIES THE ETHOS (P. 278)



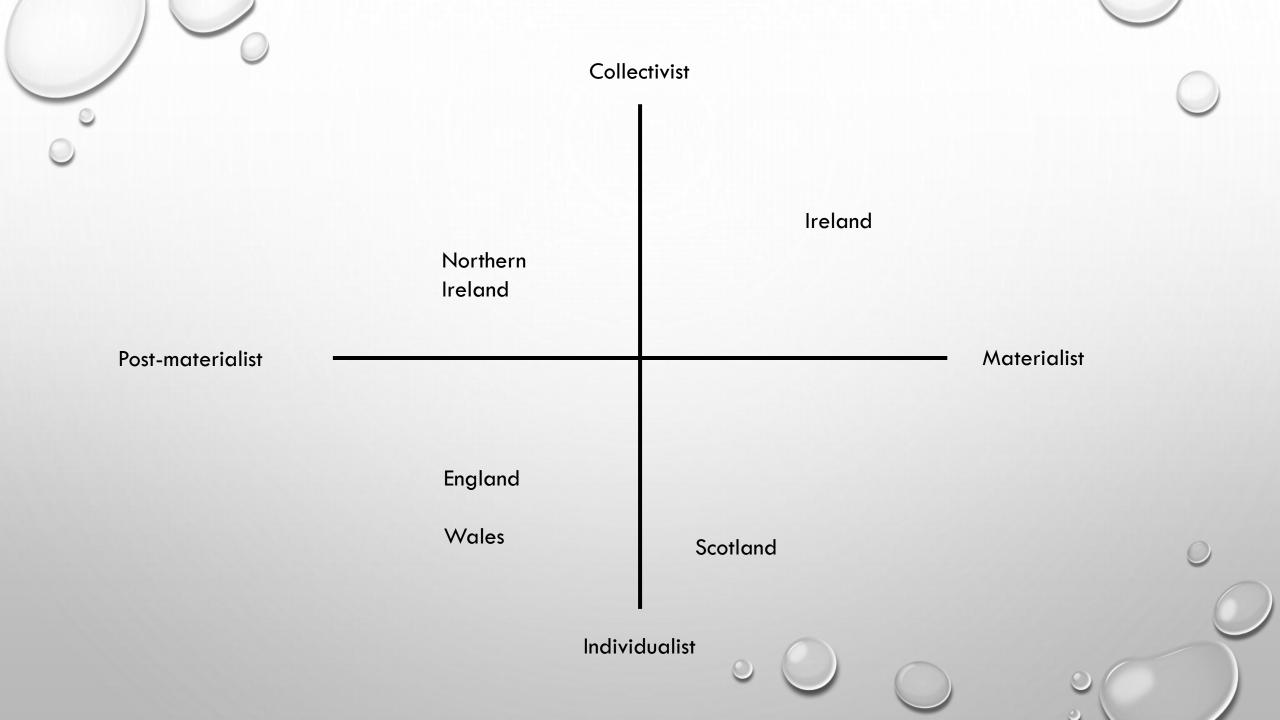
RETURNING TO CULTURE (CONT'D)

- CULTURE ACCOUNTS FOR DISCONTINUITIES IN «UNSETTLED LIVES»
 - «IN SUCH PERIODS, IDEOLOGIES EXPLICIT, ARTICULATED, HIGHLY ORGANIZED MEANING SYSTEMS
 ESTABLISH NEW STYLES OR STRATEGIES OF ACTION» (P. 278)
 - "CULTURE HAS INDEPENDENT CAUSAL INFLUENCE IN UNSETTLED CULTURAL PERIODS BECAUSE IT
 MAKES POSSIBLE NEW STRATEGIES OF ACTION-CONSTRUCTING ENTITIES THAT CAN ACT (SELVES,
 FAMILIES, CORPORATIONS), SHAPING THE STYLES AND SKILLS WITH WHICH THEY ACT, AND
 MODELING FORMS OF AUTHORITY AND COOPERATION" (P. 280)



RETURNING TO THE FAMILY

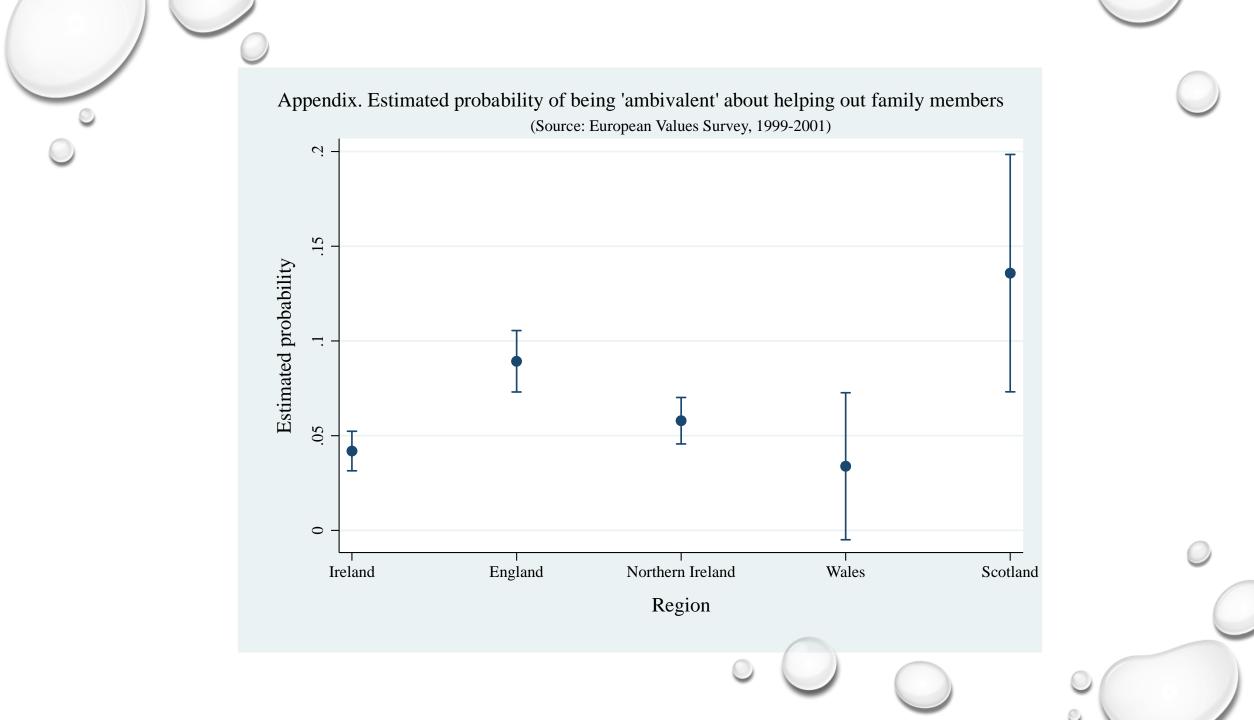
- IN SITUATIONS OF SOCIOECONOMIC CHALLENGE, DIFFERENT MODELS OF HOW TO DO FAMILY COMPETE
 - ONE MODEL OF FAMILY REFLECTS POST-MATERIAL SCRIPTS WHEREBY FAMILY IS A VEHICLE FOR SELF-ACTUALIZATION ON AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL
 - ECONOMIC STRAIN WOULD UNDERMINE THE LOGIC OF STAYING TOGETHER; ECONOMIC SHOCKS WOULD BE DEVASTATING
 - «ITS SIMPLY NOT WORKING»





RETURNING TO THE FAMILY

- ANOTHER MODEL OF FAMILY REFLECTS A MORE MICRO-COLLECTIVIST ORIENTATION, PARTICULARLY ONE WHERE FAMILY IS PERCEIVED AS A SOURCE OF RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES
 - ECONOMIC STRAIN WOULD HEIGHTEN THE LOGIC OF STAYING TOGETHER; ECONOMIC SHOCKS WOULD BE GALVANIZING
 - «WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS...»
- BOTH MODELS EXIST BUT HAVE VARIABLE SALIENCE IN THE TOOL KIT





THANK YOU!

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