



School of Economics

Microeconomic Datasets

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Microeconomic Datasets

- Typically modelling the actions of microeconomic agents
- Individuals, households, firms
- We concentrate on individuals and households
- Treat them as inter-changeable in this presentation, but distinction can be important
- Sample sizes vary but can be anything from about 3,000 to A VERY BIG NUMBER

What type of data is there?

- Usually cross-section – looking at single point in time – there may be repeated cross-sections – but they are not the same units (individuals, firms whatever)
- Panel data: follows the same units over time – can control for unobserved factors associated with each unit, but also problems with attrition

What sort of information is available?

- Most datasets will contain the following:
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Education
 - Marital Status
 - Principal Economic Status
- Others may also include
 - Health and Lifestyle (Self-assessed health, GHQ, health problems, doctors visits, smoking, drinking)
 - Labour market data (hours worked, wages, earnings, occupation)
 - Income data (wages, transfers, investments, pension)
 - Other family info (parents, children)
 - Housing facilities
 - Expenditure data

What Sort of Research Questions Can You Address?

- Providing data is available you can investigate (among others):
 - Standard economic relationships (labour supply functions, wage equations etc)
 - Measurement issues for distributions (inequality, poverty, polarisation)
 - Policy/treatment effects

Some of the more common Irish datasets

- **Household Budget Survey (HBS)**
 - Released every 5 or so years, very detailed information on expenditure, also detail on income, housing and other human capital variables
- **Living in Ireland (LII)**
 - Annual data from 1994-2001, loads of detail on income, also lots of human capital stuff – used extensively by ESRI, panel aspect
- **Survey of Income and Living Conditions (SILC)**
 - Annual from 2003, much of same info as LII but not as extensive
- **Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS)**
 - Quarterly from 1998, lots of labour market stuff (but not wages!), extra modules which can be very useful for specific questions, some panel aspect

Some of the more common Irish datasets (contd.)

- **Census**
 - Lots of demographic/housing information – also some labour market, human capital data
- **Other ESRI datasets**
 - School Leaver Survey, time-use, housing quality
- **SLÁN**
 - Data for 1998, 2002, 2007 - lots of health stuff, not so much other human capital
- **National Employment Survey (NES)**
 - Wage, earnings, hours data by NACE code and public/private sector – not sure of its general availability
- **Growing Up in Ireland**
 - Just out, will eventually be a panel, lots of child (and adult) related stuff
- **Also a number of European datasets of which Ireland is a member (e.g. SHARE)**

How do I get this data?

- Irish Social Science Data Archive (ISSDA) located in UCD – see website for details of how to access all listed datasets, plus others
- Download from web

Some broad points to bear in mind

- Always re-assure yourself as much as possible re quality of data
- Data from official agencies usually OK, other data sources may be acceptable also
- You will typically be looking at relationships/policy effects conditional on all the factors you can observe
- There will also be factors you *can't* observe
- Selection/endogeneity nearly always an issue
- “Before/after” natural experiments are very useful if you can find them