nasc

The Irish Immigrant Support Centre

Nasc Research Report:

"Evaluating the Barriers to Employment
and Education for Migrants in Cork"
By Paul Dunbar

Executive Summary

This research project was commissioned by Nasc, a non-Governmental immigrant support organisation based in Cork city. Nasc became increasingly aware, through the support services it offered, and its regular contact with migrants, that there were barriers to employment and education for migrants.

Research Aims and Objectives

The primary objective of this research was to uncover the nature and extent of the barriers to employment and education for migrants. This was achieved by interviewing a wide-range of interest groups: migrants, service providers, and employers. The following questions provided the focus for the research:

- Why is there a high percentage of unemployment amongst refugees and people with leave to remain in Ireland?

- What barriers and routes exist for migrants to Ireland who are seeking work? (refugees, people with leave to remain, other categories e.g. those under family reunification schemes, Eastern Europeans, non-EEA citizens requiring an employment permit).

- What can we learn from those who are in paid employment about their experiences in the workplace, including issues of racism and discrimination?

- What are the factors which inhibit and support access to appropriate education/training, for migrants to Ireland?

Research Methodology

This research draws largely on qualitative methods of data collection. Using data from the Census 2006 as a starting point, a profile of suitable candidates was drawn up which would enable the research team the greatest opportunity to address the questions which are outlined above. The interviews were semi-structured in nature which allowed the interviewee to raise particular issues which were important to them or their organisation. While there was a set of questions available to each interviewer working on the research team, these questions were by no means intended to limit the discussions.

Profile of Interviewees

Interviews were conducted with 36 migrants, 21 service providers, and 15 employers. Of the migrant interviewees, 58.3% were male and 41.7% female and were drawn from ages ranging from 20 to 45. In terms of country of origin, 38.8% of interviewees were of African origin, 36.1% from the EU Accession States, 16.6% from Asian countries, 5.5% were from the EU-15, and 2.75% from South America. The service provider group was drawn from a range of organisations and institutions involved in education, employment, and enterprise in the Cork region. Employers were sought on the basis of Census 2006 figures which detailed the percentage of migrant workers in

a particular sector. As such, 33.3% were involved in the hotel/restaurant sector, 20% from the construction sector, 20% were recruitment agencies, 13.3% from the manufacturing sector, 6.6% from transport, and 6.6% from the financial services sector.

Summary of Findings

English Language

- Migrants are fully aware of the importance attached to their level of English and almost all of the interviewees professed a wish to improve their language capabilities.
- A significant number of migrants stated that their level of English had prevented them from accessing employment in their chosen field.
- Some migrants had come to Ireland specifically to improve their English language skills.
- Some educational service providers expressed concern over the language abilities of migrants. While some had opted to give prospective students the 'benefit of the doubt', recurring problems have led them to question this approach.
- A number of service providers highlighted the high demand for English language tuition and the limited number of places available on such courses.
- There was also concern among service providers over the *ad-hoc* approach to English tuition and the general lack of a standardised programme and accreditation.
- Employers place great emphasis on English skills, particularly in the professions.
- Understanding written and spoken English is crucial in terms of health and safety. Some employers have taken the step of producing health and safety literature in a number of different languages in order to cater for their migrant staff.

Racism/Discrimination

- Racism and discrimination, particularly for the African interviewees, appeared to be a significant barrier to securing employment.
- While one migrant felt he could prove he had been discriminated against when applying for a job, others spoke of the discrimination as being difficult to prove.
- Incidents of racism and/or discrimination within the workplace tend to be centred around relations among staff members as opposed to relations between staff and management.
- Service providers who have contact with unemployed migrants generally agree with the assessment that African migrants experience the greatest difficulty when accessing employment. They attribute this to discrimination on the basis of ethnic background. However, as noted above, this is difficult to prove.
- The research found that racism/discrimination does not appear to be an issue for migrants applying for education or training.
- Several employers noted an increase in complaints of a racist nature from their clients/customers.

- The majority of employers interviewed do not have specific anti-racism policies in place. Rather, they have incorporated this into their equal opportunities policies.

Recognition of Qualifications

- Many migrants found it difficult to secure employment in which they could use the skills they had previously learned.
- The process whereby a migrant can have the qualification or skill they have gained abroad recognised in Ireland is taking too long.
- Furthermore, some migrants are unaware of the facilities offered by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland.
- Some migrant interviewees expressed the opinion that qualifications gained abroad are considered inferior to those gained in Ireland.
- The migrants who had complemented their prior learning with further education in Ireland found that it greatly increased their employment opportunities.
- The manner in which the NQAI communicates the Irish equivalent of a migrant's qualification gives no indication as to the qualifications authenticity and can create doubts in the minds of employers.
- Migrants who, for whatever reason, cannot prove their qualification or skill level, often find they are required to retrain.

Access to Education

- Asylum seekers are unhappy with the educational opportunities available to them and expressed great interest in pursuing full-time study.
- Financial barriers constitute a significant barrier for migrants who wish to pursue further education or training.
- Migrants who are permitted to remain in Ireland as a result of having an Irish-born Child (IBC status) are not entitled to the same rights in terms of education as refugees and people with leave to remain.
- There is no policy at the national level that deals with the various educational needs of migrants.
- Information on the types of education open to migrants is poorly disseminated and leaves many unaware of the opportunities available to them.
- Some migrants are unaware of the implications for their social welfare payments if they take up full-time study.
- Furthermore, information on grants and financial assistance is often complicated and confusing for migrants, particularly in relation to their legal status in Ireland.
- Some migrants have difficulty pursuing further study while in full-time employment.

Employment Permits

- Applying for an employment permit takes too long and the application system is not fully understood by many employers.
- Migrants who require employment permits stated that they were often worried about whether or not their permit would be renewed.
- Some employers stated that the cost of applying for employment permits acted as a disincentive.

- The stipulation that most employment permits require the candidate to earn a salary of more than €30,000 per year excludes many migrants from working in Ireland.

Exploitation

- Exploitation in the Irish context generally takes the form of underpayment of wages or non-payment of entitlements such as holiday pay or overtime.
- Migrants who experience exploitation at work are often unwilling to take action against an offending employer, primarily for fear of losing their jobs, but also because of a lack of knowledge of their rights and entitlements.
- The practice of paying wages which are below the rates agreed by employers' representatives and trade unions is commonplace within the construction industry. It should be noted that this most commonly occurs in small to medium-size firms.
- Employers who are found to have exploited workers in terms of underpayment of wages or imposing excessive working hours are not liable for any financial penalties.
- The time it takes, from the date of application, for a case to be heard by the Labour Relations Commission or the Rights Commissioner is commonly 6-9 months.
- If a migrant has a poor understanding of English, they appear to be more susceptible to exploitation.

Recommendations

Education
- A comprehensive, coherent education plan for migrants is essential
- Establishment of a forum for all education providers in the Cork area to identify over-laps and gaps, to agree standards in relation to English classes, and to ascertain what 'sandwich courses' or 'bridging classes' are required for migrants.
- Development of database systems within education/training institutes to monitor their performance in relation to migrant access and participation.
- A follow-up system in all educational and training institutions to ascertain how migrants fare after completion of courses in terms of employment or further education.
- Increase access to education for all asylum seekers.
- Increase awareness among migrants of the implications for social welfare payments should they undertake full-time education.
- Afford migrants with Irish-born Child (IBC) status the same rights and entitlements as refugees and people with leave to remain.
- Additional resources need to be directed towards programmes which assist the most vulnerable migrants to access education. This is particularly true for those migrants which came through the asylum process.
- The anomaly whereby some migrants must pay international fees for education must be addressed.

Employment
- Educated and highly-skilled migrants have the potential to contribute to the development of a 'knowledge-based' economy rather than just in area of unskilled labour. Methods should be devised whereby migrants who arrive in Ireland with qualifications may easily adapt these qualifications to suit the Irish labour market. This will avoid the situation whereby highly-skilled migrants are being underemployed and in low-skill labour.
- Offer increased training and education opportunities for migrants who may be low-skilled which will allow them to secure gainful employment.
- Address the under-representation of migrants within the public sector and civil service institutions.
- Additional resources need to be directed towards those migrants who, for whatever reason, find themselves in long-term unemployment.

English Language
- Standards and guidelines for English proficiency classes at all levels are needed, including a national accreditation system for qualified providers and adequate funding to deliver a programme to agreed standards.
- There is a need for a comprehensive strategic plan at both national and local levels on the provision of English language. This plan needs to take into account new realities in terms of needs, resources and funding.
- Investigate ways in which employers can provide English classes to their staff members. It was evident from the experiences of some employers who provided English classes that staff were largely unwilling to partake in these

classes outside of working hours. There should be incentives for migrants to improve their English.

- Increase the provision of English language tuition available to migrants in order to satisfy the current high demand.
- In relation to education, provide additional resources for students who may be experiencing difficulties related to their understanding of the language.

Recognition of Qualifications

- Resistance to licensing people with foreign trade or professional qualifications must be addressed.
- Acceleration of the process which matches a migrant's qualifications with existing FETAC and HETAC qualifications.
- The manner in which this qualification is communicated to an employer may lead to uncertainty on the part of the employer with regard to the legitimacy of the qualification. It is recommended that the communication be conducted in such a way as to eliminate this uncertainty.
- Some of the interviewees were unaware of the facility offered by the NQAI. It is recommended that information regarding this service be more widely disseminated among the groups who would be likely to use it.

Exploitation

- Increase the number of Labour Inspectors within the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.
- Greater enforcement of existing employment regulations and legislation.
- Reduce the period of time it takes for a case to be heard by the Labour Relations Commission or the Rights Commissioners.
- Impose penalties on employers who are found to have exploited workers which are commensurate with the level of exploitation.
- Increase awareness among the migrant population with regard to their rights and entitlements at work e.g. correct rates of pay, overtime payments.

Racism/Discrimination

- Some of the migrants interviewed were unaware of the Equality Authority and the work it does in investigating cases of discrimination. It is recommended that awareness of this facility should be heightened in order to provide migrants the opportunity to challenge cases in which they feel they have been discriminated against on the basis of their race or religion.
- It is recommended that a nationwide educational campaign be initiated which would increase awareness of minority ethnic groups among the indigenous population and tackle racism.

Employment Permits

- Reduce the length of time it takes to apply for an employment permit.
- Apart from a limited number of occupations, employment permits are generally only available to persons earning more than €30,000 per year. If this figure was lowered it would permit greater access for migrants to the Irish labour market.

- Investigate ways in which the application process can be made more transparent.
- Reduce the costs incurred by employers when applying for employment permits.
- Increase awareness among employers of the various types of employment permit available.
- Remove the requirement for a permit for the spouse/dependent of a person in Ireland already on a permit.

Introduction

Piaras Mac Éinrí, Department of Geography, National University of Ireland, Cork

A few basic facts concerning the recent performance of the Irish economy, while well-known, bear repeating. In 1986, there were only about one million people at work in the paid economy in Ireland. Unemployment was over 17%, while emigration reached one of the highest absolute annual figures for the entire 20th century in 1988/89, when over 70,000 people, or 2% of the entire population, left the country. It was a time of pessimism, characterised by poverty, poor public services, high taxes, low standards of living and the bleakness which followed the apparently false dawn of European Community membership and the relative boom of the 1970s, when many Irish emigrants actually returned to a country which seemed to have put its own past firmly behind it. By the 1980s, talk-show presenters were advising people to leave the country while they could; thousands voted with their feet.

Twenty years later, much has changed. Ireland currently ranks fifth in the annual A.T. Kearney/Foreign Policy Globalization Index, down, admittedly, from the country's number one ranking in 2004, but still in the top tier. The number of people at work has doubled to over two million. Unemployment, at 4.7%, has risen slightly in the recent past, but is still the sixth lowest in the EU. Ireland is eighth in the world in Gross National Income per capita. Moreover, as the Irish economy began to grow dramatically in the 1990s, it experienced a series of classic phases of change, as it first absorbed the unemployed, experienced increased participation in the workforce by women and attracted emigrants to return. As these sources of surplus labour gradually became exhausted in the mid to late 1990s, immigration took off. Today, over 11% of those in employment (second quarter 2007), 239,000 persons, are foreign nationals. In the hotels and restaurants sector this figure reaches almost 30%. In relative terms, Ireland attracted the highest number of immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe after the Accession States joined in May 2004. Many of these immigrants, whatever their origin, are here to stay. This is likely to be the case even if the country experiences, as now seems likely, a downturn in economic growth.

On the face of it then, this is a picture of a remarkable, indeed dramatic, turnaround. In many ways it has been a very successful transition. Ireland does not have a racist political party of any significance and it cannot be said that there are riots in the streets. A quiet revolution has taken place. Moreover, unlike the traditional type of migration to industrialized countries, foreign workers and their families are to be found in every corner of Ireland, doing every kind of work. It can truly be said that the Irish economy and Irish society could not function without them.

However, it would be a mistake to assume that Ireland's high rates of immigration are unproblematic. Surveys of migrants suggest relatively high levels of prejudice and discrimination in the workplace as well as in various social settings. There is evidence of various kinds of glass ceilings in the workplace, compounded by a type of differential racism which seems to privilege some migrants over others. Data from Cork and elsewhere suggest that the highest rates of unemployment among migrants are to be found among those who have been granted refugee status or given leave to

remain. More than half of West African people with full status or leave to remain are unemployed.

Apart from cases of niche unemployment such as the one just mentioned, there is much evidence to indicate that the majority of migrants are in fact better qualified than the population of the receiving society, yet are doing jobs which are not commensurate with their abilities, education and training. This may be seen in part as a phenomenon common to other parts of the western industrialized world, as indigenous workers move up the employment ladder and migrant workers fill the vacant places, not because they cannot do more highly qualified work, but because Irish workers no longer want to do the work on offer for the rate on offer. This may be understandable and even inevitable as a transitional phenomenon, especially in conditions such as those at present when a Latvian graduate can earn more as a cleaner in Ireland than as a knowledge worker in Latvia. But there are clear signs of the emergence of sustained, structural barriers to progress on the part of such migrants in the Irish economy. These include obstacles to integration such as a lack of access to the acquisition of requisite language skills, problems concerning the recognition of qualifications obtained in other countries and straightforward discrimination.

There is a danger at present that Ireland is developing a two-tier labour economy, in which local workers enjoy a relatively privileged position and foreign migrants (apart from an elite high-skills category employed in high-skills work) do the '3d' – dirty, dangerous, difficult - work. A growing tendency to use agency or sub-contracted labour migrants is leaving many such workers exposed to exploitation and benefiting from fewer rights. Such approaches pose several problems, whether one adopts a human rights-based approach or even simply one of enlightened self-interest. It is a waste of talent, and adds very little to the economy, to have a highly qualified graduate doing work which does not require such qualifications. It also conditions people into a belief that certain people are 'only fit' to do certain jobs. Such attitudes rapidly become part of a racist arsenal of prejudicial attitudes and behaviour which are then used to justify the inferior position of certain groups and individuals by the circular argument that this is all they are able to do. It may be accepted that in the Irish labour economy we need to make special efforts, in the case of those types of employment for which there is a worldwide shortage, to entice people by offering something like humane conditions. But in the case of the other more 'menial' positions (and we need such work to be done just as much if society is to thrive) workers can be regarded as expendable and offered less attractive terms and conditions, including less attractive options for becoming long-term residents or citizens. Finally, these changes in the Irish labour economy can be seen as a process whereby the social contract which underlies the entire European approach to workplace rights, developed over a century and a half of hard battles, is being hollowed out in favour of a neoliberal model, characterized by an inexorable 'race to the bottom' in which wages and conditions of work are systematically devalued and the terms of negotiation between employers and employees are permanently altered. Who will be the losers? Migrants may pay the price in the short term – but ultimately all of us will.

Lincoln famously said that America could not be 'half-slave and half-free'. He was referring, apart from the question of innate human rights, to the corrosive effect on mainstream society of a profound structural inequality. It is no different in the case of

migrant workers in a society such as ours. A society of 'citizens' and 'denizens' may dehumanise the denizens, but ultimately it will dehumanise all of us.

In the case of the nearly half a million Irish who left the country in the 1980s, nearly half came back in the following decade and a half. The others stayed in their new countries. There is no reason to suppose that it will be very different in the case of migrants in Ireland. A large number of Poles, Latvians, Lithuanians and other Eastern European migrants may indeed return to their home countries, but substantial numbers will remain and become a part of Irish society on a permanent basis. Moreover in the case of those who have been granted refugee status or leave to remain, many if not most have no home to go to other than the one they already have in this country. It is no coincidence that West African migrants in Ireland, for instance, have been to the fore in engaging with Irish society and in addressing the integration agenda.

Integration does not simply mean the recognition of cultural diversity or a declaration of formal equality. If we tolerate a society where foreign migrants cannot access the workplace on equal terms, or where they encounter systematic structural discrimination as workers, we are storing up problems for the future. The value of this research is that it seeks to address the nature of the obstacles encountered by migrant workers, especially insofar as they may be gaps between their qualifications on one hand and their workplace experiences on the other, before setting out proposals for an agenda for change.

The appointment of a Minister for Integration in June 2007, a first for Ireland, is a measure to be welcomed, but practical and well-resourced measures will be needed if the long-term marginalisation of migrant workers and their families – all too familiar, sadly, in other European countries – is to be avoided.

Literature Review: Education

Access to and Participation in Education for Migrants in Ireland

Dr Claire Healy

The issue of the education of the children of migrants in Europe has been the subject of much research, and there has been a recent focus in the Irish media on the issue of access to education for migrant children, particularly in certain areas in Dublin. Access to and participation in education by adult migrants has received considerably less attention, though there are some significant documents that can be referred to. Both non-governmental organisations and Government-funded organisations have contributed to the small corpus of research in this field.

In general, existing literature addresses the three major areas of education relevant to migrants in Ireland – access to further education, higher education and English language tuition. Lack of English language ability emerges as a significant barrier to access, together with a lack of clarity around immigration status, and the levying of high, and often prohibitive, fees on students from outside the European Union (EU). Existing research has also identified the issue of recognition of foreign qualifications as a central concern. On a more positive note, a review of more recent literature reveals an increased emphasis at Government level on access to and participation in education for migrants during the past three years, while the recognition of prior learning and foreign qualifications has similarly been flagged. This year, the Government has launched a review of English language tuition in Ireland, with a view to developing a national policy in that area.

Overview

The most significant and up-to-date publication to focus on education for immigrants in Ireland was a report commissioned by Pobal, a charitable organisation that manages Irish Government and EU social inclusion programmes, in September 2006. The report is entitled *Barriers to Access to Further & Higher Education for Non-EU Nationals Resident in Ireland* (Warner, 2006). It is a very comprehensive report, and, despite not addressing access and participation among migrants from within the EU, it provides an excellent overview of the situation. In researching the report, Rosemary Warner carried out extensive consultation with educational institutions, government bodies and non-governmental organisations, as well as interviewing nine students from outside the EU (Warner, 2006: 39). The three key messages of the report were that any policy must adopt a rights-based approach to access to education; that current barriers to access are detrimental to the Irish economy and the Lisbon Agenda; and that there is a need for a coherent policy on integration (Warner, 2006: 7).

The report argues that barriers should be placed to education only where there is a legitimate policy aim and where the barrier is proportionate. Problems identified by Warner from a survey of existing literature include restrictions based on residency status, lack of information, high fees, discrimination and lack of English language ability (Warner, 2006: 15). The Pobal report also provides a useful appendix on "The Main Categories of Residency Status & Their Educational Entitlements" (Warner, 2006: 76), outlining access to Government education schemes, and the liability for

high fees for migrant workers. Warner's report concludes that there is no government body in charge of overseeing access to education among migrants in Ireland, and that problems in this area will be detrimental to the future development of Irish society and the economy (Warner, 2006: 66).

The Pobal report's recommendations include developing an educational integration policy, addressing difficulties in paying fees for further and higher education, and providing grants to long-term residents from outside the EU, improved information and a nation-wide policy on English language teaching. The author further recommends that data be collected on non-EU students, anti-discrimination policies be put in place in higher education institutions and structures for the recognition of prior learning and qualifications be improved (Warner, 2006: 70-3).

A year later, in September 2007, the Immigrant Council published research specifically commissioned to examine the issue of English language and introductory classes for newcomers to Ireland (Healy, 2007). The Immigrant Council's research examined international best practice as well as existing capacity in Ireland, concluding with recommendations on setting up a national programme of language and introductory courses. The report highlighted the fact that provision is focused on refugees and people seeking asylum, while very few free or affordable English classes are available for migrant workers. It further emerged that provision is particularly lacking both for people with literacy problems and very basic English, and for highly-skilled migrants wishing to improve their English in order to work at their skill level in Ireland.

In all forms of education, institutional racism, informal racism and discriminatory policies can present a barrier – or at best a disincentive - to migrants accessing education in Ireland (Warner, 2006: 24). Various bodies within government have been charged with addressing the issues of anti-racism and interculturalism in education, such as the Department of Education and Science Education Working Group on Anti-Racism and Interculturalism, and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Interculturalism and the Curriculum Steering Group (Equality Authority & NCCRI, 2002: 36).

The Equality Authority and the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) undertook a study of education in 2002 for the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, at a time when Travellers still represented the largest minority ethnic group in the country (Equality Authority & NCCRI, 2002: 7). However, in the education sector, some actors were beginning to address the increasing diversity of the Irish population. As such, the study is now a little dated, but does provide an outline of the Irish education system, and of good practice in the field, together with identifying gaps in the data available, particularly data disaggregated by national or ethnic origin. The problem of a lack of categorisation of data highlighted in this report has since been somewhat rectified, particularly with the inclusion of a question on ethnicity in the 2006 census. However, indirect discrimination and racial harassment are considered to be a fundamental problem in some educational institutions (Warner, 2006: 15).

Further Education

In general, there is a lack of clarity regarding the relationship between access to education, access to education funding and immigration status. This leads to a variance in admission policies among further education institutions. Uncertainty about residence status and delays in establishing it are also deleterious to secondary school children's and adults' prospects for accessing further and higher education (Warner, 2006: 40). The further education sector in Ireland was up to recently characterised by a lack of investment (Equality Authority & NCCRI, 2002: 12).

In 2005, the Equality Authority and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment held a conference on equality within vocational education and training in Ireland. The conference was attended by government departments and bodies, NGOs and further education practitioners, and the full proceedings were published in 2006 (Equality Authority, 2006). The conference addressed the new challenges for the further education sector arising from the increasing diversity of Irish society, the need to plan for equality, and implementing equality policies.

In 2003, Tanya Ward published a guide specifically for education providers to assist them in assessing the eligibility of migrants for education. The guide is organised according to each specific category of migrant – thirteen in all – and was extremely useful in clarifying issues of entitlement. The guide also includes a concise table laying out the various entitlements (Ward, 2003: 31-5), together with explaining terminology and listing relevant government documents.

Some short-term programmes have been put in place to cater for the needs of specific groups. Blanchardstown Direct Provision Centre in Dublin, together with Pavee Point, a Travellers advocacy organisation, provided a FÁS course for Roma adults in English, communication and integration (Lesovitch, 2005: 45). The FÁS Safe Pass course is a one-day training awareness programme for workers in the construction sector, providing a basic knowledge of health and safety in the workplace. It was developed by FÁS in consultation with the Construction Industry Federation, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the Health and Safety Authority. Safe Pass cards issued on passing the exam must be updated every four years (See: www.fas.ie).

Separated children at school who are granted refugee status and reach 18 years of age must be looking for work in order to qualify for unemployment assistance and must therefore leave school, if teachers do not intervene (Mooten, 2006: 46). Most 'aged-out' minors and young refugees are unable to access further or higher education (Pobal, 2006: 52). This situation has recently been slightly improved by the decision to allow time spent in Ireland awaiting an asylum decision to count towards qualifying for Back to Education Allowance or the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme. However, the young refugees concerned must be out of formal education for two years and in receipt of welfare for one year (Pobal, 2006: 51).

The City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee set up the Separated Children Education Service in 2003. For the purposes of this new service, a comprehensive assessment of the language and educational needs of separated children was undertaken by Tanya Ward and published at the end of 2004 (Ward, 2004). Young people still in the asylum process have no entitlement to study beyond second level,

and even those with leave to remain are not eligible for free fees or grants education (Pobal, 2006: 51). In spite of these restrictions, Ward found in her survey of separated children in Dublin in 2004 that many teenagers had aspirations towards higher education and intended to go to university (Ward, 2004: 43).

Access to Third Level

For the Irish population as a whole, access to third level education has dramatically improved during the past decade, with higher levels of third level participation seen to contribute to lower unemployment (OECD, 2007: 31). There is a direct correlation between employment stability and a third level education in Ireland (OECD, 2007: 127). The Irish university system – together with its Spanish counterpart - is considered to provide the most equitable access in terms of the socio-economic background of students (OECD, 2007: 116). However, access to information on entitlements to access and financial assistance in relation to third level has proven difficult for migrants, and in some cases incorrect information was provided (Warner, 2006: 19). Nevertheless, there has been a significant increase in the numbers of foreign students enrolled at Irish universities during the period 2000-2005, and this is considered to relate closely to the popularity of learning English as a foreign language (OECD, 2007: 306).

The National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education, within the Higher Education Authority, provides a number of publications on its website relating to its activities in improving access (http://www.hea.ie/index.cfm/page/category/id/172). The Office has published an Action Plan for 2005-2007 on achieving equality of access, which sets out a framework of policies and initiatives, and creates new access routes to higher education, encompassing diverse teaching and learning strategies. "Ethnic minorities" represent one of the Office's target groups (HEA, 2004). The Office also published its annual report and outline plans in early 2007, though this does not specifically mention migrants. The Office intends to set participation targets for ethnic minority groups for the first time in 2007 (HEA, 2007: 13).

In 2004 a study was undertaken on university equality policies and the researchers were 'struck by the relative lack of interest on the part of the university sector as a whole' in the area of access for ethnic minorities, and found very little data available. The report further found that participation rates by refugees in higher education were low, particularly due to people being unclear as to who had the right to study in Ireland (Equality Review Team to the HEA, 2004: 43-4).

A workshop on working and teaching in a multicultural university was held at Trinity College Dublin in late 2002, and the proceedings were published in 2003 (Lentin, 2003). Among the papers included is a contribution by Ronit Lentin, seeking to define multiculturalism and interculturalism, looking at the issue of recruiting lecturers from minority backgrounds and detailing incidences of racial harassment at Trinity College (Lentin, 2003: 7-20). Further contributions by Raj S. Shari and Antra Bhargava examine the challenges of, and barriers to, developing a truly multicultural university (Lentin, 2003: 35-6; 68-9). In the same volume, Margaret O'Flanagan assesses the difficulties in collecting data on ethnicity (Lentin, 2003: 56-67), a recurring theme in the literature.

Fees charged to non-EU nationals for universities and institutes of technology are considered to pose a significant barrier to many migrants in Ireland. Fees policies vary among institutions of higher education, but there is an inherent tension between institutions' obligation to subsidise Irish students' education with non-EU fees, and the requirement to promote equity of access (Warner, 2006: 48). A further problem relates to the requirement for prospective students to be unemployed for a period of time before they can receive Back to Education (BTEA) or Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) allowances (Warner, 2006: 51). There is also a gap in financial support for separated children and children of migrants between the ages of 18 and 21 who want to progress from secondary to higher education. In 2003, Keogh and Whyte conducted interviews with staff, parents and pupils at four schools in Dublin to analyse progression routes to university for immigrant pupils (Keogh & Whyte, 2003).

Fees pose a particular problem for migrants from outside the EU in accessing third level education, as non-EU fees can be extremely high compared to fees for EU citizens and unrealistic in terms of affordability. Grants are rarely available to migrants from outside the EU. This is compounded for many migrants by the loss of social welfare entitlements while in education and represents a *de facto* barrier to participation for many (Warner, 2006: 22).

English language

Part of the problem with access to education for migrants in Ireland is the lack of an adequate level of English to attend their chosen courses (Warner, 2006: 15). The issue of provision of English language tuition has been flagged in various Irish policy documents during recent years. As early as 2000, the White Paper on Adult Education highlighted 'the need to provide specific tailored programmes and basic literacy and language education for all immigrants as an elementary part of provision.' In 2002, the Department of Education and Science pinpointed the English language 'as central to [...] acquiring the skills and confidence (cultural capital) necessary to engage with Irish society' and further emphasised that there is 'a critical need to address the language needs of adults for whom English is not the mother tongue, regardless of status' (DES, 2002: 18).

In 2004, QE[5] Ltd was commissioned by the Irish-Finnish MORE project on the resettlement process, to examine the training needs of resettled refugees in Ireland. The report concluded that language needs were paramount for adult refugees, as 'proficiency in English language means that refugees are more likely to be employed, to interact with Irish people, to socialize, to feel they belong to the community in which they live, and to enjoy better mental health' (QE[5], 2004: 8).

The National Action Plan Against Racism 2005-2008 does not allocate great significance to English language tuition, including it under Objective Three: Provision, where provision of English teaching is to be 'enhanced.' The participation of refugees and people with humanitarian leave to remain in further and higher education is to be enhanced within the plan, while a national intercultural educational strategy is to be developed and the accommodation of diversity in the school curriculum is to be improved (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 2005). The Social Partnership Agreement *Towards 2016* prioritises adult education and focuses on increasing the numbers of migrants availing of English language

teaching, rather than on increasing provision. The document also recommends guidance and counselling to accompany literacy and language learning, and the regulation of language schools and workplaces providing courses through mandatory requirements (Department of the Taoiseach, 2006).

In May 2006, the Department of Education and Science and the Reception and Integration Agency held a Working Seminar entitled 'Towards a National English Language Policy for Adult Newcomers' to develop policy in this area. The objective was simply 'to clarify the role of current stakeholders and to identify issues and challenges in provision.' As yet nothing concrete has emerged from consultation.

The National Economic and Social Council (NESC) report on migration policy, launched in September 2006, emphasised the fact that the positive outcomes of migration are not inevitable. The report calls for an active integration policy from the Irish government, with language education as a cornerstone of this policy. The Council also commissioned the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to analyse the management of migration in Ireland. The IOM pointed to problems with access to language teaching and information as a major problem, and considered English language proficiency as a prerequisite for participation in Irish society. The report recommended the provision of comprehensive orientation services to all migrants to ensure participation and prevent exclusion (NESC & IOM, 2006: 141-5). Many more recent publications and reports have highlighted language and orientation for migrants as a central concern.[1]

Currently in Ireland, the statutory providers of English language classes are adult education centres and further education colleges, Integrate Ireland Language and Training, post-Leaving Certificate courses, Vocational Training Opportunities and Youthreach schemes, prisons and VEC adult literacy schemes. FÁS provides vocational English classes in conjunction with computer courses. Classes are also provided privately - though often with a minimal level of VEC funding - by community groups, religious organisations and private schools

A significant capacity for English and orientation courses for recognised convention refugees and programme refugees, and to a lesser extent for people seeking asylum,

---

[1] Irish Department of Education and Science. "Promoting Anti-Racism and Interculturalism in Education - Draft Recommendations Towards a National Action Plan" (Dublin, 2002), 18; MacÉinrí, Piaras, and Paddy Walley. *Labour Migration into Ireland: Study and Recommendations on Employment Permits, Working Conditions, Family Reunification and the Integration of Migrant Workers in Ireland* (edited by Orla Parkinson, Dublin: Immigrant Council of Ireland, 2003), 60; Kelleher, Patricia, and Carmel Kelleher. *Voices of Immigrants: The Challenges of Inclusion* (edited by Orla Parkinson, Dublin: Immigrant Council of Ireland, 2004), 92; Smyth, Karen, and Jean Whyte. *Making a New Life in Ireland: Lone Refugee and Asylum-Seeking Mothers and Their Children* (Dublin: Trinity College Dublin Children's Research Centre and Vincentian Refugee Centre, 2005), 66; Lowry, Helen, *Realising Integration: Creating the Conditions for Economic, Social, Political and Cultural Inclusion of Migrant Workers and their Families in Ireland* (Dublin: Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, 2006), 147; National Economic and Social Council. *NESC Strategy 2006: People, Productivity and Purpose* (Dublin, 2006), 140; National Economic and Social Council, *Migration Policy, NESC Report No. 115* (Dublin: National Economic & Social Development Office, 2006), 190; Deasy, John. April 2006. "Eleventh Report, Report on Migration: An Initial Assessment of the Position of European Union Migrant Workers in Ireland post 2004" (Dublin: Houses of the Oireachtas, Joint Committee on European Affairs, 2006), 27; Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, *Tommorow's Skills: Towards a National Skills Strategy* (5th Report, Dublin, 2007), 105-6.

already exists in Ireland. Providers include the regional Vocational Education Committees and Integrate Ireland Language and Training, as well as NGOs such as Spirasi, and are mainly located in Dublin. People seeking asylum are entitled to four hours of English classes per week, while recognised refugees are entitled to 20 hours (Smyth & Whyte, 2005: 65). Integrate Ireland Language and Training publishes an annual activities report outlining the achievements of the organisation and of the learners, and detailing the expansion of IILT's services within the previous year (Little & Lazenby Simpson, 2007).

People seeking asylum are eligible for 'language and literacy provision, as well as mother culture supports' through the VEC's literacy and English language courses (Ward, 2003: 16, 32). This is the only form of education to which adults seeking asylum in Ireland are entitled. The City of Dublin VEC does not currently accept EU nationals in English language courses (Irish Vocational Education Association, hereafter IVEA, 2005: 27).

Seminars on the VEC's English language provision took place in 2003 (ESOL for Asylum Seekers) and in May 2006 (NALA ESOL 'Building Skills'). The Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA) has published four pilot frameworks, the latter of which was specifically targeted at addressing the language needs of migrant workers. The framework suggests a model educational programme comprising planning, assessment, analysis of content, various levels and sample FETAC courses. It recommends that programmes for migrants should cover language classes up to FETAC level 6, courses on Irish society, IT and legal and employment frameworks, as well as family learning. All classes should be free up to FETAC level 3 (IVEA, 2005: 36, 43). The IVEA has called for the allocation of funding to English language provision by the Department of Education and Science, and by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (IVEA, 2006).

The Reception and Integration Agency at the Department of Justice, together with the Department of Education, commissioned a review in mid-2007 on the subject of a national English language policy for adult migrants in Ireland. The Review Group is currently engaging in consultation with stakeholders, and the report is due to be published in spring 2008 (Department of Education and Science, 19 July 2007).

Recognition of Foreign Qualifications and Prior Learning

One of the principal barriers to access to education for skilled migrants is the obstacle of recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland. This is an issue which is beginning to be addressed, but Ireland lags far behind other EU countries, including the United Kingdom, in this regard. A recent report published by Integrating Ireland highlighted the role of professional bodies in this regard and called for a national policy to be developed in consultation with employers, professional bodies, migrants, migrant organisations and the Government (Ní Mhurchú, 2007). The report also called for research to be conducted to establish the educational attainment of migrants in Ireland, and pointed to an undervaluing by the Irish labour market of education and experience obtained abroad (Ní Mhurchú, 2007: 14).

In late 2005, the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) commenced a pilot project in the area of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) with

fifty participants. This was a first step in the process of harmonisation of recognition, and the evaluation report was published this year. Unfortunately, no reference is made to recognition of prior learning among non-Irish nationals (FETAC, 2007).

In 2005, Integrating Ireland published research into access to further education and recognition of professional qualifications. The researchers conducted interviews with fifty non-EU nationals. The worrying conclusions of the report were that lack of access to further education for skilled migrants was a major obstacle to integration and social inclusion, and that there was an element of institutional racism at play (Integrating Ireland, 2005).

Overall to date, there is no clear programme or policy in existence in Ireland for skilled migrants to attend courses to upgrade their professional skills. This could prove dangerous to the economy, as recent research has suggested that Ireland is highly dependent on skilled immigration, and vulnerable to the potential impact of a shortage of skilled migrants in certain sectors (Bruff, 2007). This research, by Ian Bruff, focusing specifically on migrants in the information technology industry, posits that this is a result of deficiencies in Ireland's education and training policies, a situation that is detrimental to both Irish and foreign residents of the country.

It is clear that courses currently provided to migrants by FÁS and the VECs among others do not cater for professional migrants wishing to localise their skills (Coughlan *et al*, 2005). The skill levels of migrants, and their ability to use those skills in Ireland, are issues that are intimately connected to access to education. As established at the National Skills Conference in October 2006, 'the educational profile of Ireland's labour force has improved dramatically in recent years, due in part to demographic effects and in part to immigration'. The conference also emphasised the central role of education in relation to developing a 'participative and inclusive economy' and warned of the development of an occupational gap for many well-educated migrants (Shanahan, 2006: 1-2). There are similar barriers for low-skilled migrants as for low-skilled Irish people, specifically inappropriately designed courses and an under-funded adult education sector.

Conclusion

In relation to access to and participation in education among migrants in Ireland, much research remains to be conducted, not only to establish the barriers to access to education for migrants and the extent of their participation, but also to predict the impact on the Irish economy and society, and on migrants' lives, of access to education. The ability of migrants to work at their appropriate skill level is essential to integration, but is also crucial for the Irish economy to benefit from inward migration. Existing research has focused on barriers to access and participation, together with the issues of recognition of foreign qualifications, funding difficulties and the scarcity of ethnic data. It is to be hoped that future research will both build upon and update the existing literature, as well as progressing on the collation of data and providing constructive recommendations for the improvement of the current situation.

Literature Review: Employment

Barriers to economic participation of immigrants[2]

Dr. Will Denayer
University College Cork

Introduction

The existence of barriers to economic participation is perhaps the most serious problem that immigrants face in Irish society. After all, having a job means economic and social integration, the development of self-esteem and social contacts, it means opportunities for personal advancement and development, the ability to be independent or to raise a family. Without work – and in the case of immigrants this often means without welfare benefits either – people inevitably suffer hardships such as poverty, exclusion, domestic violence, isolation and mental and other health problems. It is for reasons of social justice just as well as for economic reasons that the economic participation of immigrants has to be prioritised politically.

The removal of barriers to employment is essential, but in itself it is not enough to accomplish integration (Brunkhorst, 2005). Instead, it is necessary to develop a consistent *integral* approach, driven by immigrants, immigrant groups as well as local and national policy makers (Advisory Board, 2007: 56). This approach has to deal with a whole range of policy domains such as education, social inclusion, deprived areas, work opportunities, welfare arrangements, recognition of foreign qualifications and prior learning, anti-racism and anti-discrimination, ethnic entrepreneurship, social infrastructure in poor neighbourhoods (social housing, child care), public transportation and more (see also Baulder, 2002). This is what this literature review will focus on. What is needed are often small changes which nonetheless have the potential to have major beneficial effects: a child care centre here, a playground there, a remedial teaching group in a deprived area. Ireland has certainly done economically well enough during the last fifteen years to afford decent social infrastructure for the residents of Ireland and therefore the ball is now in the court of the politicans (CSO, 2005; Denayer and O'Tuama, 2008).

In the first two headings, we present answers to the question of what is going on in economical terms. Following Chris Hamnett, we distinguish between social inequality and social polarisation. This is, as we will see, far from a purely 'academic' distinction. We describe some consequences of economic globalisation as well as the effects of policies that create inequality in society, implying that if we want more equality, such policies will need to be revoked.[3] In the third heading, we present some

---

[2] I am grateful to Seamus O'Tuama (UCC) for his valuable comments on earlier drafts. I also wish to thank Rhona Hodgart (Anniesland College Glasgow) and Tarik Modood (University of Bristol) for sending me information as well as Stephen O'Brien (UCC), who took time to share insights on cultural deprivation and multiculturalism with me.

[3] By this, I do not imply that globalisation is not a phenomenon of which the occurrence has not been greatly facilitated by the ruling political class, although at the same time, this class proclaimed its fundamental 'helplessness' towards steering economic global change. See Baumann, 1998: 11 ff; see

theoretical insights on deprived areas and in the fourth heading reciprocity, social capital and ethnic capital are dealt with. After this, we give an example of the power of cultural factors. The sixth heading deals with spatial barriers to employment and the seventh with enclave entrepreneurship. After this, we present key results of initiatives dealing with employment for immigrants and in the ninth heading, we present some conclusions.

Deregulation, the Shrinking Welfare State, Social Polarisation and Social Inequality

The concept of social polarisation was taken up by Saskia Sassen in a series of publications of which *Global city: New York, London, Tokyo* (1991) is the most well-known. Sassen argues that the structure of economic activity, particularly the dramatic growth of financial and business services and the decline of manufacturing industry are reflected in a shift in the supply of employment and polarisation in the income and the occupational distribution of workers (Sassen, 1991: 22 *ff;* see also Castells, 1991; Albrechts and Denayer, 2001). This polarisation is a result of a number of interrelated processes. First, the rise of business and financial services in cities leads to the creation of an occupational and income structure that contrasts with the occupational structure of the old manufacturing industries. The new occupational structure is comprised of a mixture of highly skilled and highly paid jobs and low-skill and low-paid jobs (Sassen, 1991: 36 *ff*). In addition, two other processes generate increased polarisation. There is the derivative growth in low-skilled and low-paid jobs in hotels, catering, cleaning personal and personal services, all of which are necessary to service the new global service class. Second, there is the growth of the downgraded manufacturing sector, which is characterised by a high concentration of low-skill and low paid work (Sassen, 1991: 58 *ff*; Sassen, 2003; see also Anderson, 2003, on the commodification of domestic labor). Taken together, these conditions have contributed to a new urban class alignment.[4]

Sassen's basic thesis has received support as well as criticism (Hamnett, 2001: 164). Here, we focus on two points. First, as Hamnett explains, one of the main shortcomings of Sassen's book is that it lacks a precise definition of social polarisation (Hamnett, 2001: 161). To Sassen, social polarisation involves the absolute growth of the occupational and income distribution at both the top and the bottom ends, combined with an absolute decline in the middle (the so-called 'disappearing middle' thesis). Sassen is not alone in this. For Castells, for example, social polarisation refers not only to growing inequality, but to the fact that the rich are becoming richer and the poor are becoming poorer in absolute terms (Castells, 2004: 16 *ff*). However, as Hamnett notes (Hamnett, 2001: 171), there is no reason to call this social polarisation when an increase in absolute income is the issue. There is a difference between inequality and social polarisation, so that it is possible to have greater inequality without greater polarisation and *vice versa* (Hamnett, 2001: 172). For this reason, Kloosterman suggests that inequality in the distribution of earnings or incomes should refer to the extent of dispersion between given levels of earnings,

---

also Cohen, 2006 and Gilbert 2004 on the transformation of the welfare state and the surrender of public responsibility.

[4] One can object that Sassen deals with global cities, but in this I go with Nightengale, who raises, *contra* Sassen the possibility of a 'global inner city' that has similar characteristics *regardless of location or size* (see Hamnett, 2001: 169).

while polarisation should refer to the disappearing middle, the shrinkage of the number of middle-income jobs or incomes and a growth (absolute or relative), both at the top and bottom ends of the income distribution – after all, polarisation, by definition, means concentration at the extremes (Kloosterman, 1996; Hamnett, 2001: 173).

Castells is very clear about the outcome of the polarisation process (as explained here and fragmented by race, ethnicity, gender, occupational and industrial location and the different spaces people occupy). However, as Hamnett writes, the argument about the changing *size* of rich and poor groups is very different from the argument that there is a widening *gap* between the average incomes of the rich and those of the poor (Hamnett, 2001: 172). Both theses may be correct, but the causes may be very different and distinction between the two is highly relevant for both evaluating current policies and formulating new ones. As Hamnett convincingly argues (Hamnett, 2001: 173), not distinguishing between these concepts is to divert attention away from what is really happening. For example, studies have shown that in Britain earnings and income inequality has risen considerably during the 1980s and 1990s, while at the same time the socio-economic structure has shifted upwards. The increase in income inequality, however, was not the result of an increase in the *number* of the less skilled and low paid – often immigrants - (as Sassen argued in *Global Cities*), but from the impact of rising professional and managerial incomes, massive tax breaks for the rich, growing unemployment in some sectors and insufficient increases in rates of government assistance for the unemployed or low paid (Hamnett, 2001: 174; Stiglitz, 2004).[5] As Hamnett writes, it is clear that cities reflect sharp and growing differences in wealth, as can be noticed from the extent of homelessness, the growth of gentrification and abandonment, the role of spatial displacement as a mechanism of expansion by the middle classes, the growth of turf alliances, the role of governance in promoting gentrification, the changing form of political cleavages, most of them which stem from the nature of a renewed and intensified capitalism which is legitimised by the assertive rhetoric of neo-liberalism (Hamnett, 2001: 173; Bauman, 1998: 5). Deregulation and the shrinking welfare state, however, had the effect of increasing inequality everywhere where such policies were introduced (Hamnett, 2001: 170; Klein, 2007: 13; Gilbert 2004, Fraser and Honneth, 2004).[6]

---

[5] Stiglitz gives an excellent example of this. Between 1977 and 1990, the American Congress approved *nine* major tax reforms and several minor ones. The years 1977 - 1990 are well chosen, because it is precisely then that the third wave of globalisation really took off and consolidated itself as a major reality. According to Stiglitz, *nine out of ten* American families would have paid less taxes in 1990 if Congress would not have made any change to the system. The big winners of the reforms were the one per cent superrich who in 13 years time saw their taxes go down by *36 per cent*. The enormous decrease in revenue of the federal government was subsequently used as an argument to cut back social welfare programs - which found a sympathetic ear because of the ideology of deregulation and the attack on the welfare state (cf. 'the undeserving welfare mother') were raging in society, as they are today (Stiglitz, 2003: 104 ff).

[6] I cannot refrain myself from including the following information which was published in *The Independent* on March 4, 2008. O'Grady reports that, according to Steinbruck, the German Finance Minister, tax evasion costs Germany about €30bn a year in lost revenue; the UK loses a similar sum; the EU may lose €100bn in all. HM Revenue and Customs has paid for information relating to about 100 people who could collectively owe the UK as much as £100m. It is estimated that the Cayman Islands is home to $1.4 trillion of offshore money including $300bn worth of hedge funds. Nauru, a Polynesian micro-state, saw some $70bn of Russian money turn up over the past few years. Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man attract about $1trn, much of it ex-UK. Globally, estimates of the total funds parked by

The New Economy, Competitive Advantages and Immigration

Since the 1970s, cities in the Western world have been in decline as centres of manufacturing and are instead increasingly dependent on service functions. In the 'developed' countries, manufacturing activities have fallen dramatically as a share of employment while producer and consumer services have risen, creating a new 'global' economic system (Idele, 2004; Mac Gregor, 2001). In addition, cities and regions are facing a competition in which continued economic success depends on attracting considerable numbers of migrants, both low-skilled and high-skilled. Demand for low-skill low-pay labour is being created by the high skilled knowlegde and producer services economy which exerts a strong demand pull for jobs for office and household cleaners, in the retail and hospitality sectors and in construction, transport, leisure and domestic services (Ecotec, 2005; Anderson, 2003). Often, however, is it is difficult to source the lower skilled labour required for such services, as the high costs of living make it difficult for residents to take the lower income jobs involved. The ageing European population is exacerbating this situation because in many European countries the economically active labour force is shrinking at the same time as the demands on services, especially health and leisure, for this segment increase. At the higher skill end of the spectrum operate global markets for both private and public services – doctors, nurses, therapists, dentists, software designers, media and PR professionals (Ecotec, 2005).

While European cities and regions increasingly recognise the importance of migrants for their function, they often have considerable difficulty harnessing this emerging human resource. Experience shows that immigrants are disadvantaged in their access to employment (Ecotec, 2004: 5). Factors such as legal status, qualifications, work experience, lack of language skills, poor knowlegde about working practices in the host country, prejudice and discrimination by employers, distinct cultural practices, lack of political power and of social capital as well as a whole set of practical problems - spatial barriers and child care - function as significant barriers to employment and consequently to the integration of newcomers as well as settled immigrants. Therefore, minority ethnic and immigrant groups are particularly prone to poverty and social exclusion. For example, the employment rate of non-EU nationals legally resident in the EU 15 was around 53 per cent in 2001, compared to 64 per cent of EU nationals. For women, the employment rate is lower, with an average employment rate of 41 per cent, falling to as low as 18 per cent in some countries, compared to approximately 57 per cent for EU nationals (Ecotec, 2005: 6). In England, seventy per cent of all people from ethnic minorities in England live in the 88 most deprived local authority districts compared with forty per cent of the general population (Ecotec, 2005: 9). It is not only recently arrived migrants who have difficulty accessing the labour market. Established minority ethnic groups also experience considerable difficulties. Furthermore, European research has indicated

---

individuals in offshore havens vary from $7trn to $12trn. As O'Grady writes, depending on assumptions about returns and tax rates, such sizeable funds could yield around $250bn for legitimate public spending. That ought to be enough, for example, to achieve many of the UN's Millennium Development Goals by 2015 (see O'Grady, 2008). Although tax evasion is of all ages, deregulation and neo-liberalism made public responsibility into something like an antiquated concept for global capitalists and deregulation, as a policy from the neo-liberal state, was in it self highly instrumental in making these perverse evasions possible.

that second and third generation descendants of immigrants are more likely to remain jobless than their first generation counterparts (DGESA: 2003: 7).

The following table lists a number of barriers experienced by minority ethnic groups and immigrant groups to integration in the labour market.

Migration history

Legal status in host country (including particular legislation which restricts asylum seekers from seeking training or employment opportunities as is the case in Ireland)[7]
Personal difficulties through experience of trauma and/or violance in previous country

Skills and competencies

Language skills
Lack of education in country of destination
Lack of recognition of qualification in country of destination
No previous work experience in country of destination

Cultural background, attitudes and motivations

Cultural background and cultural norms
Aspirations and attitudes to work (including longer term impacts of exclusion over generations)

Personal obligations

Family structures and norms
Dependents

Employer attitudes and discrimination

Prejudice and the ascribing of false or stereotypical characteristics
Lack of knowledge about the value and relevance of qualifications and experience gained in other countries.

Table 1: *Specific barriers experienced by immigrant and ousider groups according to Ecotec, 2005: 4.*

Barriers of table one might easily lead to a *further* set of obstacles to accessing the labour market, including:

---

[7] A refugee is someone who is forced to flee her or his home and country or who escapes to another country and is granted refugee status by the government of the new country. These rules are laid down in the 1951 *United Nations Convention on Refugees*. According to the Convention, a refugee is anyone who "(…) owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protections of that country" (UN Convention on Refugees, 1951: Preambule, iii). Someone who has fled from her or his home country and has applied for refugee status in another country is an asylum seeker.

Isolation and Access

lack of access to information
lack of access to networks
physical disability and access

Attitudes and motivations

Cultural background and cultural norms
Aspirations and attitudes to work

Skills and competencies

Not having the right skills for available jobs
Lack of previous work experience
Lack of references from past employment

Housing situation

Lack of affordable housing, homelessness

Personal responsibilities and dependents

Lack of affordable help with childcare responsibilities

Crime

Being caught up in the informal economy

Health

Mental health, drugs, alcoholism
Other health problems

Prejudice by employers

Prejudice against certain post-codes within cities and certain groups within society

Table B: *Barriers to employment associated with poverty and social exclusion according to Ecotec* (Ecotec, 2005: 6-7 - revised).

In what follows, we describe some of these barriers and their pernicious consequences.

The weight of living in deprived neighbourhoods

The concept of social exclusion only makes sense in a broader perspective of economical and political integration (Holt-Jensen, 2000: 281 *ff*). The European Union's Observatory on social exclusion defines the term with reference to multi-dimensional disadvantage which is of substantial duration and which involves disassociation from the major social and occupational milieu of society (Nolan and Wheelan, 1999: 5).

Economic exclusion is related to a lack of economic resources that are normally secured through employment. The transformation from Fordism to post-Fordism led to both de-industrialisation and re-industrialisation. These processes gave rise to new segmentations and divisions in the labour market: a segmentation based on *qualifications* and a segmentation based on geographical *location*. The archetypal losers of these transformations were middle-aged single house wage male industrial workers, who were in many cases transferred to permanent unemployment, as well as immigrant industrial workers and the second (and sometimes even the third) generation of immigrants, who are still culturally ill-equipped to enter the new, growing flexible job market in any other way than from below (Holt-Jensen, 2000: 283).

Cultural exclusion is a much more difficult concept to explain because social scientists do not agree on what constitutes culture. However, the discussion about Wilson's landmark *The Truly Disadvantaged* (Wilson, 1987) had the positive result that structural and cultural explanations of poverty fused. This happened (to a certain degree) in the work of Wilson himself. Wilson had argued that, since 1970, structural changes in the economy, most importantly the shift from manufacturing to service industries and the departure of low-skilled jobs from the urban centres, increased black joblessness in central city ghettos (see Wilson, 1987; Wilson, 1996). The inner cities also suffered from the flight of middle- and working-class blacks who took advantage of affirmative action and fair housing laws to relocate to higher-income neighbourhoods. As working families departed and non-working families stayed behind, inner-city neighbourhoods gradually became poorer. As a result, a new 'underclass' of single-parent families, welfare dependency, joblessness and increased 'social pathologies' became endemic in inner cities. To Wilson, the 'underclass' is characterised by its geographic concentration, its social isolation from the middle-class and its joblessness.

Wilson's theses that urban poverty changed during the 1970s and 1980s and that poverty became more concentrated have been empirically verified and are widely accepted. The term 'underclass,' however, met with considerable resistance (Wilson himself abandoned the term in favour of 'the ghetto poor'). Although Wilson argued that the lack of jobs was the ultimate cause behind inner-city destitution, he recognised that cultural and behavioural patterns are important in perpetuating ghetto conditions. Therefore, questions whether there is a specific 'ghetto culture,' what its causes and contents are, whether it is a cause or perpetuating factor, how it reproduces poverty, exclusion and unemployment became hotly debated. This forced sociologists to examine how to define culture. While no consensus exists, most sociologists nowadays regard 'culture' as a 'tool kit' of habits, skills and lifestyles from which

people construct strategies of action (Small and Newman, 2001: 35; Bourdieu, 2000). We will give an example of cultural factors below.

Political exclusion relates to the lack of stake in power and non-participation in decision-making. Formally, on national and local levels, political inclusion is guaranteed by general voting rights, but concerns are raised as to the percentage of the electorate not voting. It has been documented that voting participation is very low in deprived neighbourhoods. Participation in elections is much higher among the rich and the middle classes (Hughes, Clancy, Harris and Beetham, 2007: 131). The effect of this situation is especially harmful in that there is little political need to take the interests of weaker social groups into account, whereas middle and higher class protests against taxation are often highly successful (Small and Newman, 2001: 237).

Furthermore, it has been documented often enough that private institutions that service deprived areas are separate from and, in the words of Waquant, "massively inferior to those that provide goods and services to the rest of the metropolitan system" (Waquant, 1998: 28). Large shopping malls (with bargain sales) are increasingly located to be accessible mainly by private cars and sales may be limited by ownership of a credit card (Holst-Jensen, 2000: 285). Such malls are not located in deprived areas, whereas the small, local shops sometimes provide the same goods but at higher prices. Holst-Jensen agrees with Waquant where he says that formal public social capital in some American ghettos has deteriorated to such an extent that it is possible to maintain "that public institutions operate as *negative* social capital that maintain ghetto residents in a marginal and dependent position" (Waquant in Helst-Jensen, 2000: 286). Welfare provisions are turned into an apparatus of surveillance including "the establishment of toll-free numbers for anonymous denunciation of 'welfare cheats' contributing to solidifying distrust in state bureaucracies and to intensifying the stigma of welfare receipt" (Waquant, 1998: 31; Smith 2005 (on the 'margins of inclusion' in London)).

We also want to define exploitation. Exploitation is seen *not only* as the extraction of surplus value based on class relations, but also – and perhaps more importantly – as the foreclosing of the possibilities for community building, social redistribution of wealth and the production of non-capitalist economic alternatives and lifestyles in general, including alternative political spaces, initiatives and practices (see Communities Economies Collective, 2001: 10 *ff*). As the Communities Collective further comments:

"The trauma of exploitation is not that something belonging to you is taken from you. Rather, it is that you are cut off from the conditions of social possibility that the surplus both enables and represents" (Communities Economies Collective, 2001: 26).

The result of these several types of exclusion brings about a situation in which the different processes of exclusion reinforce each other. The process *in globo* leads to a situation that is characterised by:

Social homogenisation: deprived areas become increasingly inhabited by people that are poor in economic resources. Others, who have the necessary financial means to do so often leave the area. At the same time, there is an influx of poor immigrants. Poor households are increasingly allocated social housing in the area.

Cultural diversity (or cultural 'fragmentation'): cultural identity is built on age groups and on ethnic and religious divisions, rather than on the 'old' class (as in working class) (we do not imply that this is undesirable in itself, only that it is happening).

Disempowerment: as inhabitants are also poor in political resources, they are increasingly treated as clients and not as citizens, participants and stakeholders in local and other decision-making processes.

Organisational desertification: both public and private organizations reduce their activities or supply poorer services (such as schools, churches, shopping areas, health services, police, public maintenance of parks and streets, voluntary organisations, etc.).

Depacification of everyday life, as formal jobs have dwindled, while clubs and organisations that could activate people in their spare time have disappeared or have reduced their activities, youngsters among others will tend to live more on the streets.

Economic informalisation: as participation in the regular wage-labour economy is problematic or impossible, some inhabitants will turn toward informal work.

Typically, four areas of policy can be identified as being of fundamental importance in order to combat social inclusion and promote 'social cohesion' (as this, whatever it is, is called by the EU): social policy, housing policy, labour market policy and immigration policy. However, there are reasons to maintain that the recent development of social policies all over Europe to a great extent are making the situation more difficult (Holt-Jensen, 2000: 283; Baulder, 2002), as fiscal austerity has undermined the level of social welfare delivery throughout Europe and the political acceptance of the welfare state has decreased.

It is one of the central questions of urban inequality whether neighbourhood deprivation affects the life chances of those who live there.[8] It is generally argued that the concentration of poverty results in the isolation of the poor from the middle class and its corresponding role models, resources and networks of employment. It is for this reason that Wilson – and many others – has argued that being poor in a mixed-economy income neighbourhood is less damaging than being poor in a high poverty neighbourhood (the reverse has also been argued but with little success).[9]

Small and Newman identify two sets of answers to the question of how poverty reproduces itself. There are, first, *socialisation mechanisms*, which deal with the ways neighbourhoods socialise those who grow up in them and, second, *instrumental*

---

[8] The problem with 'neighbourhoods' is that it is very difficult to test the hypothesis that an individual living under the conditions of a specific neighbourhood is better or worse off than in the absence of this condition. This is because people live in neighbourhoods as a result of both observable and unobservable characteristics that may by themselves, independently of neighbourhoods, affect life outcomes (Small and Newman, 2001: 30). But the even more basic question is what a neighbourhood is. Many sociologists define neighbourhoods in terms of informal relationships and social networks among persons living in a geographic space and propose that we conceive of neighbourhoods in terms of separate and complementary dimensions, such as 1) social space; 2) a set of relationships; 3) a set of institutions and 4) a symbolic unit; or that we think of neighbourhoods as 1) sites; 2) perceptions; 3) networks; and 4) cultures (Small and Newman, 2001: 34). However, even if we succeed in defining neighbourhoods in terms that are not exclusively geographical, the problem is faced of determining their geographical boundaries if we want to adequately test whether they matter for poverty outcomes.

[9] It is said that high poverty neighbourhoods are characterized by the formulation of successful survival strategies because greater homogeneity supports stronger reciprocal relationships.

mechanisms, which describe how individual agency is limited by neighbourhood conditions (Small and Newman, 2001: 33).

Socialisation mechanisms, suggest that neighbourhoods 'mould' those who grow up in them into certain distinctive behavioural patterns and 'typical' cultural practices. It is for this reason that these explanations focus on children and adolescents. Small and Newman distinguish between six such mechanisms. The *epidemic model* (used by Wilson, among others), argues that when many of a child's neighbourhood peers engage in certain behaviours, the child will be socialised into engaging into such behaviours. The *collective socialisation model* (also used by Wilson), focuses on the scarcity or absence of successful role models which makes children less likely to envision success for themselves (see also O'Faithaigh and O'Brien, 2007). The *institutional model* argues that non-resident adults – teachers, GPs, *Garda* – attached to institutions will treat youngsters worse if the neighbourhood is poor, for example by teaching them poorly or treating them like criminals. A fourth model, the *linguistic isolation model* deals specifically with the situation of African-American children in poor, segregated neighbourhoods of American cities. It argues that, under such circumstances, black children become isolated from Standard American English and only absorb Black English Vernacular. As a consequence, they do poor in school and when interviewing for jobs. The fifth mechanism, the *relative deprivation model*, argues that poor children will be worse off in rich than in poor neighbourhoods. Because people judge their economic position by comparing themselves to others, poor children will develop more unfavourable opinions of themselves. This, in turn, may be a facilitating factor for resorting to deviance. The sixth, is the *oppositional culture* or the *cultural conflict model*, which argues that either segregation or neighbourhood poverty causes residents to develop a culture opposed to mainstream norms and values (see Small and Newman, 2001: 33).

Instrumental models focus on adults rather than on children or adolescents. The most important one is the *networks isolation model*, which argues that being in a poor, extensively unemployed area disconnects individuals from social networks of people, making it difficult for them to obtain information about job opportunities (see Wilson 1996). The *resource model* argues that poor neighbourhoods, deprived of institutional resources such as schools, churches, recreational areas, daycare centres, make it difficult for parents to raise children effectively. Finally, there is the *political alliance model*. It has been argued that blacks in the US have difficulty developing political alliances across racial lines because, in conditions of segregation, no neighbourhood specific benefits accrued to black will accrue to members of other races. As a consequence, African-American living in segregated neighbourhoods are unable to attract public resources for decent schools, child care, playgrounds or to attract business investment.

Class, Social and Ethnic Capital, Reciprocity and employment

Immigrants often flock together in cities and use informal relationships to obtain resources and information. There is a lot of literature dealing with the social capital of immigrants and relations of reciprocity between them. Since immigrants, especially low-skilled ones, are often poor in employment, the idea is that their social capital and reciprocal relations plays a positive role in the development of survival strategies or, more generally, in a wider attempt towards integration, in finding information, residence, employment opportunities and so on. Both social capital and reciprocity have been celebrated in sociology as alternative ways for immigrants to start building up a life. However, as we will show, both social capital and reciprocity exhibit problematic features.

Reciprocity

Much of the theory on reciprocity and kinship solidarity takes its point of departure from the work of Karl Polanyi. Polanyi distinguishes between three modes of economic integration (Polanyi, 1944). These are market exchange, redistribution and reciprocity. Reciprocity refers to non-monetary forms of interactions that are present in small local networks of, for example, ethnic minorities. Reciprocity works primarily on the basis of mutual trust. It is 'you do this for me, I owe you'. Research has shown that reciprocity plays a role in the formulation of survival strategies of ethnic minorities in deprived urban areas, for example in the activities of ethnic entrepreneurs (see below). Reciprocal relations attracted scientific attention, as it was gradually recognized that goods and services did not have to be produced and consumed using 'official' channels. Instead, they could be made, traded, swapped and bartered among members of informal networks. In short, reciprocity enables people to obtain goods and services that they are unable to obtain through the channels of the market or through redistributive systems, either because they lack the necessary monetary resources or because they are excluded from redistribution (for example immigrants that are excluded from social welfare) (O'Kelly, 2003).

However, while reciprocity helps people obtain resources and information, there are also problems. Following Polanyi's original mindset, there has been a tendency to interpret reciprocal relations as free from violence, coercion and manipulation. However, what, for example, happens to the members of an ethnic community who lack competencies and/or resources and therefore cannot contribute to the system of reciprocal exchange? This is a valid question, as every social system, however rich or poor in resources, produces its own social outcasts. According to Komter, the effect of 'Matthew's law' (those who give most, will receive most in return) plays in reciprocity as much as it plays in redistribution and market exchange (Komter, 1996: 27). Furthermore, as Mingione has shown, in theory, networks that are based on reciprocity are further removed from individual autonomy, self-determination and self-interest than other networks. It is precisely for this reason they are likely to be characterized by a high degree of authoritarianism, while they also tend to be highly paternalistic (Mingione, 1996: 103).[10] Therefore, those who want a clear and realistic

---

[10] This is, of course, nothing new. It has been documented, for example, that in the case of the Irish migration to America during and after the Famine, reciprocal relations were partly responsible for keeping many of the Irish immigrants in the large cities of the East coast. Many of them became part of

picture of reciprocal relations, will have to investigate the *positive and the negative* characteristics and effects of this mode of economic integration, which has not often been accomplished.

Social Capital

In any society, people form groups based on common ancestry, residence, friendship, common beliefs, ideology or other factors. They join associations, church groups, unions and political organisations. These groups both reflect and help shape individual identity, norms, beliefs, and priorities. Through networks, people share information, provide and receive support, and work together. Perhaps the oldest definition is from Hanifan, who defined social capital as "those tangible assets (…) good will, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit" (Hanifan (1920) in Woolcock, 1998: 61). Bourdieu and Wacquant define social capital as the "Sum of resources (…) that accrue to a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 17), while for Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti (1993) social capital refers to "(…) features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti, 1993: ix).

In 1995, Putnam proposed two distinct forms of social capital. The first type, *localized social capital*, accumulates in the course of informal social interactions of families, churches, and local groups that people participate in every day. These networks help to engender trust as well as to enforce norms of behaviour among group members. He uses the term *bridging capital* to describe the second type of social capital (Putnam, 1995: 144). This concept is based on the work of Granovetter (1973) and other sociologists who have shown that so-called weak ties (relationships with individuals outside of one's immediate network) are important in the acquisition of new information and opportunities. For localized networks to function together to produce society-wide effects, they must facilitate *generalised* trust and political accountability. Despite numerous critiques, Putnam's conception of social capital has been embraced by a large number of researchers and policymakers.[11]

Although much of the empirical research tends to treat all associations as equivalent, it is clear that social capital within one group can be positively *or* negatively related to social capital at large. The distinction is between groups that are tied to the wider community and those that are not. Negative effects are to be expected when there is

---

a typically nineteenth century industrial underclass and often fell victim to exploitation, sustained poverty and racism. Even social mobility was co-determined by the axes of kinship solidarity within the Irish enclaves (*cf.* the cliché about the 'Irish cop').

[11] As Almond and Verba put it long ago, as the main mover of liberal institutions is capitalist development, only *moderate exercises* of *certain* civic virtues are required, preferably coupled with much *passive* acquiescence and even *myths* of democratic equality (Almond and Verba in Mouritsen, 2003). To be concrete, what Italians need is not more football clubs, *tifosi* brotherhood and choral and bird watching societies (to use Putnam's examples), but a civicness that is directed at relevant levels of government and governance and which challenges fossilized institutions, fights corruption, improves solidarity and stimulates the construction of new political platforms to these ends (Mouritsen, 2003).

low between-group trust and/or lack of interaction or mediating networks between groups. Cross-cutting groups, on the other hand, traverse social boundaries, increase members' tolerance through contact with diverse others and prevent the creation of pockets of isolated trust and idiosyncratic networks. Isolated associations can intensify inward-focusing behaviour, reduce exposure to new ideas and increase social cleavages. Associations that are connected to the larger community should therefore be more beneficial than associations that remain isolated (Paxton, 1999).

Putnam's *prima facie* distinction begs the question: which factors create inward and outward looking groups? Research has shown on many occasions that not all individuals or groups uniformly acquire social capital. Inequality of social capital occurs when a certain group clusters at relatively disadvantaged socio-economic positions and when the general tendency is for individuals to associate with those of similar group or socio-economic characteristics (Lin, 2002). The first reflects *a structural process*, as social groups differentially occupy socio-economic standings in a society. Depending on historical, political and institutional processes, every society structurally provides unequal opportunities to members of different groups defined over class, race, gender, religion, or other ascribed or constructed characteristics. The second principle, *homophily*, suggests a general tendency in networking, namely the tendency for individuals to interact and share sentiments with others with similar characteristics. Members of a social group tend to form networks involving other members from the same group (Lin, 2002).

These two mechanisms produce relative differential access by social groups to social capital. Members of a group, clustering around relatively inferior socio-economic standings and interacting with others in similar social groupings, are embedded in social networks that are poorer in resources as well, *i.e.* they are poorer in social capital. Resource-rich networks, on the other hand, are characterised by relative richness not only in quantity, but also in kind – in *resource heterogeneity* (Lin, 2002). Members of such networks enjoy access to information from and influence in diverse socio-economic strata and positions. In contrast, members in resource-poor networks share a relatively restricted variety of information and influence. Any given social group reflects degrees of group demarcation and variation of network resources among members (Lin, 2002).

It has been shown, for example, that significant differences appear in the social networks and embedded resources between females and males. Lin also shows that men's networks, when compared to women's, consist of fewer kin and more non-kin, and includes fewer neighbours but more co-workers, advisors and friends. Women's networks, in contrast, incorporate a larger proportion of kin overall as well as more different types of kin, but fewer different types of non-kin. It has also been confirmed that males tend to have larger networks than females. The gender differential in network diversity and size is due partly to the fact that males and females participate in organisations with different embedded resources. Zhou shows that men belong to larger organisations when compared to women in similar categories, whether in work, status, age, education or marital status (Zhou, 2004). Lin also found that men were located in core organisations which were related to economic institutions, while women were located in peripheral organisations which were more focused on domestic and community affairs. Men and women had almost exactly the same number of memberships, but the dramatic differences in the sizes and types of their

organisations exposed men to many more potential contacts and other resources than women. Men's positions in the voluntary network were much more likely to provide access to information about possible jobs, business opportunities and chances for professional achievement (Lin, 2001).

According to Lin, such gendered differential associations and networks may explain why males and females have different access to different hierarchical positions in society. Consistent evidence shows sex segregation in occupational contact networks. Women tend to know persons in fewer occupations than do men; their networks are negatively affected by having children younger than six and they often change jobs in response to their spouses' mobility; men's networks are largely unaffected by these constraints. Therefore, females are associated with disadvantaged networks – smaller and less diverse, more female ties, ties lower in hierarchical position. Since their associations and networks tend to be more homogeneous, there is likewise a network closure and reproduction of resource disadvantage among females (Lin, 2001).

Inequality in social capital is also evident across racial and ethnic groupings. It has been confirmed in several studies that members of racial minorities have a higher rate of informal ties with relatives, friends and neighbours. Studies in the USA have shown that network diversity and size decreases from whites to Hispanics and blacks. Sex diversity is highest in the networks of whites. Even among blacks, this hierarchical differentiation remains. Black elites tend to form social ties through participation in churches and social clubs. The black upper-class, composed mainly of professionals and well-to-do businessmen who have got higher education, create a closed social world of their own. Their specific universe of discourse and uniformity of behaviour are maintained through sororities, college and alumni associations, professional associations and civic and social clubs (Lin, 2001: 52).

Similarly, Portes and Sensenbrenner advanced the enclave-economy hypothesis, arguing that ethnic economic enclaves afford opportunities for entrepreneurs and labourers to gain a foothold in the economy and labour market. The basic premise is that such a market is largely built on kin and ethnic networks (Portes and Sensenbrenner in Lin, 2001: 56). Because immigrant groups or enclaves tend to be poorer, these groups are disadvantaged in social resources. That these disadvantages are embedded in the social capital resource of white and black networks can for example be seen very clearly from the fact black children adopted by whites tend to access better social resources, which produces higher achievement outcomes (Lin, 2001:59).

Cultural Factors

In what follows, I give a short example of the work by Tarik Modood, who is one of the leading theorists in multicultural studies. To Modood, class and other concepts, such as Bourdieu's cultural capital, are clearly important but, as he sees it, they do not tell the whole story when applied to contemporary ethnic phenomena in relation to resources, capital and the likelihood of social mobility (Modood, 2004: 88; Modood, 2007). Essential as class may be, other factors are at work, some of which work towards worsening the socio-economic position of immigrants relative to the rest of society, while other factors may have the opposite effect. Culture and ethnicity are two such factors.

Ethnic group membership is one factor that can mitigate or exacerbate class disadvantage. Modood gives the example of a study of school results of adolescents (controlling for a set of class attributes). The likelihood of achieving high marks for Pakistanis and Indians was 10 per cent higher than for their white social class peers, while for black Caribbeans it was 8 per cent less (Modood, 2004: 92). This result cannot be explained by class analysis alone because, as Modood writes:

this categorisation of people (according to class) by the possessions of similar resources and the way they deal with it can be a characteristic of ethnicity: it can vary across ethnic groups within the same income classes. *Hence, (...) ethnicity seems to cut across class, possibly even to constitute class in some ways because ethnicity can mean resources* (Modood, 2004: 93 – my emphasis).[12]

If ethnicity means resources, which specific resources explain the results of the study on school outcomes? Modood points to a strong drive for educational achievement that is present in certain minorities and which functions as a powerful motor towards it. Particularly thinking of South Asians and Chinese, the answer is to be found in the following causal sequence: if parents and significant others share general and durable ambitions to achieve upward mobility of themselves and especially for their children and if they see (higher) education as an important tool to achieve this ambition and if they are able to successfully convey this view to their children who internalise this and if the parents have enough authority and power over their children, reinforced by others in the community, to see that the children do whatever is necessary at a particular stage for the progressive realisation of this goal, high educational achievement will very likely be achieved. This is not to say that, for example, racism and the effects of living in deprived neighbourhoods are unimportant – they obviously are – but in some circumstances they offer more explanatory assistance than real explanation. The sort of ethnic capital Modood refers to requires three different dimensions: relationships, norms and norms enforcement. As he says, referring to Zhou's conception of social capital, this is not a competition between dense versus loose relationships. It is about finding out what might work for a particular group in a specific setting. In this way, then, it can be explained, as Zhou and Bankston have done, that the Vietnamese, who arrived in the US poor, without pre-existing ethnic community networks to assist them, have nonetheless achieved outstanding academic achievement (Zhou and Bankston, 1998). However, the real value of this specific sort of ethnic capital goes beyond the immediate practical stimuli it produces, as it will actively construct or structure identity:

People act (…) the way they do because it seems to them to be living an identity (…) certain behaviours make sense or do not make sense, become possible or 'impossible' (…) The (…) triad (gives) some Asians a sense of who they are, their location in the world (…) Asian migrant parents may have little relevant economic-human capital to transmit, but subsequent human capital acquisition by their children may depend upon parent-child transmission of norms-laden and goals-directing identities. The motivational power of identity is more at the heart of ethnic minority social/cultural

---

[12] As interesting and theoretically innovative as this may sound, it is not new. In 1943, Abhram Lean/Wainstock completed a landmark study in Brussels, *Considerations de la Question Juive* (published only much later). Leon (an assumed 'Belgian' name in a doomed attempt to escape Auschwitz) combined the Marxist concept of class with the specific ethnicity, norms and culture of the Jews and their specific economic roles as proto capitalists and pariah entrepreneurs (often fulfilling functional roles in the larger economy through engaging in activities despised by Gentiles) through history.

capital than, say, residential concentration, mutual self-help or community institutions (Modood, 2004: 100-101).

Modood shows that culture can be a determinant of social integration and economic success. Although, obviously, many factors play and although, perversely enough, the danger of 'blaming the victim' is lurking here, culture has the capacity to make a gigantic difference. Therefore, it is absolutely essential to integrate people into education, organise remedial teaching were necessary and to provide positive role models.[13]

Spatial Barriers

The problem of spatial barriers has traditionally been neglected. Whatever the reason for this may be, spatial barriers exist and they are a problem for some, and, as research shows, in particular for immigrants. Spatial barriers to employment refer to limited access to transport and geographical distance from employment opportunities. Far from being a solely American phenomenon, spatial barriers exist everywhere. The life-cycle of cities creates geographical mismatches between predominantly ethnic neighbourhoods and spaces of employment (Champion, 2001: 141).[14] The mismatch can take the forms of immigrants living in more or less segregated central neighbourhoods, distant from expanding suburban employment centres (as happens in many American cities), but many other spatial configurations are possible in which immigrants become isolated from employment. Furthermore, there is no reason to assume that the existence of spatial barriers is only limited to urban areas.

It turns out that immigrant women often face additional burdens because of a peculiar mix between gender and culture in which women are largely responsible for domestic work. Immigrant women find that competing demands on home and paid work often restrict job searches to the local neighbourhood or make them prefer informal employment above formal work, while household responsibilities also restrict other activities, such as the ability to take and complete courses.

How do spatial distances create barriers? Preston, McLafferty and Liu (1998) looked at commuting times in the New York Metropolitan Area. They explain that commuting times are one indication of how workers link their roles at home and at work within the spatial context that constrains residential and employment decisions. Commuting times, however, also indicate access to transportation as well as access to employment. Preston, McLafferty and Liu examined the effects of skill and class differentials by considering occupation, education and income and they used regression analysis to analyse the impacts of these factors on differences in commuting times by gender, race and nativity: do immigrants face different spatial barriers to employment than native-born Americans?; does gender play a role?; and

---

[13] Compare Modood's story with the oppositional culture thesis, which states that black inner-city culture is not only different but also *self-consciously* opposed to the norms and values of the white middle class. Evidence exists that some black adolescents devalue schoolwork out of fear of being seen as 'acting white'. O'Brien and O'Faithaigh (2007) document that some Irish working class children shun schoolwork because to value learning is a betrayal to the working class values of the 'lads.'

[14] By which is meant the cycle of urbanisation, suburbanisation, counterurbanisation and reurbanisation.

how do processes of residential segregation and labour market segementation play out in the New York area? (Preston, McLafferty and Liu, 1998: 530 ff).

Preston, McLafferty and Liu's results need not to be reproduced here, but it has to be emphasised that specific urban processes produce similar effects in all urban areas: gentrification and redevelopment, almost by definition and, indeed, often by design, force immigrants out of the neighbourhoods which are being renovated because of rising costs. As Preston, McLafferty and Liu underline, even minor differences in residential location can affect immigrant women's access to employment. This is so because their job searches are often limited to small local labour markets (Preston, McLafferty and Liu, 1998: 532). By working near home, many women find it easier to accommodate paid employment and domestic work. For them, and often for their families as well, spatial contexts are all important, so that some of them will prefer lower paid work with short commuting times to higher paid work with longer communiting times.

For example, immigrant Chinese women with little English and few jobs skills in New York often find working in Chinatown a better option despite the low wages, because the enclave enables them to fulfill their multple roles more effectively as wage earners, wives and mothers (Zhou, 2004: 1048). This is not surprising, given that, in Chinatown, jobs are easier to find, working hours are more flexible, employers are more tolerant to the presence of children and private child-care within close walking-distance from work is more accessible and affordable – these typical tangible and intangible benefits associated with the ethnic enclave are absent in the 'general' seconday labour market, where co-ethnicity is atypical and reciprocity is not an enforceable norm (Zou, 1992: 63). Often enough, however, there will be no choice and therefore immigrant workers (men as well as women) travel longer to work than native-born workers. Preston et al., show that in New York long work trips are the norm for both minority women and men and that commuters who rely on mass transportation commute longer times than those who are able to drive or walk to work (Preston, McLafferty and Liu, 1998: 532). As Preston, McLafferty and Liu state: "Some workers depend on highly localised job opportunities, public services and social networks, while for other workers, the relevant labour market is metropolitan and even regional in scope" (Preston, McLafferty and Liu, 1998: 532).

The researchers were also able to point to a persistent and significant effect of wages on women's commuting times (if women earned as much as men, the gender differential in commuting time would diminish). Only among white women, the most 'privileged' group, is there evidence that a convenient workplace is valued more than high wages. Furthermore research shows that immigrant workers have more difficulties than American-born workers in adjusting their commuting patterns to accommodate domestic concerns. This effect becomes stronger with decreasing educational attainment (Preston, McLafferty and Liu, 1998: 532).

To conclude, spatial barriers to employment are a real concern. Long commuting times may lower wages, increase job search costs and increase unemployment. These effects, in turn, reinforce and reproduce already existing patterns of residential segregation by limiting the future residential choices of immigrants.

Enclave Entrepreneurship and the Risks of Pariah or Survival Capitalism

Contemporary entrepreneurial activities among immigrant groups are increasingly heterogeneous in range, scale, intensity and levels of formality and institutionalisation. As in the past today's immigrants exploit entrepreneurship as an effective alternative to circumvent labour market barriers and create social mobility. Support of ethnic entrpreneurship is an interesting issue for several reasons.[15] It is known that minority ethnic groups are often more successful in setting up businesses than members of indigenous populations – the willingness to take risks is often stated as part of an explanation as well as the advantage of having social networks both within and beyond the immediate locality. However, there are sharp differences in the success rate between ethnic groups.

Zhou (Zhou, 2004) distinghuises between two main types of ethnic entrepreneurs: *middleman minorities* and *enclave entrepreneurs*. Middleman minorities commonly establish business niches in poor minority neighbourhoods deserted by mainstream retail and service industries (at least, in the USA) and, typically, have few intrinsic ties to the social structures and social relations of the local community in which they conduct economic activities. Enclave entrepreneurs, on the other hand, include mainly those who are bounded by ethnicity, ethnic social structures and location. They typically operate in immigrant neighbourhoods where their ethnic group members dominate and they themselves are interwined in an intricate web of social networks. In present times, as many ethnic enclaves evolve into multi-ethnic neighbourhoods and new ones develop in relatively middle-class suburbs, those who run businesses may simultaneously play double roles – as middleman minorities and as enclave entrepreneurs. The enclave economy has an integrated cultural component. Economic activities are governed by *bounded solidarity* and *enforceable trust* – mechanisms of support and control necessary for economic life in the community and for reinforcement of norms and values and sanctioning of socially disapproved behaviour (Portes and Zhou, 1992: 60 *ff*; Zhou, 2004: 1049 *ff*).

There is a transnationalisation of ethnic entrepreneurship going on. Due to the worldwide economic restructuring and the 'globalization' of capital and labour and other factors such as jet flights, the internet and other high-tech means of communication and transportation, the scale, diversity, density and regularity of movements have changed dramatically (Zhou, 2004: 1051). Today, a garment design conceived in New York may be transmitted electronically to a factory in some remote country in Asia, and the first batches of the products can be shipped to San Francisco in one week's time (Castells, 1980). Transnationalism is defined as "the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their socieites of origin and settlement" (Bash et al., 1994: 6). Portes *et al.*, 1999 propose a typology of three sectors of transnationalism (economic, political and sociocultural) at two levels of institutionalisation (high and low) and define transnationalism as measurable occupations and activities that require regular and

---

[15] Ethnic entrepreneurship is likely to become more economically important for yet another reason. The demand for ethnic consumer products is stimulated both by growing ethnic populations and the changing tastes of natives. Both ethnic and under-served non-ethnic makers allow certain groups of immigrants to succesfully carve niches for self-employment. The success of ethnic businesses hinges on the size of the ethnic population as well as on the access to customers beyond the ethnic community (see Zhou, 2004: 1051).

sustained social contacts over time across national borders for their implementation (Portes *et al.*, 1999: ix). Transnational networks are extremely diverse: some are oriented toward sending countries while others more toward the receiving country; some have relatively more open boundaries while others are more exclusive or even very exclusive (Zhou, 2004: 1060; Gold, 2001).

As Zhou writes, it is not clear what the effects are of transnational ethnic entrepreneurship in the localities of origin (Zhou, 2004: 1061). Although there are direct economic and non-economic benefits to indvidual transnational entrepreneurs in terms of employment security, economic independence, earnings and social recognition in sending countries, such individual gains do not automatically spill over to others ethnic group members (Zhou, 2004: 1056). Some of these members continue to face hardships and disadvantages despite existensive transnational ties and it is far from unrealistic that some face hardships because of it.[16] Gold adds that not all forms of transnational practices bring about positive effects for group social mobility in host societies, as they are regularily undertaken only by a small minority who sometimes impose a whole new set of obstacles and difficulties on local communities (Gold, 2001).

Immigrants seek self-employment in greater proportion than natives because of discrimination in the labour markets and disadvantages associated with immigrant status, such as poor English proficiency, depreciation of human capital and discrimination.[17] It is recognised that ethnic entrepreneurship fosters an entrepreneurial spirit, sets up role models in the community, and functions as a training ground for prospective entrepreneurs. Bonds of soldarity in small ethnic firms and the presence of ethnic entrepreneurs encourage informal business apprenticeships, which has social effects beyond pure economic gain. Informal training systems are formed through close contacts between owners and workers in ethnic enclaves as well as in spatially dispersed ethnic economies, enabling potential entrepreneurs to eventually start their own business (Bailey and Waldinger, 1991).

Zhou also reports that non-economic effects have largely been overlooked. Effects such as serving as an alternative means to social status recognition, nurturing entrepreneurial spirit, providing a role model and strengthening local as well as 'global' social networks are noted in the literature but lack thorough investigation and leave conceptual gaps. Zhou cites the different positions of Korean entrepreneurs as an example. Korean entrepreneurs running businesses as middleman minorities in non-Korean neighbourhoods do not tend to invest in the social structures of these neighbourhoods because they are not bounded by social relationships with local residents. However, Korean entrepreneus running businesses in neighbourhoods which are predominantly Korean have a stake in the community and are interwined in multiple social relations with ethnic residents and their social structures (Zhou, 2004:

---

[16] Zhou cites the Dominican community in New York as an example: this community is marked by the most serious social pathologies despite the presence of thriving ethnic businesses (Zhou, 2004: 1057).

[17] Zhou also explains that there are inter-group differences. Koreans, for example, often consider business ownership as a strategy to cope with problems associated with blocked mobility, but do not want their children to take over the business. Hispanics, on the other hand, often view entrepreneurship not just as an instrument to overcome discrimination, but also as a strategy for intergenerational mobility (see Zhou, 2004: 1050 ff).

1061). Therefore, Zhou argues, it is the *social embeddedness* of ethnic economic activities, rather than the ethnic economy *per se*, that affects a unique social context for mobility (Zhou, 2004: 1061; Zhou, 2002). The authors of the Ecotec study make yet another point: the relatively high degree of participation in entrepreneurship of the parts of immigrants can also be regarded as a sign of exclusion from the formal labour market (Ecotec, 2004). Many ethnic businesses are family based and rely on the support of family networks to provide finance and venture capital to support the development of such businesses to formal enterprises which can ultimately offer good quality employment to local people. This is all good and well if the business turns out to be viable. If forms of survival entrepreneurship fail, there is no safety net left and people can literally end up on the streets.

Carving out Pathways to Employment

In order to scope the types of activities that might help *skilled* refugees to gain employment in their field of expertise, the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies of Birmingham University (CURS) undertook a study of organisations providing employment support of refugees and migrants in 2005 (Phillimore *et al.*, 2005; Phillimore *et al.*, 2007). The study aimed to identify good practice in enhancing the employability of skilled refugees and migrants. It concluded that the most effective approach was to create an integrated package or 'pathways' of activities, including vocational language training, work experience and accreditation of prior learning either through testing or through the provision of workplace based opportunities to demonstrate skills. CURS developed a model that is now known as the 'employability pathway' to demonstrate the idealised way in which refugees could be helped into education, training and employment commensurate with their skills. They subsequently sought to pilot the model in the West Midlands to explore what could be learned from the implementation of this integrated approach and to examine prospects for mainstreaming the recognition of refugees's skills. The report *Employability pathways: an integrated approach to recognising the skills and experiences of new migrants* details what was undertaken in each of the pilot activities as well as the main barriers to success, key learning points and recommendations for the future (Phillimore *et al.*, 2007). Because this report is highly relevant, we summarise some of its findings that we find especially important.

CURS dealt with 5 pilot initiatives: 1) Coventry Construction in Coventry and Warwickshire (dealing with refugees with a construction background); 2) the development of the Birmingham General Maintenance Pathway (meeting the training and employment needs of new migrants with past experience in the construction sector); 3) the University of Birmingham Social Research (for which CURS developed three models for research skills training for migrants); 4) the development of Business Administration (tailoring courses for refugees with a background in business administration) and 5) the development of a pre-adaption course for Refugee Healthcare Professionals (to help refugee health professionals) (see Phillimore et al., 2007: 16 ff).

As for the key findings, first, as is well-known (but worth repeating) the trauma of refugee experience brings with it a loss of confidence generally, but particularly in state institutions (Phillimore et al., 2007: 54). Lack of trust in employment initiatives is often exacerbated by negative experiences with Job Centre initiatives. Therefore,

the first hurdle in developing initiatives for refugees is rebuilding trust between trainers, providers and refugees.

This sounds simple enough, but practice shows that it is not easy to achieve. Phillimore et al., discuss working closely with community organisations to ensure that they have *some ownership of initiatives* (this seems to be especially important), 'showing your face' rather than relying on electronic media, employing skilled refugees who are respected in their community and using clear communication. When working with students, building relationships between groups is also very important as they can offer support to each other as well as developing employability from the early stages in a programme, providing opportunities to meet employers and stressing the value of the programme (and the difference with other courses or programmes that the refugees might have encountered before) (Phillimore *et al.*, 2007: 54 ff).

Second, it is essential to recognise that some refugees, because of the ordeal they went through, experience a wide range of problems which can impact on their ability to commit to training or work. Refugees need to deal with Job Centres, utilities, immgration, with overseas family, emergencies, health problems and sometimes with extreme situations such as homelessness and mental illness. Therefore, rather than waiting for problems to turn into crises, trainers and providers needs to adopt a proactive approach to identify difficulties and help to provide solutions or at least advice on how to cope with specific issues whilst remaining on the programme (Phillimore *et al.*, 2007: 55). In the CURS pilot initatiaves, there was also a mentor helping to support students to understand the cultural nuances associated with their vocational area. During the training, students were telephoned before each session to check that they were able to attend and helped to get around reasons why they might drop out. According to Phillimore et al., such factors, though seemingly small in themselves, were critical to the success of the initiative (Phillimore *et al.*, 2007: 54).

Third, it is important for people (as well as for society at large – see Denayer on recognition) to re-enter their vocational area. Re-entering the work one has been educated for, will often secure financial security and enable the redevelopment of self-esteem. The problem, however, is that refugees, on the flight from persucution, often enter their new country with very little or nothing at all. Refugees are often unable to prove their educational attainment and if they are able to prove their qualifications, their degrees will often not be (fully) recognised. The same holds for specialised skills which need demonstration as proof of their existence. Sometimes marriage licenses cannot be retrieved and police clearances (proving the absence of a criminal record) cannot be delivered.

Phillimore *et al.*, 2007 comment that recent immigrants' non-employment needs are served by community-based immigrant-serving agencies, but that one common barrier is that immigrants will find themselves 'left on their own,' when it comes to finding employers and manage training-to-work transitions. While this is probably true for others also, language barriers and the lack of family and social networks compound these issues for immigrants.

A lack of language and literacy skills is recognised as a key barrier to the integration of immigrants. Immigrants encounter barriers related to their insufficient grasp of both *general* and *technical* language skills. For recent immigrants, who are still in the

process of learning generals language skills, the challenge of acquiring technical language skills presents an additional learning task for which adequate supports often do not necessarily exist. The Canadian Apprentice Forum (CAF) gives the example of automotive service and repair. The quanity of new technical information published every year by automakers is considerable and in some cases surpasses the surreal - according to CAF, one automaker alone produces some 60, 000 pages per year (CAF, 2004: 5).

Phillimore and her colleagues from Birmingham conclude their study on employability pathways by giving the following recommendations to immigrant community groups and government agencies:

- lobby towards the removal of legal barriers, aiming to construct a binding general framework for all sectors, trades and professions (see Denayer on recognition for more on this);
- improve possible negative attitudes of immigrants at the side of the employers. Although such attitudes may sometimes arise from negative views on the part of specific individuals, they may also stem from a lack of adequate information or insight into the cultural, economic, educational and informational barriers that recent immigrants face and the particular needs that these might entail.
- evaluate career counseling and information about trades, technical training opportunities, language training and other education and bringing these to the attention of immigrants;
- evaluate the access to other information that recent immigrants may find difficult to access. Information should be made easily available in easily understandable terms on subjects such as foreign-credentials recognition services and resources and on navigating the relevant bureaucracies and dealing with paperwork in the sphere of employment, education and apprenticeships (see Phillimore *et al.*, 2007: 56 ff).

All of this makes complete sense, but, as Rhona Hodgart recently also re-emphasised, I would add that it is necessary to work both on the supply side – trying to mobilise labour to adapt to new opportunities for work – or, better for *decent* work - and to acquire socially useful skills by drawing unemployed and socially excluded people (immigrants or not) along pathways to integration with strong local points of entry (Hodgart in Advisory Board, 2007: 55). At the same, on the demand side, this means to prospect for new sources of employment – particularly by identifying service gaps and market failures that remain unaddressed by private enterprises and public provisions (see IDELE, 2004: 3). Furthermore, as the authors of the IDELE study add, the re-awakening of interest in social enterprise and the social economy, gives the opportunity to stimulate alternative forms of enterprise within local communities that give both the opportunity to addressing gaps and the chance that unemployed people can create 'tailor-made' jobs by acting as social entrepreneurs (IDELE, 2004: 6 *ff*).

Local employment development can directly support the integration of minority groups and immigrants into labour markets. The 'added value' of local approaches is in recognising the employment potential of migrants, building up trust with local employers to support flexible approaches to employment, bringing together different actors to tackle specific problems faced by migrants, develop outreach services to hard-to-reach groups, create sensitivity to local needs and opportunities as well as exploit creatively the existence of service gaps to stimulate good quality local jobs that are accessible to all (see IDELE, 2004: 6). However, as IDELE reports, in the UK

at least there is some 'fatigue' at the local level and the need to support new forms of innovation and transfers of best practice. Another problem is a lack of statistics and reliable data – according to IDELE, this is partly due to the sensitivities around action, which function as a barrier to action itself, as it is easy to see failure and difficult to measure success (IDELE, 2004: 7). Therefore, it cannot be stressed enough that public perceptions of programs and attitudes towards immigrants need to be considered and remedied whenever necessary – as, after all, political willingness depends on it also (McVeigh and Lentin, 2002: 11).

So far, needs have been addressed for immigrants that have education and skills. This is, of course, highly selective. As Atlin and Pond-White point to a structural feature of global capitalism :

Inherent in the north-south divide is the reality that, in many of the countries producing large numbers of today's immigrants, there are more businesses operating with under-resourced and less sophisticated machine and technological infrastructures than found in (…) (the developed west) (Atlin and Pond-White in CAF, 2004: 6).

Because of this reality, programs need to distinguish between high skilled and low skilled immigrants. The dichotomy means that different approaches and initiatives are in order according to which specific groups are addressed, as the matrix below illustrates.

	Newcomers	Others
High skilled	Recognition of qualifications gained abroad; Provide skills audits, validation of prior learning.	Support entrepreneurship and career progression; Taclke employer prejudice; Positive action.
Low skilled	Language training, technical training, supported work placement; Draw people away from informal economy.	Outreach training projects and project aming to reintegrate demoralised and disenfranchised groups.

Table C: *Types of approaches used in best practice initiatives according to Ecotec*, (Ecotec, 2005: 8).

Furthermore, the message is that speed is of the essence. Many immigrants opt to take jobs for which they are over-qualified, or which have nothing to do with their training and experience. The fact is that the longer these individuals remain outside of training and work in their chosen field, the more significant the skills erosion will be, which suggests that their prospect of working in the trades decreases significantly the longer they are away from related training or employment (CAF, 2004: 6).

Conclusions

Minority ethnic and immigrant groups are particularly prone to poverty and exclusion. In this review, we looked at some of the reasons why this is the case. We started by commenting on major changes that took place in the world economy and in the organisation of welfare states during the last thirty years. Currently, the West has a

need for both high skilled and low skilled immigrant workers. However, several mismatches and barriers exist and there is often considerable difficulty harnessing this human resource. Taking deprived neighourhoods as a point of departure, we tried to look at how immigrants organise themselves. Several points were made. It is easy to say that immigrants's social capital can help them to formulate survival strategies or integrate them into society, without inquiring into the specific nature of this social capital. As Lin (2001) explains, the social capital of immigrants is often poor in resources and tends to cluster around people who share similar socio-economic conditions. Furthermore, ignoring or neglecting the negative effects of reciprocity constitutes a serious omission and produces a false image of what is going on in deprived neighbourhoods. A similar note has to be produced about the literature on ethnic entrepreneurship. Ethnic entrepreneurship has been celebrated by some as a major window of opportunity for immigrants. However, not every immigrant is an entrepreneur and not every entrepreneur acts in a benign way towards the local community. As Zhou (2004) writes, the criterium is whether the enclave entrepreneur is *embedded* in her or his community or not. If this is not the case, the existence of the ethnic business may be inconsequential for the neighourhood where it is located. As Lazardis and Koumandraki (2003), among others, make clear, ethnic entrepreneurship can also be seen as a failure of inclusion. Spatial barriers, although neglected in the literature, are a real problem for many immigrants and especially for women. Long commuting times lower wages and have other negative effects which reinforce existing patterns of segregation. Cultural factors towards community life, education and work are important determinants and can be nurtured by providing positive role models.

Research Methodology

Overview

This research was commissioned by Nasc in order to uncover the various barriers to employment and education for migrants in Cork. The project was considered necessary because of the increasing awareness among immigrant support groups that accessing employment and education could often prove more difficult for migrants relative to the indigenous Irish population. There are a range of problems which face the migrant community when trying to access work and education. Furthermore, certain migrant groups can experience these difficulties to a greater degree than another. Thus, the task of this research is not only to uncover the barriers but also to establish whether or not certain migrant groups are more likely to experience them.

The research started in early August 2007 and was completed by late November 2007. A research team was assembled to provide a range of social expertise. Paul Dunbar coordinated the research with three other researchers collecting data on particular groups. Each member of the team was allocated a particular group which they would focus on for the project. Aoife Fitzgibbon-O'Riordan interviewed organisations from the service provider sector; Kate Moynihan was responsible for interviewing employers; and Fidelma Connolly conducted interviews with migrants. Upon being offered a full-time position elsewhere and leaving the project Aoife Fitzgibbon-O'Riordan's section of the research was taken over by Alan Egan. Prof. Alastair Christie from the Department of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork and Dr. Jacqui O'Riordan from the Department of Sociology, University College Cork agreed to act as advisors for the research.

Research Focus

The research was focused on answering the following questions, as outlined by Nasc in the tender documentation:

- Why is there a high percentage of unemployment amongst refugees and people with leave to remain in Ireland? Unpublished research for RIA[1] (Mac Einri and Coakley (2007) Department of Geography, UCC) shows that 70% of refugees and people with leave to remain are unemployed. Nasc wishes to uncover the reasons for the high level of unemployment among these migrant groups.

- What barriers and routes exist for migrants to Ireland who are seeking work? (refugees, people with leave to remain, other categories e.g. those under family reunification schemes, Eastern Europeans, non-EEA citizens requiring an employment permit). This may refer to those who are unemployed or to those who are seeking employment appropriate to their qualifications.

---

[1] The Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) is a statutory body responsible for coordinating services for asylum seekers and refugees. It also has responsibility for coordinating the implementation of policy for all refugees and people with leave to remain.

- What can we learn from those who are in paid employment about their experiences in the workplace, including issues of racism and discrimination?

- What are the factors which inhibit and support access to appropriate education/training, for migrants to Ireland (refugees, asylum-seekers, people with leave to remain, other categories e.g. those under family reunification schemes, Eastern Europeans).

Research Design

The project began with a meeting at which all of the researchers and the advisors from UCC were present. The tender document for the project had set out the groups who were to be interviewed and the size of samples to be interviewed: fifty migrants, twenty-five service providers, and twenty employers. The first task of the meeting was to discuss how each group would be broken down in order to achieve a broadly representative sample. Census figures were readily available which proved useful for this task. Employers were divided by sector, paying particular attention to the sectors where migrants would tend to be in employment e.g. the construction and service industries. It was decided that the service provider element of the research would benefit from a split between those involved in education and those involved in employment. It was also noted that there would be a degree of crossover among some service providers. For example, the Local Employment Service (LES) is geared towards assisting people who have difficulty finding work, particularly those who are long-term unemployed. However, they also provide information and assistance in relation to education and training, as this may be the best option for a person to improve their employment prospects.

Arriving at a breakdown for the migrant element of the research proved more difficult. There was the immediate issue of who was considered a migrant for the purposes of this project. The title 'immigrant' can often be confusing and the Irish experience is no different. Upon hearing the word some people may conjure images of asylum seekers, Polish construction workers, or professionals from the UK or elsewhere. However, it appears evident that the word 'immigrant' now carries a slightly negative connotation in Ireland, one reserved for people who would not traditionally be expected to come to work and live in this country. If the sample of migrants were representative of the census, the research would have concentrated too much on groups of migrants who would not be expected to face significant barriers to employment or education. For example, the census figures for 2006 show that the number of people from the EU Accession States living in Cork City and County was almost equal to the number from the UK. Migrants to Ireland from the UK share a common language and culture and can often avail of a range of long-established migrant support networks. It appears self-evident that a person from the UK, or a returning Irish emigrant, would not experience barriers to work and education to the same degree as a person from Nigeria with refugee status for example.

For the reasons outlined above, and following detailed discussions on the specific aims and objectives of the research, it was decided that the sample of interviewees

should exclude people from 'Western'[2] countries. There was an acknowledgement that people from 'Western' countries may themselves be immigrants to those countries and thus face similar barriers to a migrant in Cork. However, to avoid complicating matters it was decided that the project should seek only non-Western migrants to Cork. The next concern was to break the target group of fifty into sub-groups. Again, in order to achieve a good cross-section, the census figures were used as a guide for this. However, upon reflection it became evident that if the numbers were broken down solely along census figures the majority of interviewees would have been drawn from the EU Accession countries. It was agreed that if this method was pursued then it would have overlooked many of the issues faced by the Asian and African communities in particular because of their low number relative to the EU Accession states. On the basis of the above, it was decided that the sample of migrant interviewees would include: twenty from EU Accession States, ten from African states, ten from Asian states, and ten 'Other'. The latter group was to be comprised of countries which would not have fallen into the EU, African, or Asian groups e.g. Brazil, Russia, or Turkey. It was agreed that this sample would allow the research to focus on the issues which had been outlined in the tender document.

Data Collection Methods

Having established a sample set of desired interviewees the next concern was to design the interview formats. Each group (Migrants, Service Providers, Employers) required a different approach. Each member of the research team was assigned one of the aforementioned groups. This was necessary in order to ensure that one person would develop a detailed understanding of the issues which arose in relation to each group. Paul Dunbar (research coordinator) had responsibility for compiling the final report and with this in mind it was decided that he would interview people from each of the categories. The research coordinator met with each researcher individually in order to discuss and finalise the topics which should be covered for each group. The principal areas of interest across all groups were English language difficulties; recognition of qualifications; racism/discrimination; and the work permit system. The resulting interview format for each group is available in the appendix (4.1 - 4.3).

In-depth interviews were conducted which would allow each interviewee the freedom to focus on particular issues of importance for them. The interview questions which were devised for each group provided a broad overview of the possible avenues for investigation but were not intended to limit the content of the interview. For example, difficulties with English language may not have been an issue for some of the migrant interviewees and as such could be disregarded in the interview. It was envisaged that interviews would last no longer than one hour and it was agreed that each interviewee from the migrant group would be paid a fee of €20 for their participation.

So, while the research project drew largely on qualitative methods, there was some use of quantitative methods of analysis. As mentioned above, the census figures were employed at various stages, particularly when trying to arrive at the desired groups of interviewees for each group. It should be noted, however, that the research did not adhere strictly to these figures as the basis of its sample of interviewees. Rather, it

---

[2] It is acknowledged that the term 'Western' is a contested term, often interchangeable with other terms such as 'developed' or 'industrialised' in this context.

used the census figures as a starting point which were then modified in such a way as to ensure the research focused on the migrants who would be expected to experience barriers to employment and education. Much of the data relevant to the research had been published by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) prior to the start of the project. However, some figures which would have proved useful only became available at a later date. For example, figures which categorised employment status in terms of place of birth only became available in early September 2007.

Sourcing the Interviewees

It was the responsibility of the research coordinator to source all of the interviewees for the research and to schedule appointments with them. Contact was established largely through phone calls to the relevant bodies. The service provider groups were readily available and thus relatively easy to make contact with. Similarly, sourcing employers was a matter of using the interviewee breakdown as a guide and then contacting the suitable candidates for interview who would have been likely to employ migrants.

While the latter two groups were relatively easy to contact, the greatest difficulty with proved to be the timing of the research project. Many of the educational institutions were experiencing their busiest time of the year in terms of new student arrivals and registration. This meant that the people who would have been most suited to our research had limited time to spare for an interview. In many of the businesses that were contacted the relevant people (i.e. human resources managers) were on annual leave. A total of forty letters requesting their participation were sent to various employers that were deemed suitable for the research. This list of forty selected from a list of businesses that are members of the Cork Chamber of Commerce. The response from this group was poor, but it is beyond the scope of this research to analyse why some employers appeared reluctant to participate. Some employers, particularly those who would regularly employ migrants e.g. the hotel sector, expressed great interest in the research and were keen to participate.

For the migrant interviewees contact was made with the various Minority Ethnic-led Organisations (MElo)[2] in Cork. The sheer number of these groups and their formation based on nationality proved quite useful in terms of targeting the desired interviewees. Further to this, posters were drawn up and posted in places which one would expect to be frequented by migrants e.g. ethnic food shops, internet cafes and immigrant support centres such as Nasc and Cois Tine in Cork city. The response from the MElo groups was encouraging and many of the contacts that were made led to a snowballing effect whereby more potential interviewees were identified. The posters proved less effective. Interviewees were also sought through channels such as trade unions and personal contacts. Provision was made for a certain number of interviews to be conducted with a translator but this was a rare occurrence as many of the interviewees that came forward had a good level of English.

All of the interviews were digitally recorded which enabled the interviewer to devote greater attention to the interviewee's comments. As such, the interviews were

---

[2] MElo groups are commonly formed by ethnic minorities in order to assist and provide support to members of this community.

conducted in a conversational manner which would allow the interviewee to raise issues which were pertinent to themselves. Overall, the migrant interviewees had the most insight into the barriers and routes to employment and education. It was evident that many of them had previously considered, in detail, many of the questions which arose in the interviews, and were keen to offer their points of view on these issues. A number of the migrant interviewees expressed gratitude for being allowed to express their opinions and for the opportunity to contribute to the research. This demonstrated the level interest that many of the migrants had in the subject.

For the purposes of this report, all interviewees will be referred to using pseudonyms. In the case of service providers, where consent was given, reference will be made to the organisation which employed the interviewee and that person's position within the organisation.

Chapter 1 – Primary Research: Migrants

Fidelma Connolly and Paul Dunbar

1.1 Introduction

Given that the focus of this research is to evaluate the various barriers and routes to employment and education for migrants, it is self-evident that migrants themselves are in a good position to speak on these issues. As noted above, a lot of consideration was given to the selection of suitable interviewees for the purposes of the research. It was necessary to ensure that we spoke to people who would be expected to experience the barriers which had been identified by Nasc as being prevalent in Cork. Some of the interviewees recounted positive experiences in Ireland and, as such, allowed for an analysis of both the barriers and routes to employment and education. Other interviewees found the process of seeking employment or education a far more challenging experience. The following chapter will give an account of these difficulties.

Table 1.1

Migrant Interviewees by Nationality:

Polish	10
Nigerian	9
Indian	3
Lithuania	2
Spain	2
Bangladesh	1
Brazil	1
Cameroon	1
Hong Kong	1
Estonia	1
Ivory Coast	1
Japan	1
Rwanda	1
Somalia	1
Zimbabwe	1
Total	**36**

Table 1.2

Migrant Interviewees by Sector:

Unemployed	9
Service	8
In Education/Training	7
Professional	5
Call-Centre	2
Retail	2
Construction	1
Religious	1
Manufacturing	1
Total	**36**

1.2 English Language Proficiency

The research team interviewed migrants with a substantial variance in English language ability. Many migrants could speak fluent English and so did not regard language as a barrier to accessing employment or education. However, even those with a high standard of English acknowledged that proficiency in the language is crucial if one is to increase their employment prospects. The interviewees with a lower standard of English found that this was often an impediment to them accessing employment and education. The first question often asked of a job applicant is "how is your English?" (Natalia, Estonia).

The requirements for English language vary depending on the type of employment. Many of the participants had worked in businesses where other staff had little or no English. This appears to occur most commonly in the construction industry and hotel/restaurant trades. In this instance it is often the responsibility of an employee with dual language skills to communicate to those who are less capable. Other sectors, including the professions and some service providers, require a higher standard of English and have devised ways which allow them to quickly ascertain a candidate's proficiency in the language. Many of the interviewees said that talking face-to-face with an employer was often a far more effective method of gaining employment than simply handing out CVs. This personal contact often assured the employer that the candidates English was of the required standard. Other interviewees applied for jobs where they had to take an English test as part of their application. One such person, who was quite confident in their level of English, was surprised not to achieve the required score: "I think it's a priority, it doesn't depend on your education or your ambition or anything…it depends on your language" (Malwina, Poland).

Almost all of the migrants interviewed professed a wish to improve their English. They viewed it as an essential requirement for accessing employment and for progressing in their chosen field of work. Working and interacting with native English speakers was regarded as a great method of improving language ability. However, some migrants did experience a certain anxiety when attempting to communicate with native English speakers. They were often reluctant to speak for fear of making errors or appearing foolish:

I could read and write but I couldn't speak that well. I had no self-esteem then in speaking so the first few months it was a challenge but I knew that until I start speaking, I won't move on. So, when I started to talk to people, suddenly everything came out (Magdalena, Poland).

Others who were interviewed spoke of occasions where customers or clients would lose patience with them if they had to repeat something they said. It was often the case that the migrant had difficulty understanding what was said because of the accent or speed with which it was said, rather than not understanding the words. While many of the interviewees had taken classes in order to improve their English, almost all of them stated that working and interacting with other English speakers was the most effective method of learning.

1.3 Racism/Discrimination

Racism and discrimination was a recurring theme during the interviews, particularly with African interviewees. Many of these interviewees had been living in Ireland for a number of years awaiting a decision on a claim for asylum. During this time they were not allowed to work, which many felt frustrating. Upon being granted refugee status, many of these people experienced further frustration when searching for employment or education.

Many of the African migrants found it difficult to come up with a reason for experiencing barriers other than their ethnic background. Although many of the interviewees stated that they felt they were discriminated against because of their skin colour or ethnicity, most agreed that this was a very difficult claim to prove. Some noted that they could 'feel' it. Others had tried to the point of exasperation to apply for work: "I want to work, but you apply and get loads of letters saying 'we are sorry, we are sorry'. They keep you on file and never call you back…If you don't employ people, if you don't give them a trial, you don't know what you're missing" (Winston, Nigeria).

Some of the interviewees recounted incidents which they felt proved they were being discriminated against because of their ethnic background. One man from Nigeria had applied for a position as a cleaner. He had all the necessary requirements which he was told were minimum criteria for the job: a safe pass, a car and a driving licence. His application was unsuccessful but he happened to know the person who did get the job. It was a female from Poland who had been in the country no more than three weeks, had no transport and no safe pass. The African man in question felt extremely aggrieved with this outcome, but felt there was little he could do about it. Other migrants told of occasions where they would apply for positions only to be told there were no vacancies. However, being frequent visitors to these businesses they were in a position to see that new staff did appear on a regular basis. One interviewee spoke of a prominent city-centre business which was known among the African community not to take CVs from Black people: "…they never take any 'Blacks' there. There are so many that have gone to that place to submit their CV…they don't even take it from you, they just tell you 'there's no job'" (George, Nigeria).

Similar problems were experienced with regard to education. It should be noted that, without exception, the migrants who had engaged in education or further training talked positively about the experience and felt they had not experienced racism

towards them by any of the staff, teachers or lecturers of the institutions they attended. Problems in relation to racism and discrimination most commonly occurred if the student had to spend some time on work experience. For example, a Nigerian man who was interviewed had taken a FAS course which had 18 students in the course. During the course, he and another African man found great difficulty gaining a placement for work experience, whereas the rest of the class were successful in a relatively short period of time. It was the opinion of this man that both of the African students encountered this difficulty solely because they were African.

1.3 Recognition of Qualifications

Many of the migrants we spoke to had come to Ireland with a qualification, skill or trade. Their intention was to begin a career in their chosen field in Ireland. However, it often proved difficult to get work or go on to further education on the basis of their previous learning. There were two primary reasons for this, which became evident during the research. Firstly, employers appeared to favour qualifications gained in Ireland more so than those obtained abroad: "When you're coming with qualifications from somewhere else…they really doubt you. They think low of you….Unless you go to college in Ireland and show them 'yes, I am able'" (Nurah, Somalia). Of the migrants interviewed who did possess a qualification, many of them found it necessary to continue with further study in Ireland in order to improve their job prospects. This proved to be extremely frustrating for many because they felt that the qualifications they had obtained were seen as inferior to an Irish qualification: "Our qualifications and experience are not taken seriously by employers…[who] at times prey more on our vulnerability without giving much thought to our stability and empowerment" (Robert, Zimbabwe).

Secondly, many of the interviewees spoke of problems of registering their qualifications with the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI)[1]. The biggest difficulty that migrants faced was that the whole process took too long. One man from Zimbabwe had to wait 8 months for the process to be completed. This obviously created a barrier for him in applying for positions he was qualified to undertake. The same interviewee voiced concerns about the manner in which the equivalent qualification is communicated. The equivalent qualification is detailed in a letter which is sent by the NQAI to the applicant. At the top of each letter, the following is written in italics: "The information provided below is advisory in nature. It is based on the award documentation presented by the applicant and does not make any representations regarding the authenticity of the documentation presented". He argued that if this is the first thing a prospective employer is going to read on an applicant's qualification then it is likely that they will treat the authenticity and equivalency of the qualification with a certain amount of suspicion.

The research found that there was a significant difference in the outcomes of people who had added to, or obtained, their qualifications in Ireland and those who came with qualifications from other countries. One man from Cameroon who came to Ireland through the asylum process typifies this experience. Having successfully obtained refugee status, he began to investigate ways in which he could use his

---

[1] The NQAI is a statutory body established in 2001. This body is charged with transferring international qualifications into an Irish equivalent.

qualification as a teacher, gained in Cameroon, in Ireland. Having registered with the Department of Education, he went on to complete a Higher Diploma which would allow him to teach in secondary schools. He further added to his skills by completing a Masters in computer science and multimedia. This man is now teaching in a number of schools in Cork city and feels this was only possible because he complemented his prior learning with more study in an Irish institution.

1.4 Access to Education

Many migrants, particularly those who have been granted refugee status or leave to remain on humanitarian grounds, wish to advance their education and/or skill level in order to increase their employability in Ireland. For some, it may simply be a case of complementing their skills in order to adapt to a profession in Ireland: "Irish accountancy techniques are a little bit different so I have to improve my skills" (Martha, Poland). In other instances, migrants enter the job market with a minimum level of skills and find it difficult to secure gainful employment. Thus, access to education is vital if this section of the community is to achieve genuine integration into Irish society.

One of the primary barriers to education for migrants is the effect their status has on their educational entitlement. Asylum seekers are prohibited from applying for full-time university courses unless they can pay their own fees. Further compounding this issue is the fact that the asylum seeker would have to pay international fees which are commonly three times greater than those for EU citizens. Migrants who have been granted leave to remain on the basis of an Irish-born child (IBC status) are not subject to the same rights as some who was granted refugee status. People with IBC status have no right to subsidised education. This financial barrier was encountered by a number of the interviewees. The net result was that they felt they were treated differently from people who were in apparently similar circumstances.

A number of the migrants who were interviewed also experienced difficulties with education due to a lack of information on the types and costs of courses available to them. Many of the interviewees were not aware of the implications for social welfare payments if one takes up full-time study[2]. For example, one Somali woman was forced to drop out of a course which she was six weeks into because her rent allowance was going to be stopped if she continued the course. Another interviewee had the perception that some educational institutions were purposely accepting migrants and giving them the impression that they were entitled to financial assistance. It subsequently transpired that the migrant would in fact be liable for the fees and would either have to pay them or drop out. The reason given by the interviewee for this kind of practice was an effort on the part of the educational institution to bolster its figures for registered students in order to receive more funding. While the veracity of this claim may be questionable, the important point to note is that this was a genuinely held perception of one of the interviewees.

A number of the EU Accession State migrants who were interviewed also engaged in further education and training. This group tended to opt for evening/part-time courses

---

[2] In general, students taking full-time education are not entitled to social welfare payments such as unemployment benefit or rent allowance.

which ran over a number of years. The difficulties experienced by this group were of a different nature than those outlined above. The most common difficulty was the struggle to work in full-time employment and study at the same time. The majority of people taking these courses are not eligible for any form of financial assistance. The need to work often inhibits their ability to devote adequate time to their studies. One interviewee noted a perceived irony in the fact that employers may often dismiss a migrant's qualifications as inferior while educational grant-awarding bodies will take them quite seriously. This interviewee felt that grant-awarding bodies would go to great lengths to establish the educational achievements of a migrant. The reason given was that if, for example, a person had already obtained a degree, they were not entitled to a grant thus allowing the awarding body to refuse to give the financial assistance.

1.5 Exploitation

While exploitation may not be considered a direct barrier to employment, it can be perceived as something which may inhibit one's progress in the workplace or their ability to secure stable employment. It must be noted that all of the interviewees had a legal right to work in this country and so were not being exploited on the basis of their legal status. A small number had entered the country illegally and worked without the necessary documentation for a short period. As one would expect, instances of exploitation tended to be concentrated in the low-skilled service sectors. However, there was evidence of exploitation of qualified trades people in the construction industry.

Exploitation most commonly takes the form of underpayment of wages or non-payment of entitlements such as holiday pay for example. Underpayment of wages is particularly prevalent in the construction industry. Rates of pay in this industry are set down in a Registered Employment Agreement (REA)[3]. One interviewee cited numerous instances of cases where both he and a number of his colleagues were paid just over half of what they should have been paid under the construction REA. His involvement with a trade union had brought him into contact with many who were being paid below the rates set in the REA. He suggests that the larger construction firms usually pay the correct rates and that it is often the smaller building firm or sub-contractor which is engaging in exploitation. It is thought one of the principal contributory factors to this situation appears to be the intense competition for contracts within the construction industry. This is further compounded by the recently well-publicised downturn in the Irish housing market which has a direct impact on the construction sector. The net result is that migrants are forced to accept the lower rates of pay in order to stay in employment. Furthermore, many are reticent to take action of underpayment of rates due to a fear of dismissal: "Life is very expensive, if they want to live and work, they have to be quiet" (Piotrek, Poland).

As mentioned above, exploitation tends to be concentrated within the low-skill service sectors. The most common grievances recounted during the research were underpayment of wages, non-payment of overtime and holidays, long working hours,

---

[3] A Registered Employment Agreement is one agreed by trade unions and business associations and sets legally-binding rates of pay for an industry. It is illegal to pay below these rates.

and failure on behalf of the employer to make PRSI[4] contributions. It should be noted that this research found that exploitation appears to occur more frequently among migrants whose English is poor. One Polish woman's experience captures all of the major instances of exploitation:

> No PRSI paid when I worked in ********…wage was too low when I worked in ********; eleven months working in an internet café and no PRSI paid….when I worked in the internet café my case ended up on the [Labour Inspector's] desk, I was so scared I would not get my maternity benefit because they were not paying my PRSI (Ania, Poland).

A small number of the interviewees appeared to be in a very distressed state with regard to their current employment but were either unwilling, or ensure of how, to take action.

The level of knowledge of rights and entitlements among migrants appears to contribute to the potential for them to be exploited. For example, workers in the catering sector are entitled to double pay for working on Sundays, as set down in a Joint Labour Committee (JLC) agreement[5]. A surprising number of interviewees who worked in this sector were not paid extra for working on Sundays. Furthermore, many of them were unaware of this entitlement. One interviewee became aware of this entitlement and took a case to the Rights Commissioner[6] in an attempt to recoup what he was owed. Cases brought to the Rights Commissioner are currently taking 6-9 months to be heard[7] which further compounds the difficulty for a migrant (or an indigenous worker for that matter) who has a legitimate grievance.

1.6 Employment Permits

The majority of migrants that were interviewed did not require a permit to work in Ireland. However, the small number who had work permits experienced great difficulties with the work permit application system. The requirement to renew the permit every year led to a lot of anxiety for this group. Recent reform of the work permit system[8] has seen an improvement to what many had regarded as a system tantamount to bonded labour (see literature review above). However, problems remain with the work-permit system.

---

[4] Pay-Related Social Insurance (PRSI) is a form of tax levied on both the employer and employee to which both make mandatory contributions. After a certain period of payment of PRSI, the employee is entitled free health care or social welfare should the need arise.

[5] Joint Labour Committee (JLC) agreements are similar to the aforementioned agreements on wages in the construction industry. Rates of pay are agreed between employers and trade unions. There are 19 JLC agreements covering a wide range of sectors including agricultural workers, contract cleaners, and hairdressers.

[6] The Rights Commissioner operates as a service to the Labour Relations Commission (LRC). Grievances involving small numbers of workers and which fall under specific legislation are heard by the Rights Commissioner.

[7] Source: Noel Murphy, General Secretary, Independent Workers Union.

[8] The Employment Permits Bill was passed in 2005. This bill effected changes in the work permit system, most notably the unsatisfactory situation whereby employers rather than employees held a migrant's work permit.

Obtaining a permit is dependent to a large degree on the salary of the prospective migrant. A salary of over €30,000 is required in most cases in order to be eligible[9]. Provision is made for migrants who will be paid less that this amount, but this is quite rare. This requirement precludes a great number of migrants from applying for a work permit. Furthermore, certain occupations are excluded from applying. The above appears to demonstrate that work permits are designed exclusively for professional people, or, at best, for people who can fill a role in which there is a skills shortage. Increasing the difficulty for migrants is the fact that one can only apply for a permanent permit after 5 years.

Apart from the institutional restrictions on employment permits, there are other factors which make it difficult for migrants to engage in employment based on an employment permit. One interviewee from India provided a perfect example of such a predicament. This man joined his wife in Ireland when she secured employment under a work permit. He is entitled to a spousal permit which generally means there are fewer restrictions on him than there would be for other migrants seeking employment. Regardless of the fact that he has both a law and commerce degree, this man has been unemployed since he arrived in Ireland over a year ago. He feels that the work permit system is hampering his employment opportunities for three reasons. First, even if one is successful in securing employment it still takes a minimum of 2 months for the permit to be issued. Many employers are thus not willing to wait for this. Second, many employers appear to be unsure of the different categories of permit available and ignorant of the work permit system in general. Many others are simply unwilling to negotiate the bureaucracy involved in processing a work permit application. Third, there is a significant cost related to applying for a work permit which is usually greater than €1,000 and must be paid each time the permit has to be renewed.

Aside from the difficulties of gaining a work permit, it also appears evident that a number of migrants who are employed on this basis feel they are treated differently to workers who do not require a work permit. One interviewee told of how his employers had threatened to deport anyone who engaged in any trade union activity. These were migrants who were allowed to take up employment on the basis of a student visa. Even if the employer had no intention of carrying out this threat it does highlight the fact that some unscrupulous employers may use a migrant's relative ignorance of Irish labour law to their own advantage. One employer that was interviewed as part of this research told of the anxiety felt by a number of his staff while they awaited the renewal of their permits. Another example of the feeling of inequality is the fact that those who are legally entitled to work in Ireland on a work permit must apply for visas if they wish to travel within Europe. One man from Bangladesh who has been here for 7 years on a work permit (and subsequently obtained residency based on an Irish-born child) described how he had to send the necessary documentation to the Passport Office so that he could obtain an Irish passport. He applied over 2 years ago and the issuing of the passport is still pending. During this period, holidays or travel abroad was complicated by the need for him to apply for visas for himself and his family and the further monetary costs that this entails. He was extremely frustrated with the tardiness of this process, particularly

---

[9] This type of permit is known as a Green Card. A person who applies for a permit on the basis of a salary which is below €30,000 must apply for a Work Permit (Source: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment).

because he felt he had contributed a lot to Ireland in his time here: "I have worked here for 7 years…I pay my tax. I work 7 days a week. I own my house. So why is it difficult for us to get a passport?" (Habib, Bangladesh).

1.7 Migrants with Limited Work Experience

A significant number of the people interviewed came to Ireland having recently acquired a qualification or accreditation of some kind from their home country or a third country. This was particularly true of migrants from the EU Accession States. There appeared to be an expectation among this group that they would find it relatively easy to secure employment in which they could use the skills they had acquired. Some did manage to enter employment in their chosen field, albeit after completing further education in Ireland. However, others found it considerably more difficult. More often than not this group were forced to accept employment in which they were not using their skills i.e. they were underemployed. The principal reason for this appears to be that employers place a good deal more emphasis on one's experience as opposed to their skill level.

Conclusion

From the experiences outlined above, it is evident that all migrants experience difficulties with regard to accessing employment and education to differing degrees. Proficiency in English is the one issue which can be said to act as a barrier to all migrants. The research found that those who arrive in Ireland with a good level of English are at an immediate advantage when searching for employment. Racism and discrimination in the Irish context seems to be concentrated on migrants from African countries. While most of the migrant interviewees could recount situations where they had been subjected to racial abuse, it was largely the African interviewees who felt that their ethnic background was their biggest obstacle when trying to secure employment. Instances of exploitation which arose during the course of the interviews tended to be concentrated within the construction and hotel/catering industries. The migrant workers in these sectors were often unwilling to take action against their employers because of a fear of losing their jobs, but also because they were unaware of how one would go about taking such action.

Access to education was hampered on a number of levels. Many interviewees were unaware or unsure of their rights and entitlements in terms of education in Ireland. This was especially true when it came to issues of social welfare entitlements while studying. Others found the financial costs were beyond their means or had difficulty in managing a full-time job while studying. The migrants who came to this country with qualifications were often frustrated by the fact that their qualifications were considered inferior to qualifications gained in Ireland. While a number of the interviewees attempted to circumvent this problem by undertaking further study in Ireland, this option was not available to everyone. The issue of employment permits, while not applicable to the majority of the interviewees, proved to be a major barrier for the ones it was applicable to. The bureaucracy, lengthy time period, and cost involved in the application process made these migrants a somewhat unattractive prospect for employers.

Chapter 2 – Primary Research: Views from Key Service Providers

Alan Egan and Paul Dunbar

2.1 Introduction

As discussed elsewhere in this document, information in this research on barriers which migrants encounter in accessing education, employment and enterprise is limited to Cork city and county. While migrants themselves, and employers, will be able to provide personal insights into these barriers, it is perhaps the people and organisations who provide services in these areas, and who interact with large numbers of migrants from different countries (and over extended time periods), who are in a strong position to comment on the overall issues that face migrants in seeking employment and education. Not only may these service providers have the greatest understanding of the issues and problems confronting migrants, they are also in a position to see the bigger picture. They may experience the constraints of government policy, particularly in relation to education. They are also uniquely positioned to give examples or specific instances which are symptomatic of a larger issue, such as exploitation at work for example.

In this chapter, the intention is to present a synopsis of the views and experience of these service providers. It should be noted that this is an interpretative, qualitative approach and that the views expressed here may not be representative of all service providers. However, the richness of the opinions gathered from a diverse group of service providers will help to provide an insight into this important area. Table 2.1 (below) details a breakdown of the service provider interviewees.

Table 2.1 – Service Provider Interviews, August/September 2007

Provider	Position	Education	Employment	Enterprise
Cork City Adult Guidance Service	Guidance Counsellor	✔		
FAS	Assistant Manager	✔	✔	
Kinsale Road Accommodation Centre	Education Coordinator	✔		
Ballyhoura Local Area Partnership	Community Development Officer	✔	✔	✔
University College Cork	Course Coordinator, Centre for Adult Continuing Education	✔		
Avondhu Development Group	Coordinator, Avondhu Integration Project	✔	✔	✔
Welcome English	Coordinator	✔		
Cork Institute of Technology	Senior Lecturer	✔		
Cois Tine	Director	✔	✔	✔
Colaiste Stiofain Naofa	Director, Adult Education Department	✔		
University College, Cork	Director of Access Programmes	✔		
Cork Institute of Technology	Lecturer, Community Education & Development	✔		
South Cork Enterprise Board	Chief Executive Officer			✔
Cork Centre for the Unemployed	Senior Information Officer	✔	✔	
Cork Institute of Technology	Head of Admissions	✔		
Cork City Local Employment Service	Mediator		✔	
Cork Enterprise Board	Assistant CEO			✔
Cork Chamber of Commerce	Chief Executive Officer		✔	✔
FAS	Eures Adviser		✔	
University College Cork	Mature Student Officer	✔		

| SIPTU | Branch Secretary | | ✔ | |
| Independent Workers Union (IWU) | General Secretary | | ✔ | |

2.2 Absence of Coherent Policies

National policies and the enforcement of rights-based issues in relation to migrant issues are still developing. As a result, there is considerable inconsistency with regard to the treatment of migrants by service providers. For example, in the area of education, where 'normal' entrance criteria are satisfied, one third-level institution may accept a migrant for a course while another may not. This is particularly true in relation to continuing adult education. Different education providers obtain information on eligibility, etc. from different sources – the basic information may be similar, but can lead to differing interpretations. Also, there is a lack of any coherent policy in relation to bringing migrants of all status through the education system from basic English classes to third-level qualification. There can be over-lapping between providers in some areas, and large gaps in others. Cooperation and coordination exists between local education providers but this is mostly personal and informal and is not part of any coherent planning process. It is clear that educational providers, by and large, strive to facilitate migrants at all levels, but the broader process is hampered by the absence of clear coordinated policies. For example, "VEC adult literacy budgets provide for both ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and non-ESOL courses with the result that individual VECs may differ from others in relation to the scope of ESOL courses provided (Education Coordinator, Kinsale Road Accommodation Centre citing: Irish Vocational Education Association, 2002)."

In relation to employment, partly as a result of the lack of coherent policies, investigations into exploitative practices take far too long, where they occur at all. Issues such as non-payment of holiday pay, low pay, remittance of tax/PRSI, etc. do arise – however, they are often not investigated. Also, employers may "tick all the diversity boxes, but the tea-room attitudes can be extremely negative" (Coordinator – Avondhu Integration Project). Overall, the chronic shortage of labour inspectors causes serious problems and cases brought to the Rights Commissioner may now "take up to nine months to be resolved" (Senior Information Officer, Cork Centre for the Unemployed). The result leads to fear and distrust among migrant communities and those who may have overcome significant trauma in their quest for leave to stay and to work in Ireland often "find themselves re-traumatised all over again" (Director, Cois Tine). There is little evidence of exploitation in unionised employment, and it is ironic that trade unions can only deal with complaints from their own members, leaving migrant workers in non-unionised employment even more isolated. Multi-nationals were said to provide the best examples of good practice, while indigenous Irish employers are the worst offenders, most notably in the hotel, catering and construction sectors (Branch Secretary, SIPTU; General Secretary, Independent Workers Union).

Observations have been made about the apparent absence of migrant workers in the Irish public service as being another example of the lack of coherent policies. One

interviewee stated that the public sector is "not really measuring up when it comes to employing people from non-Irish backgrounds… if you go into any government building or public office… you don't find non-Irish people working there we believe they are not putting their shoulder to the wheel" (Branch Secretary, SIPTU). It was considered that employers are dependent on migrant workers – indeed, recent levels of economic growth may not have been achievable without this injection of labour – however, some employers appear to deliberately seek out migrant workers because their wage expectations are lower and they are less aware of their rights (Mediator, Cork City Local Employment Service). Policies exist in this regard, but there is a lack of coherence. It is unclear as to how well versed employers are, and there appears to be a lack of urgency in coordinating and enforcing existing policies and regulations.

Funding of providers is another area which leads to uncertainty. Funding comes from various sources: the state, the EU, charitable donations. Service providers often have to compete for funding. In this regard, projects may often be funded for a limited period only, leading to uncertainty within the providing organisation and problems for migrants if or when funding comes to an end.

Overall, migrants flounder and are open to exploitation in this environment of uncertainty or non-enforcement. It is clear from this research that service providers are both willing and anxious to positively assist migrants in the areas of education, employment and enterprise. However, their efforts are frustrated by the absence of clear national policies. This frustration was accurately captured by an interviewee who stated that "there is no one place to go for information … there is a need for a more joined-up approach to avoid people falling through the cracks" (Guidance Counsellor, Cork City Adult Guidance Service).

2.3 English Language Proficiency

All service providers identify language as a significant barrier either to entry or progression in the areas of education, employment and enterprise. English proficiency classes are provided by a wide range of statutory, voluntary and private organisations – however, the levels and standards vary widely, as can the capacity for learning. There can be wide differences between "conversational English and written English" (Course Coordinator, Centre for Adult Continuing Education, UCC) and between "everyday English and technical English" (Assistant Manager, FAS). Nonetheless, the demand for English classes is high, and many support or campaigning organisations have been forced to provide their own classes in order to meet this growing demand. Welcome English, who run language courses in Cork City, have seen attendance at classes increase by more than 1,200% over the past six years, and they still have to put people on waiting lists due to lack of resources. Applications from migrants to the Centre for Adult Continuing Education in UCC used to account for 5% of all applications – now the figure can be closer to 60% for some courses. "The number of migrants seeking ESOL courses nationally has grown from approximately 3,000 to 10,000, between 2002 and 2005 while those seeking non-ESOL courses has remained static at approximately 26,000 during the same period yet I am not aware of specific or ring-fenced budgets to cater for the increase in demand for ESOL nationally" (Education Coordinator, Kinsale Road Accommodation Centre citing: *"Need for immediate dialogue and planning to realise the goals set out in national policy for*

adult literacy", Stewart, J., NALA Spring Journal, 2007). "The services are swamped … and asylum-seekers and refugees sometimes get the worst of the services" (Director, Cois Tine). The increase in demand is a source of concern to many education providers, both in terms of funding, admittance criteria, a possible need for multi-lingual services, etc.

Higher level education providers are already experiencing difficulties arising from English language difficulties. This can lead to what can be interpreted as plagiarism – not because migrants set out to cheat, but simply because they want to survive in the course. This gives rise to issues of social justice, and lecturers can be torn between the individual needs of the student and the need to protect the integrity of the qualification. Such situations cause barriers both for migrants and for providers. A topical question among third-level education providers is whether students should be informed that all lectures, notes, tutorials, texts, exams, etc. will be in English and that proficiency in this language is the student's personal responsibility, or whether they should seek to provide far more support, either through additional tutoring or through other languages. Also, some colleges are reluctantly considering the introduction of more stringent entry testing, including written tests and/or interviews in order to assess the applicant's ability to engage with the course.

Lack of conversational or everyday English is often the first barrier that migrants encounter. Classes are usually provided for asylum-seekers through accommodation centres, but these remain at a basic level. There is a strong view among service providers that these should and could be improved and extended – "why not allow them access to a good education system while they are in limbo? … asylum-seeking is a development issue as much as it is a migration issue" (Education Coordinator, Kinsale Road Accommodation Centre). Migrants seeking work also experience barriers at this level, particularly when it comes to proving their competency in specialist areas. In both the work and education arenas, the need moves from conversational/everyday to written and technical competency. Application forms are not a reliable assessment guide for providers as they can never be sure whether the form was completed by the applicant himself/herself. Indeed, many providers offer assistance to migrants with application forms, etc.

Proficiency in the English language remains a significant barrier both in terms of basic communication, at each level of education, and in the workplace. Provision of basic, intermediate, advanced and specialised 'technical' English classes remains a priority. At present, these are provided on an ad hoc, 'needs-must' basis by a variety of providers and to a variety of standards. The experience and future progression of individual migrants in the areas of education or work may depend on which provider, if any, they encounter. Mr. Conor Lenihan, T.D., the Minister of State with special responsibility for Integration Policy, has recently indicated that English proficiency will be a requirement for gaining Irish residency or citizenship in the future (Drivetime, RTE: September 11th, 2007). Also, at the launch of the research document *On Speaking Terms* (2007), The Immigrant Council of Ireland called for the Government to invest in a national programme of English language courses for migrants. This research with service providers in the Cork area strongly endorses this need.

2.4 Personal & Family Issues

Service providers are in a unique position to see the bigger picture in relation to migrants, as they deal with a broad spectrum of people of varying status, nationality, background, etc. over extended time periods. In this regard, they are aware of hidden barriers to education and work which arise from personal, family and financial issues.

Certain types of work, such as construction work, shift work, care work, etc. mean long hours leading to tiredness which diminish their motivation to attend classes, complete assignments, etc. Also, childcare responsibilities act as a barrier to education or work, especially for women. Other factors include low wages, transport costs, etc. "Consider the difficulties facing a migrant family where their children are kept back at school, or are targets for bullying, where the woman has to stay at home and is isolated from the community, and the husband is earning the minimum wage, or less" (Community Development Officer, Ballyhoura Local Area Partnership). Such situations may lead to fear, distrust, weariness, loneliness, stress and depression, and all of these create hidden barriers to education and progress in work. There is little official recognition of these barriers and "policy-makers need to understand what it means to be Polish or African or any other minority nationality in Ireland today" (Director, Adult Education Centre, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa).

2.5 Cultural Understanding

Another barrier, both for migrants and service providers, can be the lack of cultural understanding. Service providers are aware of the difficulties caused on both sides. Migrants to Ireland may or may not be aware of what is and what is not acceptable in Irish society and so they sometimes unwittingly cause additional problems for themselves – and their fellow migrants – by, for example, refusing to deal with women. They may sometimes assume that the procedures, processes and customs prevalent in their home countries are the same in Ireland and this can lead to difficulties. For example, asylum-seekers "… are supplied with a booklet setting out the rules for the accommodation centre, but they are not supplied with any information for engaging with Irish society" (Education Coordinator, Kinsale Road Accommodation Centre). Service providers are at pains to point out that they do not subscribe to assimilation theories, and that positive integration can be helped enormously by greater awareness and understanding – on both sides. Some service providers stated that some migrants seem to believe bullying of staff or claiming that staff members are being racist may enable them to gain access to a course or to have documents stamped where, in fact, they would not have such entitlement.

Equally, there is a belief that service provider staff members (particularly in organisations which deal with the entire community) need on-going training in relation to cultural issues surrounding migrants, nationality and status. In certain situations, service provider staff members may be reluctant to deal with difficult issues for fear of causing upset or crossing cultural boundaries. Such cultural issues can run very deep – for example, an African refugee working as a security guard believes, despite being highly qualified, that he cannot aspire to a higher-skill job in Ireland because somebody in his homeland had put a curse or a voodoo spell on him – and he is aware of this because it was revealed to him in a dream. Most cultural barriers may not be as extreme as this example, but they do exist. In this respect, the

dominant belief is that "awareness and education is the key" (Education Coordinator, Kinsale Road Accommodation Centre) – on both sides – and "spiritual intervention is also very important" (Director, Cois Tine).

In relation to enterprise, the experience of the pilot Equal/Emerge programme highlighted the need to introduce migrant entrepreneurs to the idiosyncrasies of the Irish business culture, without which some of these enterprises may have encountered more difficulties.

Some service providers recommend that Cultural Studies programmes should be made freely available to all migrants of all status as soon as possible after they arrive in Ireland. This should not be compulsory – "I hate the words 'have to'" (Director, Adult Education Centre, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa) – but migrants should be informed and strongly encouraged to avail of such courses.

2.6 Inclusive Community Approach or Dedicated Specialist Approach

An aspect which emerged during the course of the interviews was the fact that different service providers adopt different approaches to migrant support. Some approach educational, work and other social issues on an inclusive, community basis – in other words, migrants are dealt with on the same basis as Irish citizens, many of whom also experience problems and barriers arising from class issues, social background, literacy, access to education, lack of training, disability, etc. These providers believe that this inclusive approach is the best way towards positive integration, and that services and support should be available to all members of the community:

> our service is community specific, not migrant specific … nobody fits all the boxes, every adult student may have some issue and our job is to identify the missing brick in the wall and fill the gap … a mixed, multi-cultural approach helps us all to grow together (Director, Adult Education Centre, Colaiste Stiofain Naofa)

Other providers believe that migrants face unique problems and need dedicated specialist support. In relation to work … "a lot of people have similar problems … those problems are added to if you are a migrant, more so if you're African" (Mediator, Cork City Local Employment Service). Certainly it seems that migrants fare worse than indigenous Irish workers in the areas of low pay, overtime pay, etc. This is not to say that all Irish workers are aware of their entitlements (because many are not), but migrants do experience more problems. With regard to education, some providers also believe that migrants face additional barriers, whether these are related to language, culture, personal issues, etc., and that these must be recognised … "education can change lives" (Senior Lecturer, CIT) … "let's give them every chance" (Coordinator, Welcome English)… "migrants need special attention … a positive approach is needed … we must educate at the human level and avoid social distance" (Lecturer, Community Education & Development, CIT). These providers are not suggesting an exclusive approach – rather that the additional needs of migrants should be recognised and catered for within the broader frameworks. The Equal/Emerge programme also identifies this … "migrants do need special attention … they need more time, typically twice as long in the initial stage … migrants themselves identified that it was important to come into this programme first before moving into the broader business networks" (CEO, South Cork Enterprise Board).

Perhaps this difference in approach is not strictly speaking a barrier. The fact, however, is that this research did identify that two differing approaches are adopted by service providers in the Cork area. This is not to say that one is better than another – however, it could be a matter for further discussion. It is also perhaps indicative of the lack of central guidance on the bigger question of migration and integration.

2.7 Other Barriers

So far in this chapter, the intention has been to identify visible and hidden barriers for migrants in relation to education and work. In addition to those already discussed, other barriers do exist in certain areas.

2.7.1 *Recognition of Qualifications*

Most qualifications held by migrants are not immediately recognised in Ireland, and the approach seems to be 'if in doubt, assume the worst' (Assistant Manager, FAS). This approach creates barriers to entry to specific educational courses or to particular jobs and professions – basically, irrespective of qualifications and experience, migrants often have to start at the bottom. In the employment arena, this leads to significant underemployment of skills and/or underpayment for the work actually done. Applications to the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) "take too long … people don't bother any more … people find themselves in Catch 22 … just put up with it" (Senior Information Officer, Cork Centre for the Unemployed). As mentioned elsewhere in this report, this area continues to be a barrier to migrants' progress, both in terms of education and employment, which could ultimately be damaging to the economy. There are also suggestions that professional protectionism and institutional discrimination may be at play. Service providers see this as a very important area to be tackled.

2.7.2 *Education Fees*

Payment of fees for education, at all levels, does not arise for many migrants but is a major barrier for those to whom it applies. As stated elsewhere in this report, payment of fees is a particular problem for non-EU migrants and is a *de facto* barrier to participation for many (Warner, 2006: 22). The interviews with Cork-based service providers serve to emphatically reinforce this view.

2.7.3 *Enterprise*

The outlets among service providers to discuss and research entrepreneurial opportunities were limited. However, it seems clear that many migrants start up their own businesses (successfully) without reference to or guidance from institutional or voluntary service providers. The available evidence suggests that many migrants who cross national borders possess this entrepreneurial ability, and this is borne out by those providers who are directly or indirectly involved. While some migrants sought to "start a business because they couldn't get a job" (Assistant CEO, Cork Enterprise Board) or had "unrealistic expectations" (Director, Cois Tine), many of them have been very successful. The Equal/Emerge programme was established to encourage and develop this entrepreneurial capacity and many of the migrants who participated

(approximately 50% African, 50% East European) showed that they did indeed have considerable motivation, drive and the ability to succeed (CEO, South Cork Enterprise Board). The barrier here is that many migrants may not be aware of the support structures which exist.

2.7.4 *Race and Ethnicity*

This was not perceived as a major barrier by a majority of the service providers interviewed. Some saw discrimination as a "class issue rather than a race issue" (Coordinator – Avondhu Integration Project). Employers who exploit workers do so for economic rather than racial reasons. However, some racial discrimination or "cultural ignorance" does exist. In particular, many of those interviewed believe that "the level of ignorance in the broader community of the plight of migrants is astounding" (Course Coordinator, Centre for Adult Continuing Education, UCC). There is also considerable concern that, in the event of an economic downturn, migrants will become scapegoats.

Conclusion

The service providers in the Cork area are generally very aware, and very sympathetic, to the needs of migrants. They also acknowledge that barriers to education and work exist for certain sectors of the indigenous Irish population. However, additional barriers arise for most migrants. It seems evident that a clear, coherent policy is required in relation to education for migrants, spanning the entire spectrum from basic English classes to third-level degree. The absence of clarity leads to ambiguity which, in turn, creates barriers. In this regard, English language proficiency provides special challenges. Over-stretched and under-resourced organisations are all endeavouring to fill the need. Laudable as this is, the result is perhaps an unstructured *ad hoc* milieu which is uncoordinated, using different methods and applying different standards. The result is that there is a lack of consistency and large gaps in the services currently provided.

Issues exist around employment rights, especially for migrants. As long as rogue employers can act with impunity and escape punishment even when found to be guilty, they will continue to exploit migrant workers for their own gain. Skilled workers will remain underpaid and underemployed and, ultimately, this may be a serious issue for the economy. The barrier in this instance is lack of resources and non-enforcement of regulations.

Other hidden barriers have emerged. Personal, family, financial and cultural issues can all act as barriers to full and meaningful participation by migrants in the Irish education and work arenas. Two 'old chestnuts' continue to exist. It is not new to discover that barriers for migrants to education and work include payment of fees and recognition of qualifications. What is disappointing is that the service providers see no progress in tackling these issues, and that they remain as significant barriers.

Chapter 3 – Primary Analysis: The Employer's Perspective

Kate Moynihan and Paul Dunbar

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the experiences of fifteen employers that were interviewed for this research. As a research project concerned with gathering information on the difficulties migrants have in accessing and participating in the workplace, and to a certain extent education in the form of training, employers themselves have a valuable contribution to make by relating their experiences of employing migrant workers. Table 3.1 (below) shows the employers who participated, broken down by sector. Migrant workers tend to be concentrated within certain sectors of the economy, particularly the service and construction sectors. This concentration of migrants within certain sectors, as per the census 2006 data, was the basis for the breakdown of the employers that were interviewed. The majority of the migrants employed by these firms were from the EU Accession States. All employers expressed a positive attitude toward employing migrants. Through an analysis of the data provided by employers, the research found that there are four key areas of concern: language difficulties; difficulty in verifying qualifications and references; employment permit application process; and racism/discrimination.

Table 3.1 - Employer Breakdown by Sector

Sector	No.
Hotel/Restaurant	5
Construction	3
Recruitment Agencies	3
Manufacturing	2
Transport	1
Financial	1
Total	**15**

3.2 English Language

Without exception, employers spoke of English language proficiency being an area that is crucial to their interaction with migrants. On the whole, most employers found it relatively easy to gauge a person's level of English by simply speaking with them for a short period of time. Other employers set tests for prospective employees. The level of English required by the different employers varied depending on the area of business they were in and the role the employee played within the company.

Two of the three hotels interviewed required a basic level of English from all employees. Hotel A[1] only required English from employees who were interacting with the customers. The level of English spoken by an applicant was usually judged over the phone or at interview. Hotel B was considering introducing a basic English

---

[1] Employers will not be referred to by name. Reference will only be made to the type of business they are involved in.

test to assess proficiency. English classes have been provided by Hotel A, however, while initial uptake was good, numbers dwindled considerably after a time. The hotel in question seemed to be quite disappointed with this outcome, particularly because they had undertaken to pay for the classes themselves. Upon further questioning, the person interviewed suggested that a possible reason for the poor uptake of English classes was the fact that the classes were outside of regular working hours and that staff were simply too fatigued to partake. Another possible reason was that some of the staff may have had more than one job and so found it difficult to make time for the classes. Hotel C was also considering providing English classes but also appeared to be aware of the aforementioned problem of poor attendance.

The two restaurants interviewed suggested that a very good level of English is required by chefs and those interacting with customers. Only a basic knowledge is required by, for example, cleaning staff. The issue of being able to communicate with these members of staff is resolved through using another member of staff as an interpreter. One of the interviewees spoke of encouraging an English speaking environment: "If five people are on and four of them are Polish and one is Irish and everyone is speaking Polish then he or she will feel left out so we try to encourage speaking English" (Restaurant A). The experience of the construction firms was similar. Two of the construction firm interviewees stated that the level of English an employee requires depends on the position they have within the company. Professionals such as engineers and quantity surveyors need to be fluent in English while this is not an absolute necessity for ground staff as other members of staff are used to interpret: "Often there are lads there who speak varying degrees of English. They will act as go-betweens. It's difficult for sure for lads who come without any English" (Construction Firm A). The practice of selecting one or two employees to act as translating intermediaries between migrant staff and management appears to be quite common. While this may lead to issues where someone may assume a position of privilege or authority, it does appear to operate quite effectively. This assertion is also reaffirmed by some of the migrants who were interviewed who appeared to have no problems with this type of arrangement. Notably, one construction firm stated that it would not encourage one employee to act as a go-between because they did not wish to have a distinction between workers of the same rank.

Language difficulties can cause significant and potentially dangerous problems when it comes to issues of health and safety. Construction Firm B stated that all of their employees must, at the very least, be capable of understanding safety notices and warning signals. Further to this, Construction Firm A had taken the step of printing their safety notices in a number of different languages, most commonly Polish. The two recruitment agencies also require their applicants to have some level of English. Both see this as necessary for training and for health and safety:

> You may not need English to do the job but you'd have to have English to understand the job and understand health and safety regulations. If they're not understanding that then the employer is exposed (Recruitment Firm A).

The two manufacturing firms require their staff to have a high proficiency in English as it is the business language. Manufacturing Company A had no problem with their employees speaking their own language while on a break but asked them to speak English while in the working environment as this was causing a problem with some of the Irish workers who were feeling isolated. The financial services company requires

its entire staff to be fluent in English as communication is an important element of the employee's role. However, if an employee is having some trouble with grammar the company will provide English classes. Transport Company A requires its entire staff to have a good working knowledge of English. As part of the selection procedure, an aptitude test which includes writing a report in English is given. Some of those who are not successful when applying initially return after a few months having learned some English. Evident from the above is the fact that requirements for proficiency in English increase as the professionalism of the occupation increases. This may appear self-evident but should not be used as a rationale to deny migrants in low-skilled employment an opportunity to improve their language capabilities.

3.3 Verification of Qualifications and Experience

The three hotels stated that they hire staff based on experience rather than qualifications, but this did depend on the position available in the hotel. Hotel B suggests that they hire some staff based on qualifications but that experience is more important than formal education. Hotel C will employ people on the basis of qualifications but stated that 'attitude' is what is most important for them. This hotel tended to judge a person's attitude to work by giving them a trial period of up to a month. All three hotels described difficulties in verifying a migrant's references and experience. Most had circumvented this problem by using an existing member of staff who could speak the same language as the prospective employee to translate the references or telephone the previous employer.

Of the restaurants interviewed, Restaurant A prefers employees to have experience rather than qualifications. They will attempt to verify all references through e-mail or fax. Restaurant B will employ people bearing in mind qualifications and experience. They reported that they have never had a problem verifying a reference. Construction Firm C states that: "experience is more important than qualifications, it depends on the job obviously". Construction Firms A and B stated that a person's qualifications were more important to them than their experience. Qualifications are generally required for a professional position and both companies suggested that they would look for translations of these qualifications. Where there is difficulty verifying a qualification for a skilled worker Manufacturing Company A stated that sub-contractors would then employ an individual at an un-skilled level in order to assess the person's capability. Manufacturing Company B stated that they will ask another member of staff to translate a reference if necessary.

Recruitment Agency A suggested that the educational attainments and qualifications of many of its Eastern European applicants are not recognised here. This tended to cause significant problems for the migrant. While the person is seeking recertification they tend to find work at the semi-skilled or un-skilled level which is below their capabilities in terms of their skills set. Recruitment Agency B has had difficulty confirming that the qualification is what the person says it is:

> A lot of times it's difficult to recognise what they are. It's difficult to gauge them against our own. Sometimes you might get people, in translating their CV's into English misinterpreting what qualifications they themselves have, and telling you they have a degree when it might be a certificate (Recruitment Agency B).

The same agency prefers people to have experience in Ireland, in this way a reference can be obtained from a previous Irish employer. The understandable confusion with regard to the authenticity of a migrant's qualifications appears to feed into a general feeling among employers that qualifications gained in Ireland are more favourable to those obtained abroad.

Some of the employers interviewed had greater access to resources which allowed them to fully verify a migrant's credentials. For example, one of the manufacturing firms was a large multinational and was able to call on branches of its operations around the world to assist in the verification process. One of the recruitment firms had a similar mechanism in place whereby they would use branches of their operations abroad to verify a migrant's credentials. The transport and finance companies also had access to resources which would allow them to do this.

Even though most employers endeavoured to fully verify a person's experience and qualifications in order to give them as good a chance of successfully gaining employment as any other candidate, it appears that this is often not possible. As noted above, many employers would use a staff member who could speak the same language as a referee in order to confirm the reference was genuine. However, this was commonly only possible if the language was common among the migrant population in Ireland e.g. Polish or French. If a migrant comes from a country which has few migrants already living and working in Ireland, the chances of them being able to verify their references are severely diminished.

3.4 Employment Permits

Of the businesses who have currently, or have in the past, employed people on the basis of an employment permit, the overwhelming majority of them had major difficulties with the system. One of the employers relied heavily on staff with employment permits because of a specific facility they offer which can only be practiced by trained professionals, most commonly found in India. Thus, all of these staff had to be resourced in India and their permits arranged for them. The employer stated that, while the process was straightforward, it took far too long for the permits to be approved. This was found to be the case both when initially applying for the permit and when applying for a renewal. This employer stated that the permits frequently took 17-18 weeks to process, and in addition would frequently be late arriving. This was causing considerable anxiety among some staff members who were unsure if their permit would be renewed.

Some of the other employers stated that they would prefer to avoid the bureaucracy of the employment permit application system and simply hire people who did not require a permit. Restaurant A stated that it was involved in a niche type of cuisine and that many of the staff it would require for this type of catering would have to come from abroad. The employer in this instance was hampered by the fact that none of these staff would earn more than €30,000[2] per year. This meant that the employer had to prove to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment that this staff member

---

[2] Persons applying for an employment permit generally need to be earning a salary above €30,000. Migrants earning below this figure are entitled to apply for a permit but only in a limited number of cases.

was indeed necessary to their operation due to a specific skill they possessed. This particular employer found that the application would often be turned down in the first instance, only to be approved upon an appeal. This employer also raised the issue of the expense of the permits which cost €500 for a 6 month permit and €1,500 for a 24 month period.

Manufacturing Firm A described the process of applying for a work permit as being "a nightmare". Difficulties making contact by telephone and e-mail are some of problems they have encountered. The interviewee also highlighted the difficulties faced by migrants involved in this process:

> If I'm having that problem as an employer getting through to the Department, what [problems] are the migrants having. It's very, very hard for the immigrants trying to get through...It's very demoralising (Manufacturing Firm A)

The finance company that was interviewed also stated that the whole application process took too long. They cited incidents in which people successfully secure a position only to later realise the length of time it takes the employment permit to be processed:

> some people have handed in their notice...they end up without a salary for two or three months. And these are people with good jobs coming from where they are...there is no actual certainty as to when you can say 'you can join us now' (Finance Firm A)

A number of the businesses who were interviewed stated that they had no problems with the employment permit system. Recruitment Agency B suggested that if it meant securing the right person for their client then they were willing to complete the process. However, on the evidence presented above it seems clear that most employers do encounter significant difficulties with the work permit system as it currently stands. Many of the employers may wish to hire migrants on this basis, but the fact that the whole application process is costly, both in terms of money and time, may dissuade many from attempting to hire such a migrant.

3.5 Racism/Discrimination

Instances of racism/discrimination which emerged during the interviews with employers tended to emanate from their customers or client base. The interviewees from the hotel sector all noted an increase in complaints of a racist nature from their clientele. These complaints would generally arise if a customer found it difficult to communicate with an employee. Hotel C recounted an incident where a customer had treated a migrant member of staff abusively and threatened to have them deported. The hotel in question took the matter very seriously and barred the customer from the premises until a full apology was made.

Recruitment Agencies A and B reported incidents of clients contacting them and specifically stating that they did not want staff of a particular nationality. If this situation ever arose the agency informed the client that they cannot discriminate on the basis of nationality. Recruitment Agency A also highlighted cases where candidates felt they were discriminated against because they were a particular nationality:

over the years we've received a couple of complaints from our candidates saying that they have been victimised because they are from a particular nationality. It came from the African community more than anything else. This seemed to happen at a time when there was a lot of negative media, press, particularly in local papers (Recruitment Agency A).

The transport company also spoke of incidents where customers would enquire as to why there were so few Irish people working for them, when in fact migrants in no way constituted a majority within their operations.

With regard to anti-racism policies in the workplace, most employers appear to have included these policies in the broader context of their equal opportunities policies. Some companies were quite proactive in this area, with the transport company participating in Anti-Racism Week.

Conclusion

The data reported here offers an insight into the difficulties experienced by employers who wish to hire foreign nationals in the Cork region. Many of the businesses who were interviewed for this research had a substantial number of migrants as a percentage of their workforce[3]. It appears evident from the data collected that many employers, particularly those in sectors which may have a labour shortage, are extremely keen to hire migrants. However, their efforts to hire migrants can often be hampered for a variety of reasons. Proficiency in English is of paramount importance for most employers. Most of the interviewees spoke of the crucial importance of being able to communicate with their staff, both in terms of efficiency of operations and health and safety.

Verification of qualifications and experience also presents a major obstacle for employers, many of whom may be unfamiliar with hiring migrants. Some of the businesses interviewed were fortunate enough to be able to draw on sister operations in other countries in order to assist in this regard. However, this is the exception rather than the rule. It is clear that Irish employers feel more confident hiring a migrant if that migrant has gained work experience in Ireland. Difficulties obtaining employment permits for migrants was an issue which recurred throughout the research. Many of the employers saw the application process as inordinately lengthy and it appeared to be something which would discourage them from employing a migrant who would require a work permit. A substantial number of the interviewees, particularly those in the service sector, spoke of complaints of a racist nature from their customers/clients. It should be noted that the employers who were interviewed viewed these complaints extremely negatively and sought to distance themselves from such customers/clients. However, it is reasonable to suspect that complaints of this nature do have an impact on some employers' hiring policy with regard to migrants.

---

[3] Some of the hotels which were interviewed stated that almost 50% of their staff were foreign nationals.

Concluding Remarks

From the experiences of migrants, service providers, and employers presented above, it is evident that migrants face substantial barriers when attempting to access employment and education. These barriers may arise naturally e.g. problems with language, cultural difficulties; or the barriers may be manufactured e.g. employment permits, difficulties recognising a qualification obtained in another country. What is clear is that most, if not all, of these problems are surmountable if the correct measures are employed and the will is there to deliver on them.

Among the 3 groups interviewed, proficiency in English was without doubt the most important issue. Migrants were aware that they were at a disadvantage if their English was poor. Some migrants were able to secure employment where English was not a priority. However, undertaking further education or training is practically impossible unless one has a good grasp of the language. This was confirmed by some of the educational institutions that were interviewed who noted that an increasing number of migrants are experiencing difficulties because of an inability to understand course material or submit assignments to the required standard. The inability to understand English also has ramifications for a migrant's understanding of their rights and entitlements, and can, in some cases, leave them open to exploitation.

Language difficulties are often presented as 'natural' barriers for migrants. While this may be the case, there is still much that can be done to reduce this barrier. As highlighted in chapter 2, Ireland lacks a system of coherent policies targeted at migrants with the objective of enabling them to improve their English. However, as noted in the literature review on education (page ?) the Government is currently reviewing English language tuition with a view to developing a national policy in this area. This is a welcome development and it is hoped that this review will consider the needs of all migrants.

The absence of coherent policies in relation to English language tuition is symptomatic of a general lack of coherence with regard to a wide-range of policies which have an impact on migrants. Exploitation of migrant workers continues to be present in the Irish workplace, while many employers can avoid prosecution and financial penalties if found to be in the wrong. Considerable gaps and overlaps exist in terms of service provision, and where cooperation exists between service providers, it is largely informal and not the result of any coordinated policy. Provision of accurate information was also an issue which arose for all three groups and is again indicative of a lack of coherence.

The issue of employment permits was raised by both the migrant and employer interviewees. On the basis of the experiences of both groups, it is quite clear that the application system represents a barrier to both employers and employees.

Racism and discrimination represents a significant problem for many of the migrants who were interviewed. As noted in chapter 1, this appears to be experienced mostly by the African migrants. While it is difficult to definitively prove a person was turned down for a job because of their ethnic background, the sheer number of interviewees who considered this to be a major obstacle to employment demonstrates that it is indeed an issue which requires urgent attention.

There are numerous barriers to education which limit a migrant's ability to improve their employability. Asylum seekers are denied access to most full-time courses unless they can raise the funds personally. In addition to this, their being citizens of a non-EU country means the fees they would have to pay are considerably greater than those paid by someone from the EU. The asylum seekers who were interviewed for this research all expressed a wish to undertake study and improve their chances of securing gainful employment should they be granted asylum.

The migrants who had undertaken further study in Ireland appeared to fare better in the labour market in terms of securing gainful employment. This highlights the urgent requirement to make further training and education more widely available and accessible for migrants. Further to this, it is evident that many migrants are unsure, or unaware, of the educational opportunities which are currently available to them. This shortcoming also requires attention.

During the course of this research, a number of the migrant interviewees highlighted the fact that Ireland was entering a critical period in terms of how it integrates the 'New Irish'. Following a sustained period of inward migration in the past 10 years as a result of the 'Celtic Tiger' economic boom, a substantial proportion of the Irish population is constituted of migrants. Many of these people have settled in Ireland and begun to raise families. The crucial importance of achieving genuine integration with these 'New Irish' appears to have been recognised only relatively recently, evidenced by the creation of a new post within Government of Minister of State with special responsibility for Integration Policy. The migrant participants who had children expressed a hope that their offspring would enjoy a prosperous life in Ireland and feel part of the communities in which they lived. The reduction and dismantling of the barriers which have been outlined in this research is crucial if Ireland is to achieve this type of society.

Key Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following are the recommendations of the research group:

Education
- A comprehensive, coherent education plan for migrants is essential
- Establishment of a forum for all education providers in the Cork area to identify over-laps and gaps, to agree standards in relation to English classes, and to ascertain what 'sandwich courses' or 'bridging classes' are required for migrants.
- Development of database systems within education/training institutes to monitor their performance in relation to migrant access and participation.
- A follow-up system in all educational and training institutions to ascertain how migrants fare after completion of courses in terms of employment or further education.
- Increase access to education for all asylum seekers.
- Increase awareness among migrants of the implications for social welfare payments should they undertake full-time education.
- Afford migrants with Irish-born Child (IBC) status the same rights and entitlements as refugees and people with leave to remain.
- Additional resources need to be directed towards programmes which assist the most vulnerable migrants to access education. This is particularly true for those migrants which came through the asylum process.
- The anomaly whereby some migrants must pay international fees for education must be addressed.

Employment
- Educated and highly-skilled migrants have the potential to contribute to the development of a 'knowledge-based' economy rather than just in area of unskilled labour. Methods should be devised whereby migrants who arrive in Ireland with qualifications may easily adapt these qualifications to suit the Irish labour market. This will avoid the situation whereby highly-skilled migrants are being underemployed and in low-skill labour.
- Offer increased training and education opportunities for migrants who may be low-skilled which will allow them to secure gainful employment.
- Address the under-representation of migrants within the public sector and civil service institutions.
- Additional resources need to be directed towards those migrants who, for whatever reason, find themselves in long-term unemployment.

English Language
- Standards and guidelines for English proficiency classes at all levels are needed, including a national accreditation system for qualified providers and adequate funding to deliver a programme to agreed standards.
- There is a need for a comprehensive strategic plan at both national and local levels on the provision of English language. This plan needs to take into account new realities in terms of needs, resources and funding.

- Investigate ways in which employers can provide English classes to their staff members. It was evident from the experiences of some employers who provided English classes that staff were largely unwilling to partake in these classes outside of working hours. There should be incentives for migrants to improve their English.
- Increase the provision of English language tuition available to migrants in order to satisfy the current high demand.
- In relation to education, provide additional resources for students who may be experiencing difficulties related to their understanding of the language.

Recognition of Qualifications
- Resistance to licensing people with foreign trade or professional qualifications must be addressed.
- Acceleration of the process which matches a migrant's qualifications with existing FETAC and HETAC qualifications.
- The manner in which this qualification is communicated to an employer may lead to uncertainty on the part of the employer with regard to the legitimacy of the qualification. It is recommended that the communication be conducted in such a way as to eliminate this uncertainty.
- Some of the interviewees were unaware of the facility offered by the NQAI. It is recommended that information regarding this service be more widely disseminated among the groups who would be likely to use it.

Exploitation
- Increase the number of Labour Inspectors within the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.
- Greater enforcement of existing employment regulations and legislation.
- Reduce the period of time it takes for a case to be heard by the Labour Relations Commission or the Rights Commissioners.
- Impose penalties on employers who are found to have exploited workers which are commensurate with the level of exploitation.
- Increase awareness among the migrant population with regard to their rights and entitlements at work e.g. correct rates of pay, overtime payments.

Racism/Discrimination
- Some of the migrants interviewed were unaware of the Equality Authority and the work it does in investigating cases of discrimination. It is recommended that awareness of this facility should be heightened in order to provide migrants the opportunity to challenge cases in which they feel they have been discriminated against on the basis of their race or religion.
- It is recommended that a nationwide educational campaign be initiated which would increase awareness of minority ethnic groups among the indigenous population and tackle racism.

Employment Permits
- Reduce the length of time it takes to apply for an employment permit.
- Apart from a limited number of occupations, employment permits are generally only available to persons earning more than €30,000 per year. If this

figure was lowered it would permit greater access for migrants to the Irish labour market.

- Investigate ways in which the application process can be made more transparent.
- Reduce the costs incurred by employers when applying for employment permits.
- Increase awareness among employers of the various types of employment permit available.
- Remove the requirement for a permit for the spouse/dependent of a person in Ireland already on a permit.

Bibliography

Access Ireland (2005) *Disparate Dublin Women: Learning from a Women's Intercultural Training and Integration Project*. Dublin: Access Ireland.

Advisory Board for Naturalisation and Integration Scotland (2007) *Welcoming New Scots*, Report of the Conference held at Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow, 19th June.

Albrechts, L., Denayer, W. (2000) *Communicative planning, emancipatory politics and postmodernism* in Paddison, R. (ed.), *Handbook of Urban Studies*, London: Sage, 367-384.

Anderson, B. (2003) 'Just Another Job? The Commodification of Domestic Labor,' in Ehrenreich, B., Hochschild, A. R. (eds.), *Global Woman. Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, London: Granta Books, 86 – 103.

Area Development Management Limited (2002) *Strategies to Promote the Inclusion of Refugees and Asylum Seekers*. Dublin: Area Development Management Limited for the National Development Plan.

Balibar, E. (2002) *Politics and the Other Scene*, London: Verso.

Barrett, A., Bergin A., Duffy, D (2006) "The Labour Market Characteristics and Labour Market Impacts of Immigrants in Ireland." *The Economic and Social Review,* 37, no. 1 (1-26).

Bauder, H. (2002), 'Neighbourhood Effects and Cultural Exclusion,' *Urban Studies*, 39, 85-94.

Bauman, Z. (1998) *Globalization. The Human Consequences*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Better, S. (2002) *Institutional Racism. A Primer on Theory and Strategies for Social Change*, Oxford: Rowman.

Borjas, G. (1999) *Heaven's Door. Immigration Policy and the American Economy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (2000) "The production of Belief: Contribution to an Economy of Symbolic Goods," in Miles M., Hall, T., Barden, I., (eds.), *The City Cultures Reader*, London, Routledge, 102-119.

Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L. (1992) *Invitation to reflexive sociology*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bruff, I (2007) *The role of I.T. migrants working in Ireland: the uneasy and unstable relationship between skills shortages and career choices.* Prague: migrationonline.cz

Brunkhorst, H. (2005) *Solidarity. From Civic Friendship to a Global Legal Community*, Cambridge MA: Cambridge UP.

Butler, J. (1991) *Entrepreneurship and Self-Help among Black Americans. A Reconsideration of Race and Economics*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

Castells, M. (1980) "Multinational Capital, National States, and Local Communities," IURD Working Paper, Berkeley: University of California.

Castells, M. (1991) *Informational City. Information, Technology, Economic Restructuring and the Urban-Regional Process*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Castles, S. and Davidson, A. (2000) *Citizenship and Migration. Globalization and the Politics of Belonging*, London: MacMillan Press.

Central Statistics Office (2003) *Measuring Ireland's Progress. Vol.1, 2003 – Indicators Report*, www.cso.ie

Central Statistics Office (2005) *EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC)*, www.cso.ie

Champion, T. (2001) "Urbanization, Suburbanization, Counterurbanization and Reurbanization," in Paddison, R. (ed.), *Handbook of Urban Studies*, London: Sage, 143-161.

Cohen, R. (2006) *Migration and its Enemies. Global Capital, Migrant Labour and the Nation State*, London: Ashgate.

Communities Economies Collective (2001) *Enabling Ethical Economies: Cooperativism and Class*, Cambridge, MA: CEC.

Cotter, G. (2005) *A Guide to Published Research on Refugees, Asylum-Seekers and Immigrants in Ireland*, Dublin: Integrating Ireland.

Coughlan, D. et al (2005) *International Students and Professionals in Ireland: An Analysis of Access to Higher Education and Recognition of Professional Qualificaions*. Dublin: Integrating Ireland.

Dant, T. (1999) *Material Culture in the Social World. Values, Activities, Lifestyles*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Darden, J.T. (2001) "Race Relations in the City," in: Paddison, R. (ed.), *Handbook of Urban Studies*, 177-193, London: Sage.

Davis, M. (2000) *Magical Urbanism. Latinos Reinvent the U.S. City*, London: Verso.

Denayer, W. and O'Tuama, S. (2008) *Social Exclusion and Informal Employment as a Survival Strategy of Immigrants in Deprived Neighbourhoods of Cork City. Pilot Study Results*, UCC, Dept. of Government and Cork City Council.

Department of Education and Science (2000) *Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Science (2007) "Minister Lenihan announces Language Policy Campaign for Adult Immigrants – Minister welcomes opportunity for submissions from public". Press Release, 19 July.

——— (2002) *Promoting Anti-Racism and Interculturalism in Education - Draft Recommendations Towards a National Action Plan*. Dublin: Department of Education and Science.

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (2005) *Planning for Diversity - the National Action Plan against Racism, 2005-2008*. Dublin: DJELR.

Department of the Taoiseach (2006) *Towards 2016: Ten-Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006-2015*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Ecotec, (2005) *The Metropolitan City: Seeking Competitive Advantage through Local Actions to Integrate Immigrants and Minority Groups*, Birmingham: Ecotec.

Equality Authority (2006) *Equality in VET? Promoting equality and accommodating diversity in vocational education, training & labour market programmes*: *Proceedings of the Joint Conference of the Equality Authority and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, June 8th 2005*. Dublin: Equality Authority.

Equality Authority and National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (2002) *Analytical Study on Education EUMC RAXEN3*. Dublin: EUMC.

Equality Review Team to the Higher Education Authority (2004) *Report of the High Level Group on University Equality Policies*. Dublin: HEA.

European Commission (1996) *Employment in Europe*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Commission.

EU DG of Employment and Social Affairs (2003) *EU Social Agenda*, Luxembourg: DGESA.

Fanning, B. (2003) 'Social inclusion and immigration: migrants and ethnic minorities within the Revised Anti-Poverty Strategy', paper presented at the Irish Social Policy Association 'Changing Social Policies' Annual Conference, Sept. 2003, *www.ispa.ie*.

Fields, A. (2003) *Rethinking Human Rights for the New Millennium*, New York: McMillan.

Foner, N. (2000) *From Ellis Island to JFK. New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration*, New York: Russell Sage.

Fraser, N. and Honneth, A. (2003) *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*, London: Verso.

Further Education and Training Awards Council (2007) *Recognition of Prior Learning Pilot Project: Evaluation Report 2007*. Dublin: FETAC.

Gilbert, N. (2004) *Transformation of the Welfare State. The Silent Surrender of Public Responsibility*, Oxford: Oxford UP.

Gold, S.J. (2001) "Gender, Class, and Networks: Social Structure and Migration Patterns among Transnational Israelis," *Global Networks*, 1,1, 19-40.

Gold, S.J. and Light, I. (2000) "Ethnic Economies and Social Policy," *Research in Social Movement, Conflicts and Change*, 22, 165-191.

Grant, C. A. (1998) *Multicultural Research: A Reflective Engagement with Race, Class, Gender and Sexual Orientation*, New York: Routledge.

Guarnizo, L.E., Portes, A., Haller, W. (2003) "Assimilation and Transnationalism: Determinants of Transnational Political Action among Contemporary Migrants", *American Journal of Sociology*, 22, 367-396.

Halkett, G., and Michael, L. (2005) *The Big Picture: Materials and Resources for ESOL Tutors*. 2 vols. Dublin: National Adult Literacy Agency.

Hamnett, C. (2001) "Social Segregation and Social Polarization," in Paddison, R. (ed.), *Handbook of Urban Studies*, London: Sage, 162-176.

Healy, C. (2007) *On Speaking Terms: Introductory and Language Programmes for Migrants in Ireland*. Dublin: Immigrant Council of Ireland.

Higher Education Authority (2004) *Achieving Equity of Access to Higher Education in Ireland: Action Plan 2005-2007*. Dublin: National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education.

——— (2007) *National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education Annual Report 2006 and Outline Plans 2007*. Dublin: National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education.

Higher Education Equality Unit (2002) *Creating an Intercultural Campus*. Cork: HEEU.

Holt-Jensen, (2000) "Evaluating housing and neighbourhood initiatives to improve the quality of life in deprived urban areas," *GeoJournal*, 51, 281-291.

Houses of the Oireachtas, Joint Committee on Education and Science (2004) "The Provision of Educational Services in a Multi-Ethnic/Multicultural Society."

Hughes, I., Clancy, P., Harris, C., Beetham, D. (eds.) (2007) *Power to the people? Assessing*

Democracy in Ireland, Tasc: Dublin.

Idele, (2004) *The Metropolitan City: Seeking Competitive Advantage through Local Actions to Integrate Immigrants and Minority Groups*, Thematic Report, Birmingham: ECOTEC

Integrate Ireland Language and Training (2007) *Annual Activities Report 2006*. Dublin: IILT.

———— (2001) *European Language Portfolio/Portfolio Européen Des Langues: Reception 1: Learning the Language of the Host Community*. Dublin: Council of Europe.

———— (2003) *Anseo: English for Living in Ireland*. Dublin: IILT.

Irish Vocational Education Association (2005) *Pilot Framework for Educational Provision in the Vocational Education Sector for Migrant Workers with English Language Needs. Vol. IV - English Language Provision for Migrant Workers*. Dublin: IVEA Working Group.

Kelleher, P. and Kelleher C. (2004) *Voices of Immigrants: The Challenges of Inclusion.* Dublin: Immigrant Council of Ireland.
Kelly, O. (2003) *An Analysis of the Irish Response to the Growing Number of Asylum Applications with particular reference to Policing, Citizenship, Work and Racism*, unpublished MA thesis, UCC, Dept. Food Business and Development.

Keogh, A. F. and Whyte, J. (2003) *Getting On: The experiences and aspirations of immigrant students in second level schools linked to the Trinity Access Programmes*. Dublin: The Children's Research Centre, Trinity College.

Kenny, Catherine (2003) *Handbook on Immigrants' Rights and Entitlements in Ireland*. Dublin: Immigrant Council of Ireland.

Klein, N. (2007) *The Shock doctrine. The rise of disaster capitalism*, London: Penguin.

Kloosterman, R.C. (1996) "Double Dutch: polarisation trends in Amsterdam and Rotterdam after 1980", *Regional Studies*, 30/5, 467-89.

Komter, A. (1996) "Reciprocity as a principle of exclusion: gift giving in the Netherlands", *Sociology*, 30/2, 299-316.

Lazardis, G. and Koumandraki, M. (2003) "Survival Ethnic Entrepreneurs in Greece: A Mosaic of Informal and Formal Business Activities," *Sociological Research Online*, 8/2.

Lenihan, C. *Interview on 'Drivetime', RTE Radio*. September 11th, 2007.

Lentin, R. (ed.) *Working and Teaching in a Multicultural University* (Conference Proceedings) Trinity College Dublin, 2003.

Lentin, R. and McVeigh, R. (2006) *After optimism? Ireland, racism and globalisation*, Dublin: Metro Eireann Publications.

Lesovitch, Louise (2005) *Roma Educational Needs in Ireland: Context and Challenges*. Dublin: City of Dublin VEC, Pavee Point Travellers Centre and the Roma Support Group.

Lin, N. (2001) *Social Capital. A Theory of Social Structure and Action*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lin, N. (1999) "Building a Network Theory of Social Capital," *Connections* 22, 28-51.

Little, D. (2000) *Meeting the Language Needs of Refugees in Ireland*, RLSU Occasional Papers No. 1. Dublin: University of Dublin Trinity College Refugee Language Support Unit.

Locke, D. C. (1998) *Multicultural Understanding: A Comprehensive Model*, London: Sage.

Lowry, H. (2006) *Realising Integration: Creating the Conditions for Economic, Social, Political and Cultural Inclusion of Migrant Workers and their Families in Ireland*. Dublin: Migrant Rights Centre Ireland.

Mac Einri, P. (2006) "Migration in Ireland: A Changing Reality," in: Healy, S. Reynolds, B., Collins, M. (eds.), *Social Policy in Ireland. Principles, Practice and Problems*, Dublin: Liffey Press, 357-384.

MacÉinrí, P. and Walley, P. (2003) *Labour Migration into Ireland: Study and Recommendations on Employment Permits, Working Conditions, Family Reunification and the Integration of Migrant Workers in Ireland*. Dublin: Immigrant Council of Ireland.

Mayor of London (2002) *Missed Opportunities. A skills audit of refugee women in London from the teaching, nursing and medical professions*, Mayor of London and Refugee Women's Association, London: Greater London Authority.

McVeigh, R., Lentin, R. (2002) "Situated racisms: A theoretical introduction," in: Lentin, R., McVeigh, R., *Racism and Anti-Racism in Ireland*, Belfast: Beyond the Pale, 1 – 48.

Mingione, E. (1991) *Fragmented Societies: A Sociology of Economic Life Beyond the Market Paradigm*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Mingione, E. (1996) 'Urban poverty in the advanced industrial world: concepts, analysis and debates' in Mingione, E. (ed.), *Urban Poverty and the Underclass*, Oxford: Blackwell, 8-27.

Minns, C. (2005) *Immigration Policy and the Skills of Irish Immigrants: Evidence and Implications*. Paper presented at the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland, 24 February.

Modood, T. (2004) "Capitals, Ethnic Identity and Educational Qualifications," *Cultural Trends*, 13, 2, 87-105.

Modood, T. (2007) *Multiculturalism*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Mouritsen, P. (2003) "A Critique of Putnam's Conception of Social Capital," *Political Theory*, 23, 157 – 181.

National Adult Literacy Agency (2003) *English for Speakers of Other Languages: Policy Guidelines and Supports for V.E.C. Adult Literacy Schemes*. Dublin: National Adult Literacy Agency.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2005) *Intercultural Education in the Post-Primary School*. Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

——— (2005) *Intercultural Education in the Primary School*. Dublin: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

National Economic and Social Council (2006) *NESC Strategy 2006: People, Productivity and Purpose*. Dublin: NESC.

——— (2006) *Migration Policy*. NESC Report No. 115. Dublin: National Economic & Social Development Office.

National Economic and Social Council and International Organization for Migration (2006) *Managing Migration in Ireland: A Social and Economic Analysis*. NESC Report No. 116. Dublin.

NCB Stockbrokers (2006) *2020 Vision: Ireland's Demographic Dividend*. Dublin: NCB Stockbrokers.

Ní Mhurchú, A. (2007) *Recognition of Professional Qualifications: An analysis of the role of professional bodies*. Dublin: Integrating Ireland.

Nolan, B. and Whelan, C. T. (1999) *Loading the Dice? A study of Cumulative Disadvantage*, Dublin: Oak Tree Press.

NQAI (2004) *National Policy Approach to the Recognition of International Awards in Ireland*. Dublin: NQAI.

O'Brien, S. and O'Faithaigh, M. (2007) *Learning Partnerships for Social Inclusion. Exploring Lifelong Learning Contexts, Issues and Approaches*, Cork: New Oak Press.

OECD (2007) *Education at a Glance 2007: OECD Indicators*. Paris: OECD.

O'Grady, 2008, "Europe vs. the Superrich," *The Independent*, March, 4.

Okin Moller, S. (2004) "The Family: Gender and Justice," in Clayton, M., Williams, A. (eds.), *Social Justice*, London: Blackwell, 203 – 218.

Ostram, E. and Ahn, K. (2003) *Foundations of Social Capital*, Cheltenham: Elgar.

Paddison, R. (2001) "Communities in the City," in Paddison, R. (ed.), *Handbook of Urban Studies*, London: Sage, 194-205.

Paxton, P. (1999) "Is Social Capital declining in the United States? A Multiple Indicator Assessment," *American Journal of Sociology*, 105, 88-127.

Pedro, J. and De Azevedo, W. (2006) 'An Investigation of the Labour Market Earnings in Deprived Areas: Evaluating the Sources of Earning Differentials in the Slums,' in: Guba-Khasnobis, B., Kanbur, R. (eds.), *Informal Labour Markets and Development*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 89 – 108.

Phillimore, J. et al (2007) *Employability pathways: An Integrated Approach to Recognising the Skills and Experiences of New Migrants*, University of Birmingham, Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, working paper.

Polanyi, K. (1944) *The Great Transformation*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Portes, A. (2003) "Theoretical Convergencies and Empirical Evidence in the Study of Immigrant Transnationalism," *International Migration Review*, 37, 872-890.

Portes, A. (1994) 'The informal economy and its paradoxes' in Smelser, N., Sedberg, R. (eds.), *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Preston, V., McLafferty, S. and Liu, X. (1998) 'Geographical Barriers to Employment for American-born and Immigrant Workers,' *Urban Studies*, 35, 3, pp. 529-545.

Putnam, R., Leonardi, N. and Nannetti, P. (1993) *Making Democracy Work*, Princeton NJ, Princeton Univeristy Press.

Putnam, R. (2000) *Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York: Simon and Schuster.

QE5 Ltd. (2004) *Training Needs Assessment of Adult Resettled Refugees in Ireland*. Dublin: MORE Project.

Quinn, E. (2005) *Migration and Asylum in Ireland: Summary of Legislation, Case Law and Policy Measures and Directory of Organisations, Researchers and Research*. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute & European Migration Network.

——— (2006) *Policy Analysis Report on Asylum and Migration: Ireland Mid-2004 to 2005*. Dublin: European Commission DGJFS and DJELR Ireland.

Reitz, J.G. (2004) 'Immigration and Canadian Nation-Building in the Transition to a Knowledge Economy,' in Cornelius, J., Hollifield, J, Martin, P. (eds.), *Controlling Immigration. A Global Perspective*, Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Rutter, J. (1999) *Refugee Children in the UK*, Berkshire: Open University Press.

Sassen, S. (1991) *Global Cities. New York, London, Tokyo*, New York: Russell.

Sassen, S. (1996) 'Service employment regimes and the new inequality,' in: Mingione, E. (ed.) *Urban Poverty and the Underclass*, Oxford: Blackwell, 32-47.

Sassen, S. (1999) *Guests and Aliens*, New York: New Press.

Sassen, S. (2003) 'Global Cities and Survival Circuits,' in Ehrenreich, B., Hochschild, A. R. (eds.), *Global Woman. Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, London: Granta Books, 254-274.

Schlepper, A. (2004) "'They don't really want to know us': experiences and perceptions of international students at the Dublin Institute of Technology", *Level 3*, Issue 2.

Shanahan, M. (2006) *Skills in Ireland. Reflections Paper for National Skills Conference*. Farmleigh, 26 October.

Small, M.L. and Newman, K. (2001) "Urban Poverty After *The Truly Disadvantaged*: The Rediscovery of the Family, the Neighborhood, and Culture," *Annu. Rev. Sociol*. 27, 23-45.

Smith, D. M. (2005) *On the Margins of Inclusion. Changing Labour Markets and Social Exlcusion in London*, Bristol: Policy Press.

Smyth, K., and Whyte, J. (2005) *Making a New Life in Ireland: Lone Refugee and Asylum-Seeking Mothers and their Children*. Dublin: Trinity College Dublin Children's Research Centre and Vincentian Refugee Centre.

Sommerville, P. (2000) *Social Relations and Social Exclusion. Rethinking Political Economy*, London, New York: Routledge.

Stewart, J. (2006) *CDVEC Education Plan, 2006-2011*. Dublin: City of Dublin Vocation Education Committee.

Stiglitz, J. (2004) *Globalization and its Discontents*, New York: Penguin.

Townsend, A.R. (1997) *Making a living in Europe. The Human geography of 'economic' change*, London: Routledge.

Van Hear, N. (1998) *New Diasporas. The mass exodus, dispersal and regrouping of migrant communities*, London: ULC Press.

Ward, T. (2002) *Asylum Seekers in Adult Education: A Study of Language and Literacy Needs*. Dublin: City of Dublin VEC & County Dublin VEC.

——— (2004) *Education and Language Needs of Separated Children*. Dublin: CDVEC.

——— (2001) *Immigration and Residency in Ireland*. Dublin: City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee.

——— (2003) *Immigration and Residency in Ireland: An Overview for Education Providers*. Dublin: City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee in association with County Dublin VEC.

——— (2003) "City of Dublin VEC, County Dublin VEC, Dún Laoghaire VEC, the British Refugee Council and London Language and Literacy Unit International Seminar on ESOL for Asylum Seekers." Dublin 2003.

Warner, R. (2006) *Barriers to Access to Further & Higher Education for Non-EU Nationals Resident in Ireland*. Dublin: Pobal.

Watt, P. and McGaughey F. (2006) *How Public Authorities Provide Services to Minority Ethnic Groups*. Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Scotland. Emerging Findings Discussion Paper. Dublin: NCCRI.

Wilson, W. (1987) *The Truly Disadvantaged. The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wilson, W. (1996) *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*, New York: Knopf.

Woolcock, M. (1998) "Social capital and economic development: Toward a theoretical synthesis and policy framework," *Theory and Society*, 27, 2, 151-208.

Zhou, M. (2004) "Revisiting Ethnic Entrepreneurship: Convergencies, Controversies and Conceptual Advancements," *International Migration Review*, 38,3, 1040-1074.

Zhou, M. (1992) *Chinatown. The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Appendix

Migrant Participant Interview Questions

General/Personal Information

- Establish the person's nationality and age.
- Status (i.e. EU citizen, work permit, green card, undocumented).
- Establish the interviewee's job history, including experience outside of Ireland.
- Education/Skills/Qualifications obtained.
- Interviewee's proficiency in English language.
- How long did it take you to find work?
- What is your family status/What are your care responsibilities?
- Have you participated in any training in connection with your job?
- Do you intend to stay in Ireland?

Language

If Employed
- Is proficiency in English an essential requirement for your job?
- Do language difficulties cause problems in your work place? If so, what is the nature of these problems? E.g. Are there problems with customers/clients/other staff members?
- Do you speak your native language with other colleagues? Does this ever present problems?
- Is language an issue in relation to application forms/interviews?
- Would you benefit from a greater level of English proficiency in your type of work? Would you/Have you ever taken classes in English?
- Are there colleagues at your workplace who act as translators for management and staff when there are language difficulties? Does this cause problems?

If Unemployed
- Does a lack of English prevent you from being employed?
- When do these problems arise? When filling out applications, during interviews?
- Would you take English classes if they were available?

Qualifications

If Employed
- Do you use your qualifications/skills in your job?
- Were you hired on the basis of these qualifications/skills?
- Are these qualifications/skills necessary for this type of work?
- Do you have problems getting the qualifications/skills gained in your home country recognised here? What is the nature of these problems?
- Do you experience difficulties proving your qualifications/skill level? What is the nature of these difficulties?

- Do you feel you are underemployed at work i.e. are your skills not being utilised?

If Unemployed
- Do you have problems getting the qualifications/skills gained in your home country recognised here? What is the nature of these problems?
- Do you experience difficulties proving your qualifications/skill level? What is the nature of these difficulties?

Experience

If Employed
- Was it necessary to have experience for your current job?
- Was your experience gained in Ireland/Your home country/or a third country?
- Did you experience problems trying to prove your experience when applying for jobs? What problems arose?
- If you only have experience from your home country, did this make it more difficult to find employment? Why?
- Did you experience problems with references? What are these problems? (e.g. language, location)

If Unemployed
- Was your experience gained in Ireland/Your home country/or a third country?
- Do you experience problems trying to prove your experience when applying for jobs? What is the nature of these problems?
- If you only have experience from your home country, does this make it more difficult to find employment? Why?
- Do you experience problems with references? What are these problems? (e.g. language, location)

Permits/Visas (If Applicable)

- Have you experienced any difficulties with the permit system? What is the nature of these problems?
- Do you/Did you experience difficulties in relation to obtaining a PPS number?

Discrimination/Racism

- Have you ever encountered racism/discrimination in your workplace/when looking for work e.g. racist remarks, bullying?
- Have you witnessed racism/discrimination against yourself or a colleague? Does this come from other colleagues or from customers/clients?
- Did you/Do you find it difficult to access employment because of your nationality/ethnicity?
- Are you treated equally at work in relation to your Irish colleagues?

Migrant Worker Rights and Entitlements

- How familiar are you with your right/entitlements in terms of Irish labour law e.g. holiday pay entitlements, working hours, overtime, weekend/night work.

- Who would you consult if you were unsure of such an issue?
- Do you experience problems in accessing information on these issues?
- Have there been any grievances/industrial disputes at your work concerning migrant workers?

Experiences in Current Workplace

- Have you had to overcome barriers at work?
- Do you think your job helps you integrate into Irish society? Does it alienate you?
- What suggestions would you make to reduce the barriers to work and education for migrants?
- Do you offer anything unique to your workplace?
- Have you sought/gained promotion within your workplace?

Service Provider Interview Questions

General

- What service do you provide?
- Are there many migrants using your service? (Percentage)

Education

Applications/Admissions and Fees

- Do you encounter difficulties in relation to applications from migrants? What is the nature of these problems?
- Is the payment of fees a problem for migrant students relative to Irish students?
- Are there difficulties obtaining the necessary application documents from migrants e.g. birth certificates, qualifications documents?
- Is there ever confusion regarding a migrant's entitlements to education?
- Who would you consult if you were unsure of an issue?

Language

- Is proficiency in English necessary for the courses/training you provide?
- What problems arise when you have a service user whose English is not sufficient for the course/training? (E.g. difficulties with assignments, inability to understand lecturers/instructors)
- Do you require an English test as a prerequisite for entry to courses?
- Do you provide English lessons as part of your courses?

Qualifications

- Do you experience difficulties in verifying a migrant's qualification/skill level? What is the nature of these difficulties? E.g. language, distance.
- Are there any regions from which qualifications are more difficult to verify?

Finding Work Experience

- Do you run any programmes that require students to engage in work experience?
- To your knowledge, do migrants experience difficulties finding suitable work placement? If so, why do you think this is the case?
- In your view, is there anything that can be done to make it easier for employers to take people on for work experience?

Information

- How familiar are you with the rights and entitlements of migrants with regard to education in Ireland?

- Where would you go to seek information on these issues?
- How would you describe the usefulness of this information?

Employment

Discrimination/Racism

- Do you deal with migrants who experience discrimination/racism/exploitation in their employment or when seeking employment?
- Are there any sectors in which you feel there is a significant level of discrimination or exploitation?
- What are the most common grievances brought to you by migrants in relation to these issues? E.g. overtime/holiday pay issues, pay rates as per wage agreements/Joint Labour Committee (JLC) agreements.

Qualifications/Experience

- Do you deal with migrants who feel they are being underemployed or are unable to access work relative to their skill level?
- What are the principle barriers in this regard? E.g. qualifications recognition, verification of experience?
- What support/assistance can you provide in such circumstances?

Information

- Do you provide advice on migrant's rights and entitlements in the workplace?
- How would you describe the level of knowledge among the migrant community of these rights?
- Can more be done to increase awareness around these issues? Example?

Employer Participant Interview Questions

General

- What is the nature of your business?
- What percentage of your staff is drawn from the migrant community?
- Where are the majority of these migrants from?
- Do you receive many applications for positions from migrants?
- When did you begin to hire migrants? (if applicable)

Language

- Is proficiency in English an essential requirement for your business?
- Is a lack of English among your migrant staff a problem? If so, How?
- Do language difficulties cause problems in the work place? If so, what is the nature of these problems? E.g. Are there problems with customers/clients? Problems communicating with other staff members?
- Do your migrant staff speak amongst themselves in their native language? If so, is this a problem?
- Is language an issue in relation to application forms/interviews?
- Would your business benefit from a greater level of English proficiency among your migrant staff? How do you feel this could be achieved?
- Do you have certain migrant staff who act as go-betweens for management and other migrant staff when there are language difficulties? Do problems arise because of this?
- Would you hire people specifically because of a language they may know other than English?

Qualifications

- Do you employ migrants on the basis of their qualifications/skills?
- Are these qualifications/skills necessary for this type of work?
- Is it a problem that qualifications/skills gained in another country do not have a recognised equivalent here?
- Have you experienced difficulties in trying to verify a person's qualifications/skill level?
- Do you employ people whose skills are not being utilised in your type of work i.e. are they underemployed?

Experience

- Do you require that candidates for jobs have a minimum level of experience for the role?
- Do you experience problems trying to verify a person's experience if you are considering them for a position? What is the nature of these problems?
- Would the fact that a person only has experience in their home country/country other than Ireland be a deterrent in employing them?
- Do you experience problems verifying references?

- What is more important for your type of business, qualifications or experience?

Permits/Visas

- Have you attempted to or do you employ anybody on the basis of a work permit/green card?
- Have you experienced any difficulties with this system? What is the nature of these difficulties?
- Do you receive many job applications from persons seeking employment on the basis of a work permit?
- Do you think that the current work permit system is adequate?
- Do you receive applications from people who are not eligible to work in Ireland?
- Do you experience difficulties in relation to migrants obtaining PPS numbers?

Discrimination/Racism

- Have you ever encountered problems of a racist nature in your workplace e.g. racist remarks, bullying?
- Have you encountered racism against any of your employees from customers/clients?
- Do you have an anti-racism policy within your workplace?