



The lives of nine year old migrant children in Ireland

Philip Curry
Robbie Gilligan
Mark Ward

Migration into Ireland



- Relatively sudden, extremely diverse, very unevenly distributed.
- Barrett, Bergin and Duffy (2006) - migrants to Ireland on average a highly educated group – with fuller data, Barrett and Kelly (2008) found the same.

Child migrants to Ireland



- Census 2006 recorded 52,500 foreign nationals under the age of 15.
- 28,695 from EU countries.
- 7,647 from Africa, 5,497 from Asia and 4,612 from America.

Research on child migrants in Ireland



- Predominately qualitative:
 - *Dympna Devine and colleagues (2002, 2011)*
 - *Ni Laoire, Bushin, Carpena-Mendez and White (2009)*
 - *Smyth, Darmody, McGinnity and Byrne (2009)*
 - *Curry, Gilligan, Garrett and Scholtz (2011)*
- Relevant quantitative studies with adults or with narrow regional focus:
 - *Smyth, Darmody, McGinnity and Byrne (2009)*
 - *Fanning, Haase and O'Boyle (2011)*

Aim of this analysis

- Other than Census, GUI is first national data on migrant children in Ireland.
- Broad description of nine-year old migrant children similar to that produced for entire cohort.



Defining migrant children



- Number of options for classification.
- Need to avoid small cell sizes for ethical and statistical reasons.
- Statistical rather than conceptual definition.

Defining migrant children 2



- Country of birth of primary caregiver our key variable.
- Classified as ‘migrant’ if both parents born somewhere other than Ireland. One parent if single parent.
- Conservative approach in that a number of migrant children will not be classified as such.

Sample



	Frequency
'Old Irish'	7838
<i>UK</i>	244
Migrant	479
Total	8561

UK migrants excluded from analysis presented today

Migrant children (n=479)



Region

Western Europe (non-UK)	77
Latin America, Caribbean and North America	27
Middle East, North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa	147
East Europe and Central Asia	121
East Asia and Pacific and South Asia	107

Gender

Boys	235
Girls	244

Household

Single Parent 1 or 2 children	46
Single Parent 3 or more children	40
Couple 1 or 2 children	187
Couple 3 or more children	206

Household social class

Professional	225
Other non-manual / Skilled manual	142
Semi-skilled / Unskilled manual	68

Equivalent income

Lowest income group	132
2 nd	103
3 rd	72
4 th	64
Highest income group	66

Today's presentation



- Broad national characterization of migrant children in Ireland.
- Focus on areas that lend themselves to relatively clear-cut conclusions and are especially important for migrant children.
- All tables following show weighted percentages.

Selected issues

1. Education
2. Peer relationships
3. Bullying



1. Education



Positive attitude to school and education

	'Old Irish'	Migrant
Always like school	25.8	39.2
Always look forward to school	24.1	43.5
Always like teacher	51.9	69.1
Always likes maths	46.9	54.4
Always likes reading	58.1	58.8
Always likes Irish	22.2	27.1

High parental expectations



“Oh my Da ... want me to be – do you know those people that they – they’re on the TV and they showed the money ... like the money increases or it decreases, the amount of money in China.”

– *Romanian boy, Sixth class*

- Migrant children have positive attitudes to school and education and their parents have high aspirations for them but ...

Less hands-on parental involvement



	'Old Irish'	Migrant
Read aloud from childrens storybook	96.0	89.9
Read and fill out forms	97.3	91.5
Always or regularly provides help with homework	73.0	56.2
More than 30 books in home	56.8	43.1

Poorer attendance and homework completion



	'Old Irish'	Migrant
Mean days absent	6.2	8.3
Homework always or almost always completed	73.1	59.6

Greater risk of attending disadvantaged school



	'Old Irish'	Migrant
DEIS Urban band 1	8.3	12.6
DEIS Urban band 2	5.6	10.9
Rural DEIS	4.2	2.2
Non-disadvantaged	82.0	74.3

2. Peer relationships



Mother's report:

	'Old Irish'	Migrant
None	1.9	3.5
One	6.0	12.7
Two or three	40.9	43.2
Four or five	33.8	24.1
Six or more	17.4	16.4

Few migrant children with no friends but friendship groups tend to be smaller.

No measure of cross-cultural friendships.

3. Bullying



- Small difference in rate of bullying reported by Irish (39.6%) and migrant (43.3%) children.
- Little difference in type of bullying experienced (physical, verbal, exclusion etc.).
- However there *may* be differences in reasons reported for bullying...

Reasons for bullying



- Arranged in order of frequency in overall sample
- Based on report of primary caregiver

“But I didn’t have any fun [*on my first day*] because everyone was bullying me, that’s because I was brown.”

-7 year old Girl from Nigeria

Child migrants to Ireland



1. Will to do well

- Enthusiastic about education
- Family encourage them in this
- Children are ‘signed up’ to migration venture
- In many respects comparable to other children

2. Barriers to doing well

- Greater risk of attending disadvantaged school
- Lack of parental involvement in education
- Poorer school attendance and homework completion
- Racism and bullying
- Social isolation?

Limits of secondary analysis



- Issues may exist which are not covered:
 - Cross-cultural peer interaction
 - The role of ethnicity in bullying
 - Experience of racism
 - Differences in academic systems and expectations
 - Academic performance
 - Language proficiency

Implications



- Great deal of positive energy to be utilized.
- Cannot assume it will remain that way.
- Help overcoming barriers to doing well:
 - Pro-active measures to tackle racism and bullying
 - Measures to provide information, language and other support for educational progress in face of adversity



Quotations from:

Curry, P., Gilligan, R., Garratt, L.,
Scholtz, J., (2011) *Where to From
Here? Inter-ethnic Relations among
Children in Ireland*, Dublin, Liffey Press.

www.theliffeypress.com



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Children, Migration and Diversity Project
School of Social Work and Social Policy, TCD
Children's Research Centre, TCD

<http://www.tcd.ie/immigration/community>