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A ‘Céad Míle Fáilte’ for EU Citizens? Differential experiences based on citizenship status

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Abstract

Citizenship is a status by which individuals attain membership of a nation. Various rights and obligations are associated with citizenship, to the exclusion of those who do not enjoy this status. Discussions on citizenship are often closely linked with migration and debate about who should be entitled to the benefit of membership of the state. European citizens who are living in Ireland long term enjoy many of the rights of Irish citizens; however, there are areas where they have limited rights, especially since the 2004 citizenship referendum. This research assesses what differences are experienced by European Citizens as a direct result of their citizenship status, and how these experiences impact on them. Clear differences emerged between the experiences of those from ‘Old Europe’ compared with people from the New Member States (NMS).

Keywords: Citizenship; immigration; European Union; Ireland

Introduction

Marshall (1964, p. 84) defined citizenship as a ‘status bestowed on those who are full members of a community’; his idea of citizenship included civil, political and social aspects. Traditionally, citizenship in Ireland was based on the idea of a homogenous group, with shared culture, beliefs, language and identity, and with a precise geographical boundary (Considine & Dukelow, 2009, p. 372). Entitlement to Irish Citizenship was based on the principle of *Jus Soli*⁵; however, following the Citizenship Referendum 2004, entitlement to Irish Citizenship is now primarily based on the principle of *Jus Sanguinis*⁶. The referendum was a response by the Irish Government, to both internal and external pressures; the passing of this referendum had knock-on effects for all those residing in Ireland who do not have Irish citizenship status. Currently, European Union (EU) citizens have the right to live and work in Ireland; however, other freedoms and rights are restricted, for example EU citizens may vote at European and local elections only (Citizens Information, 2011a). It is difficult to obtain specific information in relation to EU Citizens’ rights within Irish society, and how this impacts on their lives. Information is more readily available for non-European Economic Area (EEA⁷) citizens, both in terms of research done, and on rights and entitlements. For example, The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Services (INIS) focuses predominantly on non EEA citizens. In the 2011 CSO figures, 8.5% of the population living in Ireland (excluding Irish citizens) were EU citizens (Central Statistics Office, 2012).

Methodology

The aim of this research was to assess what differences are experienced by European Citizens (who are long term residents in Ireland⁸, but do not go through the naturalisation process to become Irish Citizens) as a direct result of their citizenship status, and how these experiences impact on them. This research was conducted through an interpretive paradigm, in that it consisted of small scale research, which

⁵ *Jus Soli* means citizenship entitlement is based on being born within the territory or land of the state,; under the Belfast Agreement 1998, the right to citizenship was extended to include the six counties of Northern Ireland (Department of the Taoiseach, 2010).

⁶ *Jus Sanguinis* means the right to citizenship through the bloodline, or descent.

⁷ The EEA consists of EU 27 member states, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey (European Environment Agency, 2012).

⁸ 5 years is the minimum time required to be eligible to be considered a permanent resident (Citizens Information, 2011b).

focused on the views and experiences of people in the context of their citizenship. Interpretive research is guided by a ‘search for understanding’, and this understanding is often contextual (Willis, 2007, pp. 188-192).

Initially secondary research was undertaken in the form of a literature review, to gather background information on the issues that may affect the target group⁹, and to identify any gaps in the subject that the researcher needed to be conscious of (Hart, 1998). In order to generate the sample, the researcher sought EU Citizens who are living in Kerry as participants¹⁰; accessing participants either through people known to them¹¹, or by calling to businesses in Kerry that tend to have EU citizen employees or members¹². This purposive sampling is ideal where participants in the study are selected based on a specific characteristic; as such the numbers available for study may be small (Punch, 2006; May, 2003, p. 95). Following these interviews, the researcher then asked these initial participants if they knew others who met the criteria, who would be willing to be interviewed. Noy (2008) highlights how this method of ‘snowball sampling’ therefore relies on social networks as a way of accessing participants for a study or research. A semi structured interview process was employed which enabled the researcher to guide the direction of the interview, through open ended questions (Willis, 2007; Esterberg, 2002).

Literature Review

Citizenship is a status by which individuals attain membership of a nation. There are various rights and obligations associated with citizenship, with those who do not enjoy this status being excluded on the grounds of their nationality. Discussions on citizenship are often closely linked with migration, and who should be entitled to the benefit of membership of the state. European citizens who are living in Ireland long term enjoy many of the rights of Irish citizens; however, there are a number of areas where they have limited rights, especially since the 2004 citizenship referendum. This

⁹ For example, legal ramifications of not being an Irish citizen.

¹⁰ European Citizens, but not citizens of Ireland or the United Kingdom, and ordinarily resident in Ireland in excess of 5 years, and consider Ireland their home.

¹¹ For instance, a parent of a child in a sports club.

¹² These included retail outlets, bars and hotels, and a martial arts academy with members who hailed from New Europe.

referendum was a reaction to fears about the numbers of migrants to Ireland from the late 1990s; the Government sought to limit eligibility to Irish citizenship.

Citizenship

Castles and Davidson (2000, p. vii) explain that '[t]he membership of individuals in modern democratic societies is marked by the status of citizenship...citizens possess a wide range of civil, political and social rights'. Considine and Dukelow (2009, p. 101) suggest that civil and political rights were regarded as essential constituents to the development of capitalism, and the emergence of social rights was necessary to redress some of the characteristic inequalities associated with capitalist society. Marshall argued that citizenship had an evolutionary sequence; civil citizenship came first, followed by political and then social citizenship (Cohen, 2010). Marshall's account overlooks the experience of women in relation to citizenship rights, for example, married women in Ireland were eligible to vote long before they gained the right to work and be taxed as individuals (Considine and Dukelow, 2009; Lister, 2010). Soysal (1994, p. 2) highlights the 'bounded' nature of citizenship, which refers to the territorial boundaries of countries and nation states, to which citizenship is applicable.

The origins of citizenship can be traced back to Ancient Greece, circa the 4th and 5th centuries BC; at that time the emphasis of citizenship was on the obligations of the citizens, rather than rights, men were obliged to fight for their country or state, and only men were eligible for citizenship, with women and slaves being excluded. (Faulks, 2000, pp. 14-15). After the French Revolution, 'the nation state emerged as *the* form of political organization and nationality as the condition of membership in a polity' (Soysal, 1994, p. 17, original emphasis) and the population became redefined, from being subjects of the monarchy, to being citizens of a state or nation. Since then, ideas of citizenship have included rights as well as obligations; many of these rights came to the fore after World War II, when changing social policy-making began to address the needs of people experiencing poverty, with basic levels of income support and social services being provided by the state (Considine & Dukelow, 2009, p. 100).

The provision of supports and services are part of what TH Marshall (2000, p.32) called social rights, which together with civil and political rights and obligations make

up his three pronged theory of citizenship (Dean, 1996, p. 4). However, citizenship is a contested concept, with varying meanings depending on the ‘social, political and cultural context, and reflect[s] different historical legacies’ (Lister, 2003). Lewis (1998, p. 104) proposes that citizenship discourses have three main features; firstly, as a vision of the connection between individuals and the state, secondly, regarding ‘social exclusions as well as social inclusions’ associated with citizenship, and thirdly, the rights and protections enjoyed by the individual through the status of citizenship. For certain groups, citizenship creates inequalities and exclusions; non-citizens don’t enjoy the same protections under law as citizens of the state, and are therefore more likely to experience what can be described as secondary or inferior positions in terms of their citizenship status (Gilbert et al, 2005, pp. 287-288; Taylor et al, 2004).

Models of Citizenship

The rights and obligations that citizens can expect, by virtue of their citizenship status, is also affected by the model of citizenship practiced within the state in which they reside. This has been heavily influenced by liberalism in western society. Liberal Citizenship primarily emphasises the rights associated with citizenship (Tallgren, 2003), and freedom from interference by the state for the individual, favouring ‘a more minimalist set of duties’ in the form of taxes or military service (Kivisto and Faist, 2008, p. 50; Hindess, 2002). In contrast to the liberal model of citizenship, the republican or communitarian model of citizenship promotes the obligations and duties of citizens (Tallgren, 2003). This model expects citizens to engage in active citizenship, and contribute to the common good of the community or nation (Kivisto & Faist, 2008). Recently, the Post-Nationalist model of citizenship has come to the fore, especially as the EU, and citizenship of the union has become more prominent. Economic globalisation, migration leading to increasingly multi-cultural societies, and participation in European institutions, has meant that the idea of national citizenship has become less important (Tambini, 2001, pp. 198-199; Castles and Davidson, 2000).

Citizenship Referendum

Ireland has traditionally been a country of net emigration, so much so, that by the 1980s, emigration was being lauded as a necessity for the economy, and a useful way to deal with high levels of unemployment (Lee, 1989). This situation had changed

dramatically by the late 1990s, resulting in mass immigration. By 2007 the number of immigrants stood at 67,300, a massive increase from the 8,000 in 1996 (Quin et al 2008, cited in Gilligan, et al., 2010 p. 5). Until this change in migration patterns, Ireland's laws on citizenship and immigration had developed in an ad-hoc manner, often as a response to an unanticipated outcome or perceived loophole (Honohan, 2010). Since the early 1990s, immigration and residency policies have sought to encourage the influx of labour migrants to Ireland, whilst limiting access for asylum seekers (Ugba, 2007, p. 174). In Ireland, prior to the citizenship referendum of 2004, citizenship was obtained on the basis of *Jus Soli*, anyone born in the Republic of Ireland before this date was entitled to be an Irish citizen (Honohan, 2007, pp. 811-812; Considine and Dukelow, 2009, p. 422; Fanning and Mutwarasibo, 2007, p. 439; Triandafyllidou and Gropas, 2007, p. 368; Soysal, 1994, p. 3). This is in common with other former colonies of the British Empire¹³, but contrasted with France and Germany, who opted for citizenship through *Jus Sanguinis* (Honohan, 2007, pg. 64). The Irish government proposed changing eligibility to Irish citizenship from *Jus Soli* to *Jus Sanguinis* by referendum. The depiction of pregnant African mother arriving in Ireland on the verge of giving birth¹⁴, and abusing Ireland's liberal provision of citizenship status to all born on the island of Ireland, was used to garner support for the referendum (Hennesy, 1999; Fanning and Mutwarasibo, 2007; Shandy, 2008). The referendum was passed by a majority of 79.2% of the vote (Ní Mhurchú, 2011, p. 161; Citizens Information, 2011c).

Immigration

The Aliens Act 1935 was the earliest legislation on immigration by the Irish Free State, giving the Minister of Justice powers to impose limits and restrictions on non-nationals. The Refugee Act 1996 marked one of the key developments in immigration policy, and brought the need to develop comprehensive policies on immigration into the spotlight (Moran, 1999). The Irish Government ratified the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees in 1956, but failed to implement any measures to change state policy from that of the Aliens Act 1935, until the 1990's (Fanning, 2007, pp. 18-

¹³ For example, Australia and Canada (Honohan, 2007, pg. 64).

¹⁴ The perception at the time was of large numbers claiming asylum, largely influenced by media attention on women from African countries, declaring they were arriving heavily pregnant, or indeed in the early stages of labour, with the intention of gaining the right to reside in Ireland based on the right of their Irish born child's entitlement to Irish citizenship (Hennesy, 1999; Fanning and Mutwarasibo, 2007; Shandy, 2008).

19). Following the 1996 Refugee Act, the Government realised that the various forms of immigration were growing, and set about developing a number of initiatives to address the situation, and to inform subsequent policy. The Immigration Act saw a number of reforms in 1999, 2003, and most recently in 2004. The proposed Immigration and Residency Bill of 2008 was intended to replace the plethora of legislation on immigration, but was withdrawn in July 2010, when a number of sections were found to contravene some European Directives¹⁵ (Ejorh, 2007, p. 7). Ireland joined the EEC¹⁶ in 1973 (by signing the Treaty of Rome¹⁷), and has since ratified a number of treaties, including the Maastricht Treaty¹⁸, the Amsterdam Treaty¹⁹, the Nice Treaty²⁰, and the Lisbon Treaty²¹. These have somewhat circumscribed the states' ability to govern themselves (Guild, 2006, p. 106) Yet Weiler (1998, pp. 4-5) argues that 'the exclusive gate-keepers remain the Member States', and as such the ideal of genuinely free movement and residence across the EU remains unrealised.

EU Citizens' Rights

Under both Irish and EU law, European Citizens are entitled to move freely from one member state to another, are entitled to seek work in Ireland from the moment that they arrive; and 'are entitled to the full range of statutory employment rights and protections in exactly the same manner as an Irish worker' (National Employment

¹⁵ Ireland has to adhere to European directives, decisions made by the European Court of Justice, and the European Court of Human Rights. This is a consequence of having ratified a number of Treaties (for example, the Amsterdam and Lisbon Treaties), and Conventions (The 1951 United Nations Convention of the Status of Refugees, which Ireland signed up to in 1956; and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which Ireland ratified in 1952). The 2010 Immigration and Residency Bill is at the committee stage (see Government of Ireland, 2014 for further details).

¹⁶ European Economic Community.

¹⁷ The Treaty of Rome Treaty established four institutions - a Commission, a Council of Ministers, a European Parliament and a European Court of Justice, and established the right to freedom of movement for citizens of the EEC (Van Selm, 2006, p. 13).

¹⁸ This led to the creation of the euro, and establishment of the European Union and introduction of the co-decision procedure, giving Parliament more say in decision-making. New forms of cooperation between EU governments – for example on defence and justice, and home affairs were also added (European Union, 2007).

¹⁹ Established an area of freedom of movement, security and justice for its citizens.

²⁰ The **purpose of the Nice Treaty** was to reform the institutions so that the EU could function efficiently after reaching 25 member countries. This resulted in a change in the composition of the Commission and redefining the voting system in the Council (European Union, 2007).

²¹ The Lisbon treaty increases EU powers in areas of border control, asylum and immigration, judicial cooperation in civil matters and in criminal matters, and police cooperation. However, Ireland was given specific guarantees in the areas of Taxation policy, the right to life, Education and the family, and Military neutrality (Citizens Information, 2010) and (Citizens Information, 2009).

Rights Authority, 2008, p. 13). Yet, immigrants have experienced higher rates of unemployment, with those from the NMS being worst affected. Even when those from the NMS do have employment, they are less likely to be working at a level that reflects their educational qualifications, and tend to have less favourable working conditions to Irish nationals in similar positions, i.e. they are paid less for the same work, and are more likely to be viewed as temporary (McGinnity, 2011; Barrett and Bergin, 2007; Ruhs, 2009).

However, the right to reside in Ireland for EU citizens is not without preconditions. Every EU citizen is entitled to visit another EU state for up to three months ‘without being subject to any conditions or any formalities other than the requirement to hold a valid identity card or passport²²’ (European Union, 2004, p. 80; Department of Justice and Equality, 2004). If EU citizens wish to prolong their stay beyond this period, they must either have employment, or have adequate resources and health insurance to preclude them from becoming a burden on the state. EU students are also required to have health insurance, and need to fulfil the habitual residency criteria to qualify for student grants, however, time spent as a student is not reckonable for habitual residency (Department of Justice and Equality, 2009). Long term or permanent residency is defined as ‘a continuous period of five years without becoming subject to an expulsion measure’, under article 17 of the ECD 75/117/EEC (European Union, 2004, p. 82).

The right of permanent residency can be lost after attaining it, if an EU Citizen is absent from the member state for a period of two or more successive years. At which point, if the EU Citizen wishes to return to reside in the state, they are on the same footing as other EU nationals who come to Ireland for the first time, whereas, an Irish Citizen always has an automatic right of residency within Ireland. Furthermore, EU citizens (and their families) can be expelled from other member states for reasons of public policy, public health, or public security (Department of Justice and Equality, n.d.). In 2012, Alan Shatter, the Minister for Justice and Equality, with responsibility for immigration, stated that ‘41 EU nationals were returned to their countries of origin on foot of an EU Removal Order’ (Shatter, 2012). There is no information given for

²² This requirement means that EU Citizens have to renew their passports (or other recognised documentation) through their country of origins’ Embassy, which are primarily located in Dublin,

the reasons behind these deportations. For EU nationals who are not deemed to permanently reside in Ireland, they must satisfy the Habitual Residence condition in order to qualify for social welfare payments²³. Child Benefit is one of the payments that EU citizens can apply for; EU nationals must be working in Ireland to qualify for this payment, whereas it is deemed a universal payment for Irish Citizens²⁴ (Minihan 2012). All adults who are legally resident in Ireland are entitled to vote (unless otherwise disqualified). The Citizenship status of the individual will define the way in which they can vote (see table).

		Eligibility for Voting			
		Local Elections	European Elections	General Elections	Referenda
Non EEA	Citizen	✓			
EU/EEA	Citizen	✓	✓		
British	Citizen	✓	✓	✓	
Irish	Citizen	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: (Office for the Minister for Integration, 2011).

The register of Dáil electors²⁵ is used to select people over eighteen years of age for Jury service. This means that EU Citizens are not entitled to sit on a jury, which is one of the fundamental ways that individuals can participate in the governing of the state. Apart from non-nationals, only people who have been convicted of a serious offence²⁶, are disqualified from sitting on a jury (Citizens Information, 2012 a). This fits with the state perceiving immigrants as a threat; so EU Citizens, regardless of how

²³ The criteria for habitual residency are not clearly defined, and decisions are at the discretion of a deciding officer.

²⁴For EU nationals who have not worked in Ireland, they may still be eligible for a Child Benefit payment in their country of origin. Before payment is made in respect of children resident in other EU countries it is necessary to contact the authorities in the country of residence of the children to confirm details and establish what, if any, family benefits are payable in the home country as this will impact on any entitlement under the Irish system (NASC, 2012).

²⁵Members of society who are eligible to vote in general elections, e.g. Irish and British Citizens

²⁶ Been sentenced to a prison term of three months or more in the last three years, or have ever been sentenced to five years imprisonment.

long they have resided in Ireland, are not trusted to actively participate in one of the most important aspects of society.

EU nationals who wish to become Irish citizens can do so by going through the naturalisation process. There are several criteria which the applicant must meet, for instance, generally applicants must have lived in Ireland for at least five of the last nine years, and be of 'good character'. Nevertheless, the Minister for Justice and Equality has absolute discretion in granting or refusing to grant naturalisation applications (Citizens Information, 2012b). In late 2011, a fee of €175 was introduced for all Naturalisation applications. If the application is successful, in the case of a minor, or a widow/widower of an Irish citizen, the cost of naturalisation is €200, for all other successful applications, the fee is €950. The information available on the INIS website is heavily weighted towards non-EEA citizens; there is no mention of the fact that citizenship obtained through naturalisation can be revoked²⁷ (Citizens Information, 2012b). However, Irish born citizen cannot have their citizenship revoked.

Findings

Twelve individual interviews were undertaken as part of the research; representing eight different countries. Interviewees²⁸ consisted of six individuals from the NMS²⁹ that joined the EEA in 2003, and six interviews with people from old Europe³⁰. The duration of residency in Ireland ranges from five years to forty years, and the age range of participants is from mid-twenties to late seventies. Participants were asked about their experience of coming to, and living in Ireland. While many of their experiences are similar regardless of their country of origin, there are some notable differences which appear to be linked to their nationality, and the change in attitudes of Irish people since the citizenship referendum.

²⁷ If for example, it is subsequently deemed that you obtained citizenship through fraud, or that you have acted in a way that is contrary to your duty of fidelity and loyalty to the State.

²⁸ The terms interviewees, participants, and respondents are used interchangeably

²⁹ The participants from New Europe hailed from Lithuania (one male; and one female), Slovakia (one male; and one female), The Czech Republic (female), and Poland (female).

³⁰ The participants from Old Europe moved to Ireland from The Netherlands (one couple, now retired; and one male), Germany (two females), France (female), and Switzerland (female).

Respondents benefited from a network of local friends and neighbours, supplemented with internet searches, and utilising the Citizens Information services. For the two men from NMS, the support offered by their employers is also cited as a key source of information and assistance; ‘When I came, our accountant explained everything to me, about the PPS, about my rights to work, about the holidays and everything’, (Lithuanian Man).

A clear difference emerged in the type of employment that respondents were engaged in; people from Old Europe tended to have jobs at the higher end of the job market³¹, with five out of the six having been mostly self-employed; yet respondents from NMS tend to be in unskilled jobs³², though this did not necessarily reflect levels of education. All of the women from NMS had worked as cleaners, or in the retail and hotel trade. This concurs with existing research highlighting the inequalities NMS citizens experience in gaining employment. While the two NMS men have held the same positions since moving to Ireland, the women from NMS have not fared so well, with three reporting discrimination and efforts by employers to deny them their rights as employees.

we heard that there was such thing as minimum wage...and we went to our supervisor saying that ... we want increase...and they tried to tell us that it doesn't apply to everybody, if they don't want to increase they don't have to increase (Lithuanian Woman).

There was no obvious difference in the levels of qualifications attained across the range of participants in the study. While the majority have third level qualifications, all the respondents bar one, have chosen to seek employment in an area other than the one for which they hold a qualification. By and large, their qualifications were recognised, or they did not seek recognition. The exception to this is the female from Lithuania, who was discouraged by the extensive paperwork required to get her

³¹ The Dutch male is a gardener; the French woman is a musician and puppeteer; one of the German women is a Harpist and music teacher; the second German woman is a professional child-minder; the retired Dutch couple had their own craft shop, making and selling their own hand-crafts; whilst the Swiss woman is employed in a health food store.

³² The Lithuanian male works in a bar; the Slovakian male is a labourer; the women from Poland and The Czech Republic are currently unemployed; the women from Lithuania and Slovakia are now students.

qualification recognised here with a view to working in the sector; however, she has since been able to use this qualification to gain access to University.

The experiences that individuals have had when trying to access their rights seems to be related to the individual they were dealing with, but may reflect what authors such as Gray (2006), Joppke (1999), and Kofman (2005) cite as policies which discriminate between nationals and non-nationals, that allows for preferential treatment of migrants who are deemed to be of economic benefit to Ireland. One participant from Old Europe and one participant from NMS reported some difficulties when dealing with social welfare officers; all others said that they had no such problems.

The female from the Czech Republic endured a sustained effort to coerce her into returning to her country of origin when she exhausted her stamps for job seekers benefit; this only ended when she brought an Irish friend to question the validity of the on-going harassment she was experiencing from staff within the social welfare office. This contrasts sharply with the experience of the Polish woman, who felt that the people in the social welfare office have taken extra measures to ensure that she was aware of her rights and entitlements.

All respondents stated that they have no issues with immigration officials in Ireland, either with coming to, or going from Ireland. The woman from Lithuania commented that prior to 2004 and the enlarging of the European Union, that free movement was not as easy as it is now. All the countries from which the interviewees hailed have embassies in Dublin. Unlike Irish citizens, who do not need to own a passport, EU citizens are required to hold a valid EU identity card or passport under the Immigration Act 2004, and have to attend their country of origin's embassy in person to renew their passport. Only the Dutch Embassy posts the new passports to applicants; people from other EU countries had to return to collect the passports. Due to the distance between Kerry and Dublin, this incurs high costs, is time consuming, and takes at least one full day each time.

Only the Dutch couple was registered to vote, however, they had only ever received voting cards for local elections, despite being legally entitled to also vote in European

elections. Another three participants (French Woman; German Woman B; and Lithuanian Man) also thought that they were only eligible to vote in local elections. Five of the interviewees thought that they had no right to vote in Ireland; with the exception of the Swiss national, these interviewees all came from New Europe. Few of the respondents even knew how to go about registering to vote, though nine out of the twelve participants expressed an interest in voting in Ireland.

Most of the participants stated that, overall, they feel very welcome in Irish society; yet, some have experienced negative attitudes from Irish people because of their nationality. Three of the participants also commented on their Irish partners are also being seen as outsiders in the community in which they live.

With the exception of German Woman A, all the participants said they wouldn't mind being an Irish citizen; however, few of the respondents were aware of what is involved in the naturalisation process. All of the participants, who were aware of the procedures involved in naturalisation, felt that the cost was inhibitive, and some of them also had an issue swearing allegiance to a politician.

I should be automatically entitled to citizenship, as I lived here since I was only seven. (Dutch Man)

Three individuals from NMS were worried that becoming an Irish citizen might impinge on their ability to return to their country of origin in the future, as their countries of origin don't allow for dual citizenship. This fear could be due in part, to a history of political upheaval in many of the accession states of NMS, prior to joining the EEA; and may also account for the difficulty the researcher experienced in trying to access participants from NMS.

Participants were asked what they felt that the rights afforded to EU/EEA nationals who are living in Ireland for many years should be. Most respondents stated that the same rights should be afforded to EU/EEA citizens who are long term residents in Ireland.

Conclusion

Traditionally Ireland had been a country of emigration, this changed from the mid-1990s when Ireland experienced a period of prosperity, followed by an expansion of the EU, which resulted in an influx of migrants. Government policy has focused on controlling immigration; this has resulted in immigrants having limited rights if they do not become Irish citizens, and to them being perceived as a threat, both in terms of policy development, and within Irish society.

There were some anomalies in this study to existing, larger scale research. For example, Ruhs (2009) argues that non-nationals have great difficulty getting their qualifications recognised, and that most migrants are highly qualified, yet work in menial jobs. However, most of the respondents had not tried to get qualifications obtained prior to moving to Ireland recognised, instead choosing to seek employment in another sector. Still, there were clear differences in the types of employment held; with those from Old Europe tending to be employed in the higher end of the market, compared to those from NMS. The respondents from NMS were far more likely to have experienced discriminatory treatment in the work place or from government officials. This suggests a clear distinction in how migrants from different parts of the world are viewed; despite all the participants being EU citizens, those from NMS are viewed in a less positive way, compared with those from Old Europe.

Most of the participants felt that there should be no difference in the rights afforded to EU citizens who are resident long-term, and make Ireland their home, as they are required to abide by the same laws, and pay the same taxes. Some of the respondents have lived in Ireland for longer than the country they were born in, and see Ireland as their home. Yet, it could be argued, that until there is parity in the rights afforded to those who are long-term residents in Ireland, and make Ireland their home, then they will remain denizens of the state, and cannot be fully integrated into Irish society.

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