

Liminal Lives: How Ireland's Labour Migration Regime Entraps Migrant Households in Hyper-precarity

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Raging Lung

(Karin Elizabeth Dreijer Andersson / Olof Bjorn Dreijer)

Hear my troubles of mine
Can you take me for one last ride
I want to bend my soul again
That's what we do when we get older

Where's your troubled mind
You got your money and you got them 'cause others just can't
There's the lottery
About geography

Don't know the hand you're holding
Paying someone to put them to bed again

And that's when it hurts
The difference
This is hot blood
And a difference
What a difference
A little difference would make

Hear my love sigh
I've got a story that money just can't buy
Western standards
Poverty's profitable

See it slip and slide
Not just one answer 'cause it's working like parallel lines
It's not that easy
When you want it easy

And that's when it hurts
When you see the difference
It's a raging lung
And a difference
What a difference
A little difference would make

Don't leave me now
Don't fall asleep
We need to rest sometimes
But don't take long
It's something in the system
That still circulates
We'll dig a hole in the backyard
And drain the blood

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List of Acronyms

A&FS	Accommodation and Food Sector
CBP	Common Basic Principles
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CSO	Central Statistics Office
D&CS	Domestic and Care Sector
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
DEASP	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
DES	Department of Education and Science
DJE	Department of Justice and Equality
DJELR	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
EC	European Communities
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EEA	European Economic Area
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
EU	European Union
FAS	Foras Áiseanna Saothair (Training and Employment Authority)
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
GNP	Gross National Product
GP	General Practitioner
HAP	Housing Assistance Payment
HSE	Health Service Executive
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
INIS	Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Services
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
LDC	Local Development Companies
LPC	Low Pay Commission
MRCI	Migrant Rights Centre Ireland
NERA	National Employment Rights Authority
NESC	National Economic and Social Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMS	New Member States
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMI	Office of the Minister for Integration
PRSI	Pay Related Social Insurance
QNHS	Quarterly National Household Survey
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
SILC	Survey of Income and Living Conditions
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SVP	St. Vincent de Paul
TMR	Temporary Migration Regime
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
WFP	Working Family Payment

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I dedicate this thesis to the millions of migrant workers across the world who, in search of a better future for themselves and their loved ones, endure exploitation and disregard at the hands of a brutal system.

Title of the Study

Liminal Lives: How Ireland's Labour Migration Regime Entraps Migrant Households in Hyper-precarity.

Abstract

More than two decades have passed since 1996, when Ireland first became a net recipient of immigration. Following significant economic changes and movement from boom to bust to recovery, from 2015 onwards Ireland is again experiencing positive net migration. However, we know little about the work and life experiences of those migrants who made Ireland home. This research aims to fill key knowledge gaps relating to how migrants have experienced labour market progression in Ireland, the traps and structural barriers they have encountered and how these spill over to realities of precarious work and family lives. In particular, the research seeks to assess how labour migrants experience precarity traps in Ireland and the degree to which Irish government policy has been responsible for and responsive to labour migrants' experience of precarity. The research also seeks to discern the impacts of precarity on migrants' agency and decision-making as well as on family life.

Qualitative data from over 49 semi-structured interviews of labour migrants – men and women – and their family members, from 15 countries, is used to build a picture of migrants who first entered Ireland on work permits in the period 1999 to 2004. Participants, who first worked in the Accommodation and Food Sector or the Domestic and Care Sector, were selected through an analysis of the case files of the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland - the leading NGO working with immigrants in the country. The lens of the concept hyper-precarity is used to interrogate the labour market trajectories and experiences of participants, with analysis of different barriers, and forms of both entrapment and agency experienced by migrants in the different sectors. It identifies strategies households use to improve their labour market position and the extent to which precarity in employment bleeds into precarity in their daily lives.

The findings of this thesis are timely and the learning from migrants' experiences is used to make recommendations for policy changes that can prevent the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage in migrant households.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Introduction

The purpose of my research is to understand the extent to which labour migrants experience precarity in Ireland. I aim to understand the degree to which government policy, in the shape of the labour migration regime, but also the broader welfare regime, is responsible for creating these experiences of precarity. Similarly, I also seek to determine whether government policy has been responsive to these experiences, by means of the development of integration policy or other targeted measures to minimise the effects of precarity. Finally, I investigate the extent to which experiences of precarity in the labour market bleed into everyday life; how do they impact on migrants' use of agency and decision-making, and the implications for family life and sense of belongingness. This research is based on the qualitative analysis of over 45 migrants who have made Ireland their home; it adds a unique contribution to the literature by focusing on their lived experiences and their everyday actions to avoid, deal with and overcome precarity for them and their family members. It is a testament to the trajectories of labour migrants in the country and it aims to learn from these experiences in order to advance recommendations on how government policy can address shortcomings and prevent further marginalisation of labour migrants, particularly those in low-paid occupations, in the labour market and everyday life.

In this chapter, I contextualise my research within the existing literature about Ireland's migration journey and outline why this research is needed now, at a time when Ireland is, once again, experiencing a shortage of skills and labour and in need of more migrant workers. I also detail the key conceptual framework underpinning my research and describe the associated terminology. In doing so, I introduce the main bodies of literature that my research engages with and will contribute to. After outlining the research question and relevant sub-questions, I finish this chapter by providing an outline of the chapters in this study.

Context

Over the past two decades, the composition of Irish migration flows has changed significantly. Ireland was once thought of as a country of emigration, but today is one of the most diverse countries in Europe. Migration has transformed Ireland in many ways: from its demographics, to the structure of its labour market. More than this, it has led to a profound shift in the nation's sense of identity (Gilmartin 2015). The patterns of change are closely linked to the economic development that accompanied this period, which was marked by both economic growth and recession.

During Ireland's economic boom, which lasted approximately from 1995 until 2008, thousands of workers came to Ireland from different parts of the world to satisfy labour market shortages. They did this using the employment permit system. Continuing growth underpinned the decision to allow unrestricted access to the labour market for citizens of countries that joined the European Union after its enlargement in 2004.

The downturn in the economy, between 2008 and 2014, resulted in a return to negative net migration. Unemployment rose by up to 15%, and as a result, many Irish citizens left the country to seek employment opportunities abroad. At the same time, many of the migrants from the newest EU Member States, who had moved to Ireland following EU enlargement, left for other countries or returned home.

Soon after the economic recovery, unemployment slowly reduced, and eventually new labour market shortages emerged once again. From 2015 onwards, Ireland became a country of positive net migration once more. This migration is driven mainly by inward migration of non-EU migrants.

Ireland's migration framework developed at the same time as these demographic changes were taking place. First, the employment permit system functioned as the main mechanism for migration until the enlargement of the EU in 2004. Subsequently, the EU's principle of free movement allowed Ireland to source most of its migrant labour from the newly acceded countries. In response, Ireland's policy towards non-European immigration then became stricter, as was already the case in other countries in the EU. Since Ireland's renewed economic growth, it has been experiencing new shortages of

labour and skills at different levels. Attracting the necessary labour force has proven more challenging than expected, and renewed calls have been made by civil society advocates and employers to liberalise Ireland's labour migration policy.

While improvements to the employment permit system have been made over the years, many deficiencies remain, such as the lack of labour market mobility and its temporary nature. Furthermore, the restrictive criteria applied to the issuance of new permits, particularly for migrants in occupations not categorised as 'high-skilled', have had a big impact in the agriculture, fisheries, accommodation, and food sectors. The current government is under pressure to rethink Ireland's approach to sourcing migrant labour, and this presents a unique opportunity to discuss how to ensure that changes to migration policy are conducive to fostering labour market integration and avoiding precarity of labour. My thesis is a contribution to this academic and policy debate.

Since the early 2000s, many studies addressed different aspects of the economic integration of migrants in Ireland. Some have focused on their labour market characteristics (Barrett, Bergin and Duffy 2006); on their occupational attainment (Barrett and Duffy 2008); the wage differential (O'Connell and McGinnity 2008) and the labour market experiences of non-EU migrants (Ruhs 2003; Ruhs 2005). Several studies have addressed the labour market position of refugees (Gusciute, Arnold and Quinn 2016), of specific labour market sectors (Krings et al. 2011), or specific nationalities (Krings et al. 2013; Krings et al. 2016). While these studies give an overview of the traps and barriers that migrants have faced in the Irish labour market, their quantitative and large-scale nature has made it harder to distinguish how these processes developed and impacted on the labour market trajectories of migrants, and the extent to which labour migrants exercise agency in their decision making.

Although in recent years the literature has become more varied and focused on the influence of external factors such as discrimination (McGinnity et al. 2006; O'Connell and McGinnity 2008; O'Connell 2019) or the impact of the recent economic recession (Barrett and Kelly 2012), little has yet been written about migrants' experiences of precarity. In this regard my study will contribute to the emerging literature on precarious work and precarious lives in Ireland (Murphy and Loftus 2015; Murphy 2017; Pembroke 2018; Rooney and Gray 2019) by outlining how the immigration regime intersects with other existing regimes, including social protection, employment, childcare, and housing.

Very few studies (Devitt 2010; O'Connor and Crowley-Henry 2019) have addressed the role of policy in determining the labour market trajectories, labour market positioning, and processes of economic integration experienced by migrants in Ireland. More recently, some have focused on the policies and practices that target the labour market integration of labour migrants (Gilmartin and Dagg 2018; Arnold et al. 2019). My research will contribute to this growing literature that has the potential to inform policy changes. This contribution is unique and particularly valuable because it draws links between experiences in the labour market and experiences of everyday life which impact on migrants' sense of belonging, a key determinant of integration.

Justification

More than two decades have passed since 1996 when Ireland first became a net recipient of immigration. There followed significant economic and political changes, including expansion of the EU in 2004, and movement from boom to bust to recovery. From 2015 onwards Ireland is again experiencing positive net migration. Ireland is an interesting case given the speed and scale of sudden increases in migrant labour with distinctive historical and contemporary features in the emerging migration regime. From a political economy perspective one of only three EU states that opened up the labour market in 2004, Ireland has developed a two-tier migration policy to feed the skills and labour shortages of a two-tier economy (high growth and high skilled employment co-exists with one of the highest levels of low pay in the OECD). From a political and cultural perspective Ireland is a highly gendered economy and society with care deficits and gendered labour market participation and outcome gaps. The impact of high levels of historic migration and recent experiences of emigration have given rise to understandings of migration as temporary leading to a cultural acceptance of a Temporary Migration Regime (TMR), while an absence of integration policy means a vulnerability to racism.

All the above lends itself to a two-tier migration story. A good migration and integration story is that of post EU accession and employment-visa migrants, largely white and portrayed as easily integrated with other medium to high skilled, well paid middle class workers. On the other hand, the temporary migration regime largely constructs poorly paid racialised migrants in temporary, low quality jobs in specific sectors. However, we

know little about the work and life experiences of those temporary migrants who made Ireland home in the period pre-2004 and while we may guess their lives are relatively precarious we know little about their reality and whether or how poor employment conditions might spill- over into domestic or family life. This research aimed to fill key knowledge gaps relating to how migrants have experienced labour market progression in Ireland. We do know that despite entering Ireland on a temporary basis, and experiencing multiple forms of entrapment, exploitation and discrimination, migrant workers stay. Labour migration policy must reflect this reality. Ireland, presently experiencing full employment with labour and skill shortages, remains likely to be a positive net recipient of migration. The questions posed in this thesis are timely and the learning can feed into recommendations for policy changes to prevent intergenerational transmission of disadvantage in migrant households.

The core puzzle of this thesis is the relationship between Ireland's temporary labour migration regime and migrants' employment and life experience in Ireland. In particular the research seeks to fill a clear gap in the literature which to date lacks any qualitative assessment of the causes and consequences of migrants' experience of low paid employment in Ireland. The central question is whether and how the temporary employer-based work permit system, and related family reunification and integration policy, creates distinct employment and life experiences. To answer this it is necessary to examine how the labour migrant regime is contextualised in Ireland's wider welfare regime, its relatively weak employment protection system (and its poor enforcement), limited access to social security and labour market supports, a record of under investment in public services particularly housing and childcare. This gives insight into the degree to which Irish government policy been responsible for or responsive to their experiences of precarity. At the same time there is need to recognise migrants' agency even in the context of significant structural constraints on decision-making and family life and belongingness.

While there have been a number of human capital informed quantitative assessments of labour market earnings of migrants (Barrett and McCarthy 2007) and some assessment of labour market trajectories of high skilled migrants to Ireland (Barrett and Duffy 2008; Voitchovsky 2014) there is a significant gap in qualitative knowledge of migrants experiences and little is known about low paid work permit entry migrants (Ruhs 2005). This thesis will go on to gather extensive data from over 49 semi-structured interviews of labour migrants and family members, including men and women from 15 countries,

to build a picture of migrants who first entered Ireland on work permits in the period 1999 to 2004 to work in the Accommodation and Food sector or the Domestic and Care sector. Various theoretical and conceptual frameworks offer potential ways to open an analysis of low-paid migrants experiences of Ireland's work permit. As well as the overall concept of hyper precarity (Lewis et al 2014,2015) other literature offers concepts including temporariness and liminality, agency, voluntariness, social capital and social networks, intersectionality, racism, gender, mobility and labour market trajectories, as well as family strategies were used to analyse the rich data set generated through the qualitative research. Avoiding a narrow conception of human capital informed assessments of integration means necessarily theorising participants' self-perception of success and the meaning of work and life progression. This allows a different, more ambiguous and complicated story to emerge, which may include forms of entrapment in precarity, but may also include agency and strategies to succeed albeit where success may mean less salary attainment and more labour market autonomy or freedom from exploitative conditions, fear of irregularity or discrimination.

Scope of study

This study will address the sectorial and gender differences in labour market experiences and will focus on low-paid sectors of employment where there is a high concentration of migrant labour. As such, I will focus on migrants in low-wage employment, because they are most exposed to precarity and their labour market trajectories are more vulnerable to changes in policy (Anderson et al. 2006; Spencer et al. 2007; Ruhs and Anderson 2010). To this end the study will focus on the Accommodation and Food Sector (A&FS) and the Domestic and Care Sector (D&CS). The rationale behind the choice of employment sectors is two-fold: the highest number of permits were issued by the Irish state for the A&FS; and the D&CS is a highly gendered employment sector that also includes above-average representation of non-EU workers, many of whom entered Ireland as labour migrants using the employment permit system. I focus specifically on migrants who entered Ireland through the employment permit system because they are formally categorised as temporary labour migrants.

Hypotheses

I argue that it is in the interest of the State to maximise the benefits of migration and that this is best done by facilitating the convergence of labour market outcomes of migrants with those of the overall population. I ask whether the employment permit system, a temporary and two-tiered migration regime, has facilitated such convergence or has helped to develop a low-wage economy in Ireland. My hypothesis is that the lack of mobility built into the employment permit, its temporary nature and the restrictive access it grants to the social protection regime results in labour migrants suffering limited bargaining power for improved employment conditions. Over time, I hypothesise that these disadvantages develop into entrapment and marginalisation, while the segmentation of the labour market that they entrain helps to racialise it. I anticipate that government policies, such as integration programmes and welfare provision, fail to identify and address such precarity traps.

Objectives

A key objective of this study is to understand how migrant households exercise agency despite the different constraints imposed on them by immigration, employment and welfare regimes. I will focus on the gendered experiences of participants and pay special attention to the experiences of migrant care-workers, as well as the barriers to labour market participation encountered by family members who are dependent on a migrant worker. As part of this gender framing, I examine whether there are policies in place to address entrapment that migrant women may experience and to help bring them closer to the labour market, so as to contribute to a broader literature concerned with how migrant households experience their labour market trajectories. A final objective is to contribute to public policy developments in the field of migration and integration, inform the review of Ireland's labour migration strategy, and generate greater awareness of how government policy, such as integration policy, can increase responsiveness to migrants' experiences of precarity and enhance integration of second-generation migrants, including their labour market inclusion.

Conceptual Framework

I engage with the academic debates in migration and precarious work literature and in subsequent chapters further discuss these debates. Here I briefly outline key concepts from this literature that are important building blocks in the thesis, and, in doing so, indicate where I relate to key debates about terminology and where I am positioned in contemporary debates.

I associate my work with ongoing research on the field of ‘temporariness’ in migration. Following De Genova (2010) I categorise Ireland’s employment permit system as an example of a temporary migration regime (TMR). The temporary vs. permanent categorisation is relevant when discussing migration regimes as part of the ‘numbers vs. rights trade-off’ (Ruhs and Martin 2008). Unlike traditional countries of settlement, such as the USA, Canada or Australia, Europe has long been associated with temporary migration regimes since the guest worker programmes of the 1950s. While categorising the Irish employment permit system as a TMR, I acknowledge it has developed over time and now affords a path to residency and citizenship, which is not the case for labour migration regimes in many other countries. However, this path to residency and citizenship is not afforded to all categories of migrants in Ireland, and these temporary categories, such as international students, play an increasingly essential role in the Irish labour market. I describe this phenomenon and the racialisation associated with it in the next chapters. From the perspective of this research and the participants’ trajectories it is still useful and accurate to categorise the employment permit as a TMR, as pathways to long-term residency were only recently introduced (in 2007) and ministerial discretion still allows for the revocation of migrants’ legal status without a legal procedure required.

Deportability and the enforcement of immigration control (Anderson 2010) shapes the day-to-day lives of precarious migrants and how employment relationships are constructed. The intersection of temporariness, (im)mobility and deportability (all constituents of the employment permit regime) forms the focus of my study, which is interested in how this intersection affects the employment experiences and daily lives of labour migrants in low-paid employment and with limited access to social protection regimes. I draw from the literature on the ‘hyper-precarity’ of migrants and the relationship between temporariness, unfreedoms and entrapments (Lewis et al. 2015; Zou

2015) to understand and conceptualise the experiences of labour migrants in Ireland. I distinguish the experiences of precarity by migrants from those of the overall population, because of the migration regime and limitations of the safety net provided by the State, whether that is through childcare, housing, social protection, or healthcare regimes (Lewis et al. 2015).

Key Concepts

Throughout this study the terms ‘migrant’ and ‘immigrant’ are used interchangeably to refer to people who have moved to Ireland, regardless of length of stay. I do not distinguish between (settled) ‘immigrants’ and (temporary) ‘migrants’. There are several reasons why I have chosen to use these terms interchangeably. Firstly, as my study shows, ‘migrants’ who enter a country with a temporary permission to reside, often become ‘immigrants’ by settling in a country. This is the case of the participants in this study. Secondly, the term ‘immigrant’ is generally associated with those entering a country through settlement schemes common in countries like the USA, Canada and Australia. This distinguishes them from ‘migrants’, who are employed as part of temporary or seasonal migration schemes and who are often associated with lower-skilled migration.

This categorisation is somewhat less relevant in the context of Ireland’s employment permit system, which is a TMR but evolving to incorporate access to a long-term status. It is also less relevant in the context of the EU and the Long-Term Residence Directive (Council Directive 2003/109/EC 2003), which compels signatory Member States to introduce long-term residence schemes after a migrant has been resident for a certain period. Temporary migration schemes with less clear paths to residence do operate both in Ireland and elsewhere in the EU. However, it is conceivable that claiming universal rights such as the right to a family life may enable individuals to gain residency status based on other factors. This is because key human rights principles enshrined in the European Convention of Human Rights supersede domestic legislation. This makes the distinction between temporary and permanent migration much more complex.

From a sociological perspective, ‘migration’ is the movement from one place of residence to another and is often used to imply crossing an international border. Nonetheless, the term ‘migrant’ is not defined in any international convention – unlike, for example, the term ‘refugee’ (Goodman, Sirriyeh and McMahon 2017). The discussion around

terminology has been reignited in academic and policy circles because of the humanitarian crisis taking place in the Mediterranean area. Some academics and practitioners favour a distinction between ‘refugees’ and ‘migrants’, yet others point out that ‘refugees’ are a sub-category of ‘migrants’. They argue that emphasizing distinct terminology plays into the deserving/undeserving dichotomy (Dhaliwal and Forkert 2015; Goodman et al. 2017). Without disregarding the merits of this debate, it is less relevant to categorise the subjects of my study in this way, since they entered Ireland as labour migrants and did not access the protection system. Finally, I distance myself from terms such as ‘foreigners’, ‘aliens’ and ‘non-nationals’, which recur in the Irish literature on migration, because I believe they create a sense of exclusion and contribute to a racialised portrayal of diversity in Ireland in how they are differently applied to European citizens or migrants from Anglo-Saxon countries. I further conceptualise racialisation in **Chapter 4**.

I have also chosen to use the terms ‘irregular’ or ‘undocumented’ migrant, ‘irregular migration’, ‘irregular employment’ and ‘irregularisation’, where others use ‘illegal’ and its derivatives. Preference for the word ‘irregular’ has grown in the policy field in recent years, and, since United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3449 was passed in 1975, the term ‘undocumented’ has become the preferred word in institutional settings, including in the UN and its agencies, the Council of Europe, and a number of institutions of the EU. In academia, there is no consensus concerning this terminology. Some continue to use terms such as ‘illegal’ or ‘illegal migrants’ sometimes choosing to keep them in quotes to denote that they represent a constructed categorisation. I believe that these terms, closely associated with criminality, distort discussions on migration and help shift the approach towards a security one. Others may refuse the use of ‘irregular’ arguing that it is equally exclusive or otherwise considering it a euphemism which masks the effects of the lack of legal status in the life of an immigrant (De Genova 2002).

‘Irregularisation’ refers to the increased approach to migration as something that is not regular in nature and, as such, must be continuously policed by the enforcement of border controls. Additionally, border controls have been externalised and incorporated into daily lives (Jansen, Celikate and de Bloois 2015), for example through the increased use of biometric data in order to gain access to state services. Anderson (2010) has discussed at length the role of immigration control in fashioning the experiences of migrants, including by creating docile and submissive workers unlikely to report rights violations for fear of reprisal. Others have discussed how borders and their enforcement of control

affect us all – through aleatory identity controls in otherwise free-movement areas, for example. This argument is epitomised by De Genova (2016:51), who states that “borders cross everyone, including those who never cross borders”.

The concept of ‘deportability’ is understood as the possibility of deportation, and the constant threat of being deported (DeGenova 2002). It must be understood in conjunction with the concept of ‘irregularisation’, for example by the ease in which legal status can be lost or revoked, and the growing prominence of immigration enforcement and border control in everyday life. In a system that pushes migrants towards irregularity, through loss of employment or failing to meet ever-changing administrative requirements, deportability is a constant threat that can affect how a person interacts with the state (Lewis et al. 2015). Ireland is a case in point in how ‘deportability’ plays out to the advantage of the State; unlike other EU countries Ireland enforces very few deportation orders, just 163 in 2018 (DJE 2019). Yet, the number of orders signed amounts to 1186: the purpose behind this practice is to embed deportability in everyday life without the need to actually enforce it, pushing irregular migrants to the margins in the hope they will leave by themselves. Related to ‘deportability’ is the notion of ‘liminal legality’, which is the construction of a legal status that constantly oscillates between regular and irregular. It can be linked to the notion of ‘permanent temporariness’ (Bailey et al. 2002), which refers to situations in which residency rights can be revoked or not renewed at any time, as is the case in Ireland, and where the migrant is not fully in control of the regular-irregular nexus (Menjivar 2006).

In **Chapter 3** I conceptualise precarity, and draw out the differences between ‘precarity’, ‘precariousness’ and ‘precarisation’ as introduced by Lorey (2015). While I understand the value of Lorey’s theory of hierarchies of precarity and Butler (2006)’s conceptualisation of precarious life as a phenomenon which affects us all, I argue that the experience of migrant workers affected by immigration regimes requires a specific understanding. I outline the rationale for using Vosko’s (2010) definition of ‘precarious employment’ and the value of two additional concepts to describe the experiences of participants in my study. ‘Hyper-precarity’, as described by Lewis et al. (2015:582), results from the “interplay of neoliberal labour markets and highly restrictive immigration regimes”. As they outline, the lives of certain migrants cannot be categorised simply as precarious, because the intersection of labour and immigration regimes produce layers of insecurities, which place them under a continuum of unfreedom (Skrivankova 2010; Lewis et al. 2015). Finally, the concept of ‘hyper-dependence’ as introduced by Zou

(2015) helps us to understand employment relationships that transcend the conventional boundaries of personal and economic dependence in an employment relationship. In the context of labour migrants' work relations in Ireland, hyper-dependence is intimately linked to their precarious statuses because their permission to reside in a country is made conditional on the sponsorship of the employer and their continuous employment. This is important to stress in the case of temporary migration regimes and those with limited labour market mobility.

The historical experience of each country provides a different context for the trajectory of inclusion of migrants in a society. This is because the relations between majority and minority populations will vary from country to country. Rejecting the central argument of literature that focuses on human capital to explain delayed trajectories, I associate with literature that argues migrants' trajectories are dependent on government policies and institutions which influence how migrants can adopt a range of mobility strategies to improve their social status (Liversage 2009; Anisef et al. 2010). A growing body of research suggests that in addition to skill mismatch and difficulties in having their education or employment recognised, migrants experience different forms of discrimination which impact on their labour market trajectories and outcomes. In contrast with higher qualified migrants, less-skilled migrants with a limited grasp of the language in a country may be willing to accept lower-level and lower-paid jobs that would be turned down by their educated counterparts, resulting in what Fuller and Martin (2012:143) describe as a "delayed integration" path. Their trajectories can be more unstable as they adopt different strategies to improve human capital, such as re-education or self-employment in order to return to pre-migration levels. While acknowledging their limitations in providing a full account of low-paid migrant trajectories, I adapt typologies (Fuller and Martin 2012 and Liversage 2009) to describe the experience of labour migrants in the Irish labour market.

Research Questions

In summary, the central question of my research is:

To what extent do labour migrants experience precarity traps in Ireland?

The following sub-questions are addressed:

To what extent has Irish government policy been responsible for and responsive to labour migrants' experiences of precarity?

What are the impacts of precarity on migrants' agency and decision-making as well as on family life and sense of belongingness?

The purpose of my study is to assess how migrants experience Ireland's restrictive labour migration policy. It differentiates itself from other studies on the economic integration of migrants because it focuses on understanding the processes that lead to experiences of precarity, integration or exclusion, rather than on a comparison of outcomes based on the initial labour market characteristics of migrants. I also attempt to assess the impact on spouses and second-generation migrants by looking, where possible, at the barriers and incentives they experience to participating in the labour market, but also their sense of belongingness. I seek to understand how migrant households exercise agency in the context of constraints imposed on them by public policy and the wider international context in which family and care life is framed.

Structure of the thesis

In **Chapter 2**, I provide a historical overview of immigration to Ireland from the mid-1990s until 2019. This helps to contextualise the research and enable better understanding of the changes, in particular economic cycles, that determined migratory flows to Ireland. I describe how Ireland went from being a country of emigration to a positive net recipient in 1996 and how cycles of growth and recession have influenced the arrival and departure of migrants. I also focus on the legislative and policy framework governing immigration and particularly labour migration and show how legislative developments reacted to

rather than paved the way for the large influx of migrants. Similarly, I describe how the employment permit system evolved over the past two decades from a largely *laissez-faire* approach to a sophisticated, yet restrictive, migration policy that focuses on limiting lower-skilled migration while enshrining a preference for applicants for higher-paid positions. Finally, I overview the main categories of migrants in Ireland, who, despite not being formally accounted for in the state's economic migration policy, play an important (somehow temporary) labour market role that benefits employers and the State alike.

Chapter 3 introduces the literature on precarity. It discusses the historical conceptualisation of precarity, giving a short overview of its recent emergence as a research topic and the usefulness of the concept for the purpose of my study. I locate myself in specific literature which defines precarious employment using the work of Vosko (2010), who incorporates both social location and social context as useful factors for understanding the relation between migration and precarious employment, particularly those employed in gendered sectors such as domestic work. I then move to establish the links between precarity and migration, moving beyond the employment of migrants and introducing the concept of precarious migrant status and how it intersects with precarious employment to create hyper-precarity and hyper-dependence. This section also gives an overview of the Irish system of social protection and social services and the extent to which it is responsive to those experiencing precarity, including migrants.

In **Chapter 4**, I provide a conceptual and policy analysis of integration followed by an overview of concepts underpinning the migration process which will help me explain decision-making among participants in this study. First, I examine the conceptualisation of migrant integration both from an academic and policy perspective. I present this as a contested subject and outline the various co-existing interpretations and critiques of integration. I continue with an overview of the main determinants of economic integration and an outline of the main research studies carried out in Ireland on the economic integration of migrants, highlighting how such research has to date failed to interrogate experiences of precarity in the labour market. I discuss whether developments in EU policy on the integration of migrants influenced the development of corresponding policy in Ireland. Finally, the chapter discusses migrant integration in Ireland, outlining the organisation and funding of service provision, critically analysing the current integration strategy and its limited capacity to foster socio-economic integration. I then introduce a series of concepts which help analyse decision-making throughout the migration process.

These concepts, together with the framework on labour market trajectories and concepts associated with hyper-precarity (introduced in previous chapters), inform the analytical framework that will be used to interpret the findings of this research.

Chapter 5 discusses the research methodology I employ to address the key research questions. I start by describing the ontological and epistemological considerations which underpin my research project and then discuss issues of reflexivity and positionality which are of key importance to me as a person with a migrant background and a migrant advocate. The advantages and disadvantages of a range of different research methods in the social sciences are discussed in the context of migration-related research. I follow with a brief summary of research gaps before outlining how the research design and my approach to the research question will respond to them. I provide demographic data (in tabulated form) of the participants of the study and describe the process of analysing the data and identifying the concepts that will inform the coding process. I also describe my conceptual framework, reiterating the importance of studies of labour market trajectories and pathways to labour market integration to make sense of participants' trajectories. Finally, I review the ethical considerations of this research project and the safeguards that I put in place during the study.

Chapter 6 introduces the first of my findings and provides a descriptive overview of the participants in my study and their labour market characteristics, categorising them according to the two primary economic sectors for which their initial employment permit was issued (A&FS or D&CS). I describe the main features of each sector before describing the experiences of participants, focusing on themes such as recruitment and pay, and mobility and progression. For each of the sectors, I distinguish two primary subcategories to understand the experience of labour migrants for each sector. For the A&FS I focus on the ethnic subsector and the importance of living arrangements, and for the D&CS, the categorisation of care provided between domestic and institutional care industries. The final section of the chapter describes the labour market trajectories of participants and uses a conceptualisation based on a study developed by Liversage (2009) to explain the different paths present within the cohort. I then explain some of the facilitators and factors that condition such pathways.

Chapter 7 introduces participants' narratives regarding their life experiences in Ireland. Their description of the different stages through which they established their new life in Ireland helps us understand the obstacles and enablers of integration for labour migrants in Ireland. The first section of the chapter focuses on their experiences in deciding to

migrate and organising the move to Ireland, addressing motivation, access to information and reliance on third parties. The following section focuses on the different experiences of precarity associated with their status as labour migrants in Ireland. It adds to the description of their employment experiences described in the previous chapters and outlines how immobility, conflict and irregularity shaped their settlement in the country and the limited means they have to react to these experiences. Finally, the third section outlines some of the experiences of exclusion shared among participants which result from their status as low-paid and precarious workers in a system that discourages progression and facilitates irregularisation.

In **Chapter 8**, I discuss the role that family life plays throughout the process of migration. A key concept in migration theory, introduced in Chapter 3, is the household strategy. If migration is understood as a household venture, then family-related decision-making should be key to the different stages of mobility and immobility. This chapter shows how precarious migrant workers face difficulties in reuniting with family members or forming new arrangements, as they struggle with work and care responsibilities in their new countries of residence. Because of the inability to reunify (or the choice not to), households explore multiple transnational care strategies that affect how they engage in the labour market in host and home country contexts. The second section of this chapter focuses on the coping strategies employed by households to deal with the different experiences of precarity, everyday racism and exclusion described in the study. These include labour-market related strategies and other means found by households to ease the constraints they experience in their daily lives.

Chapter 9, the conclusion, has three primary objectives: to consider in full the findings of this research; to identify specific policy measures to contribute to policymaking and activism on immigration in Ireland; and to outline how the thesis contributes to academic literature. I first reflect on the three key themes of the research: how the temporary nature of the labour migration regime for low skills employment creates liminal legality; how this informs the quality of employment and ability of migrants to integrate, leading to hyper-precarity; and how, in the context of a limited integration regime and welfare regime, hyper-precarity spills over into family life, home and abroad. I then make specific recommendations in five broad areas: labour migration policy, mobility, irregularity, activation and the integration of migrant dependants. By applying the learnings of those who participated in the study, these recommendations aim to improve the experiences of newcomers to Ireland. The application of such learning is crucial at this time because in

the context of increased demand for migrant labour in Ireland, the framework of migration needs reform. Finally, I reflect in the contribution the thesis makes to knowledge and to key debates in academic literature.

Conclusion

The overarching aim of this study is to contribute to the knowledge about precarity in migration and the experience of labour migrants in Ireland. There is currently a gap in the literature about how the structural framework of Ireland's employment permit system impacts on the labour market trajectories of migrants and the lives of their wider households. I anticipate that the analysis of the experiences of participants will highlight the limitations of Ireland's current labour migration regime and identify what improvements are required. Advocates and academics alike have already recognised the need for reform in the Irish labour migration regime and the findings of this study, as well as the policy recommendations I propose, will contribute to that reform.

In the next section, I contextualise the migration developments in Ireland. I focus on the changes in migration flows and how these are associated with the evolving pace of the Irish economy. I introduce the main developments in immigration legislation and policy, focusing on the framework for labour migration governance, which is most relevant to my research question. This information will help the reader situate the research question and the study being carried out.

Chapter 2 – Ireland’s Migration Journey

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to enable the reader to understand how the Irish labour migration regime originated and evolved. I outline the main features of the system: its temporariness and its two-tiered approach, which form the backdrop of my hypothesis that Ireland’s migration regime is conducive to experiences of precarity, including entrapment in the bottom end of a segmented and racialised labour market. I then describe the policy changes which over time further embedded precarity, racialisation and segmentation in Ireland’s migration regime. First the chapter provides a historical overview of immigration to Ireland from the mid-1990s until 2019. In the next section, I focus on the legislative and policy framework governing immigration and particularly labour migration. I show how legislative developments reacted to, rather than paved the way for, the large influx of migrants. Similarly, I also describe how the employment permit system evolved over the past two decades, from a largely *laissez-faire* approach to a sophisticated, yet restrictive, migration policy that focuses on limiting lower-skilled migration and preferring applicants for higher-paid positions. The third section gives an overview of the main categories of migrants in Ireland, who, despite not being formally accounted for in the state’s economic migration policy, play an important role in the labour market and one that benefits employers and the State alike.

Background

The changes in migration flows in Ireland closely parallel periods of economic growth and recession. Until 1996, Ireland experienced various levels of negative net migration, with a high incidence during the economic recession of the 1980s (Barrett and Duffy 2008), during which time over 200,000 individuals left the country (6% of the population). Rapid economic growth during the period known as the ‘Celtic Tiger’, from 1995 through to 2008, transformed Ireland from a country of net emigration to a country of net immigration. That shift took place during a period of unprecedented economic growth, with rates averaging 9% per year from 1994 to 2000, and 5% between 2001 and

2007. Sustaining such growth required a 75% increase in labour market participation from 1994 onwards, reaching 2.1 million workers in 2007. Immigration was key to achieving the necessary levels of employment to sustain economic growth in the context of labour and skills shortages. Existing literature (Barrett and Duffy 2008; Voitchovsky, Maitre and Nolan 2012; Voitchovsky 2014) divides the growth in the Irish economy into two periods. The first period was fuelled by high levels of foreign direct investment in technologically advanced industries, which required skilled workers and lasted from the early 1990s to the early 2000s, whilst the second period of growth was characterised by a drop in foreign direct investment and an increase in domestic demand (particularly in the service sector), accompanied by very fast growth in construction. The related heavy demand for lower- to medium-skilled workers lasted from the early 2000s until the beginning of the recession in 2008.

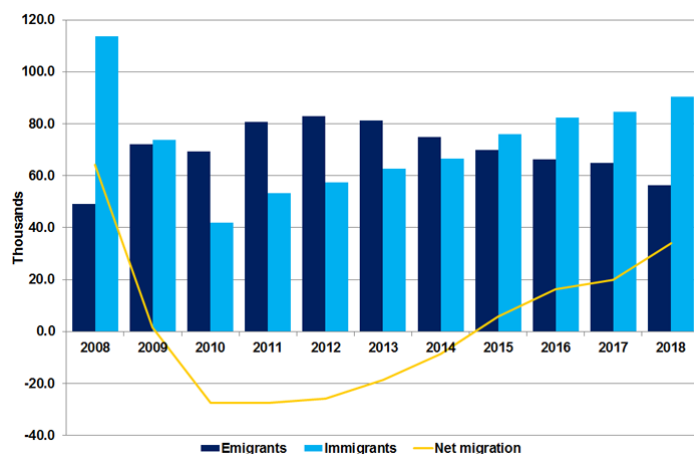
In the first period, the demand for skilled workers was met partly by the return of Irish emigrants and partly by immigration of non-Irish workers. According to Ruhs (2003) the ratio between returning Irish and immigrants stood at 54.5:45.5. If we look closer at the origins of immigrants, we note that 45% of those were from EU Member States and 55% were from outside the EU. The findings of the Census in 2002 indicate that there were 60,000 non-European workers in the labour force at the time. By the end of that year, there were 40,505 work permits (of which 23,207 were renewals) compared to just 5,750 in 1999, a 600% growth in work permits in a period of three years. The many nationalities that came to Ireland through the employment permit system in the period 1996-2004 contributed to increased diversity in the Irish labour market and changed the demographic composition of the country. In 2003, Ireland's labour migration policy shifted significantly from a largely *laissez-faire* attitude driven by employers to enable quick labour supply, particularly in the lower end of the labour market, to a more interventionist approach where successive governments developed policy to decide who was admitted into the country (Barrett et al. 2006).

In the context of EU enlargement, Ireland, together with Sweden and the United Kingdom, was one of the few EU states to grant full labour market access to the ten new states from May 2004 onwards. This policy change aimed to give preference to nationals of acceding EU countries for lower- and medium-level occupations, and to limit non-EU migration to only higher-skilled and higher-paid jobs. The immigration of nationals from the newest EU Member States was so rapid that by 2006 (Census 2006) they represented

the second-largest group of immigrants after British nationals. This change in policy, coupled with the introduction of the Working Visa arrangement, which I describe later in this chapter, helped segment the labour market and contributed to the process of racialisation which accompanies it. High-earning and managerial positions were linked to Irish and western European citizens and nationals of Anglo-Saxon countries (generally on Work Visa arrangements), whereas the newly arrived Eastern European workers occupied medium- to lower-earning jobs but with a possibility of progression. Relegated to the bottom of the labour market were non-European migrants on work permits and with increasingly precarious legal status, who were trapped with limited to no opportunities of progression in low-paid, intensive employment categories in sectors such as domestic care work, kitchen work and agriculture.

In 2008, the onset of the global financial crisis hit Ireland more severely and for longer than other countries in Europe (Callan et al. 2014). Ireland lost 14.1% of Gross National Product (GNP) in just one year, between 2008 and 2009, and returned to negative net migration rates from 2010 onwards. In particular, the construction industry, which provided employment for a large number of immigrant workers, was severely affected. The reduction in domestic demand impacted significantly on both the retail and the A&F sectors, where many low-paid migrants were concentrated (Barrett and Kelly 2012). Figure 1 below illustrates how the period from 2010 to 2015 was characterised by high levels of emigration, averaging 80,000 individuals per year and mainly composed of Irish nationals and citizens of other EU Member States. During this period, negative net migration was at a rate of 20,000 individuals per year. Figure 1 also illustrates how since the economic recovery, which triggered a new period of growth from 2013 onwards, the numbers started inverting with a return to positive net migration in 2015. A positive economic outlook and strong growth have since been continuously attracting immigrants to Ireland. In 2018, Ireland experienced a net migration rate reminiscent of the early years of the Celtic Tiger (CSO 2019b). Yet the composition of Ireland's immigrant flows has changed significantly, becoming more diverse, as described later in this chapter.

Figure 1 - Immigration, Emigration and Net Migration in Ireland, 2008 - 2018



Source: *Population and Migration Estimates, CSO 2019*

The Legislative and Policy Framework

Immigration Legislation

The development of immigration-related legislation in Ireland has been rather limited, resulting in a system largely based on non-statutory administrative procedures. *The Aliens Act, 1935* served the purpose of introducing the distinction between ‘citizens’ and ‘aliens’ in the newly formed Irish state while at the same time giving preferential treatment to British and some Commonwealth nationals as part of the established Common Travel Area with the United Kingdom (Ryan 2001). The Act failed to detail comprehensively the status and entitlements of those deemed ‘aliens’ and was later complemented by the introduction of the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act (1956) which regulated the granting of Irish citizenship. Loyal (2011) argues that the Citizenship Act reworked the existing ‘citizen’ – ‘alien’ binary by reinforcing it with a ‘national’ and ‘non-national’ one that continues to shape the racial contours of immigration policymaking today.

The *European Communities (EC) Act, 1972* paved the way for Ireland to enter the EC in 1973. Its enactment introduced the notion of freedom of movement for nationals of the then eight member states of the EC. Later, the act was amended several times to account for developments that shaped the EU and the successive enlargements that took place over the years. Loyal (2011) argues that by joining the EC, the previously mentioned binary was transformed to accommodate the category of European nationality. The

change in migration flows in the 1990s described in the previous section created a new concern for public policy in Ireland. Rather than pre-emptive, the passage of legislation was responsive to evolving developments. For example, the *Refugee Act* of 1996 was introduced to provide a framework for the processing of asylum applications in Ireland at a time when an increased number of asylum claimants were arriving.

The *Immigration Act, 1999* followed and responded to the need to address the issue of migrants with irregular status which resulted from many asylum applicants having had their claims refused by the State. The Act therefore laid grounds for a system of deportability and detainability (concepts introduced in the first chapter) in Ireland by specifying the rules underpinning detention and removal of migrants from the State. At the same time, the Act introduced the status of *Humanitarian Leave to Remain*, an appeal mechanism that was developed in response to the newly created process of deportation (De Genova 2002; De Genova 2007). Finally, the *Immigration Act, 2003* was introduced to clarify the powers of the Minister for Justice to create, grant, modify and revoke different categories of legal status for and to non-EU nationals in the State. Effectively, it conferred a substantive amount of power to civil servants to take decisions regarding the authorisation or the revocation of one's presence in the State without granting any legal remedy or the right to appeal a negative decision. Over the years, there have been repeated calls by civil society for the introduction of comprehensive legislation dealing with all aspects of immigration, including visa processing, protection needs and residence status (Landy 2015; MRCI 2015a). This was initially attempted with the introduction of the first iteration of the *Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill* in 2006, which failed to reach any conclusive outcome among members of the legislature. Similar attempts also failed in 2008 and 2010. Economic recession and high levels of emigration among Irish nationals meant migration-related policymaking was relegated to a lesser priority.

In 2015, the Minister for Justice announced that the Government no longer intended to introduce one single piece of comprehensive legislation and would instead proceed by sectioning different pieces of previously published bills. This resulted in the publication of the *International Protection Act, 2015* which updated Ireland's largely outdated asylum legislation and introduced a single application procedure for different international and humanitarian protection schemes. Table 1 summarises the main legislative developments regulating the immigration framework in Ireland. Taken together, these acts constitute the legal apparatus of the Irish immigration system. They are limited in their scope and leave a substantial legal vacuum that is filled by a large

amount of decision-making power that rests with individual civil servants under the principle of ministerial discretion. Over the years, this vacuum has produced much uncertainty over the residence status of migrants, resulting in what can be best described as processes of irregularisation (Goldring and Landolt 2013: 330), and contributing to the liminal lives of some migrants in Ireland.

Table 1 - Main legislative developments regulating the immigration framework in Ireland

Year	Legislation Introduced/Amended	Focus of legislation
1935	Aliens Act	Introduces the citizen/alien binary.
1956	Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act	Introduces the provisions that regulate the granting of Irish citizenship.
1972	European Communities Act	Introduces freedom of movement for nationals of the EC (later to become the EU).
1996	Refugee Act	Introduces the Refugee Determination procedure.
1999	Immigration Act	Regulates detention and removal.
2004	Immigration Act	Introduces the power to create, modify and revoke different categories of immigration status.
2006, 2008, 2010	Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill	Aims to introduce a single comprehensive legislation covering all aspects of immigration. Failed to pass.
2015	International Protection Act	Reforms the asylum system. Introduces a single procedure to assess claims for refugee determination, subsidiary protection and humanitarian leave to remain.

Source: Author

The Governance of Labour Migration

The State regulates the access of non-EEA nationals to the Irish labour market. It does so by creating legal channels for both immigration and employment. Ruhs (2003) divides such channels between employment-based and non-employment-based channels. It is important to underline that non-employment-based immigration channels may grant partial to full access to the labour market for non-EEA nationals. According to Ruhs' categorisation, labour migration can be defined as the type of migration where employment is the defining factor or the primary reason to migrate. Until the enlargement of the EU in May 2004, the employment permit system (initially called the 'work permit' system) was the main source of labour migration to the country. While after the enlargement policy changes sought to source all lower- and medium-skilled labour from within the EU, the reality is that the need for non-EU labour force remained, but instead non-employment based channels were used to source these workers, who could no longer obtain employment permits (MRCI 2015). Examples of this include the increased participation of international students in sectors previously associated with holders of employment permits, even though the latter were often employed in an insecure and precarious manner (Gilmartin, Coppari and Phelan 2016). This intensified the liminality of the system.

According to O'Connell and McGinnity (2008), by 1999 the scope for domestic labour supply had reached its capacity and labour market participation stood at a record high of 65.8%. With 77,600 vacancies unfilled, employers started looking abroad and actively sought to recruit workers from outside the EEA. Prior to 1999, the numbers of work permits issued yearly (including renewals) had not exceeded 5,000. Driven by continuous economic growth, the numbers jumped from 5,750 in 1999 to over 17,800 in 2000, circumventing any form of policy intervention in the process of recruitment. While it had become evident at this stage that migrant labour from outside the EU was critical for the growth of the economy, the system operated without a proper legislative framework, being based entirely on administrative regulations and effectively employer-led with very little intervention from the State. The total number of permits (including renewals) reached another all-time high in 2003, when 47,707 were issued. Almost three-quarters of those permits were for jobs considered 'low-skilled', evidence that an 'occupational gap' and a racialised and precarious migrant experience were being developed (Barrett and Duffy 2008).

Work permits were issued to the employer, rather than to the migrant worker, for a duration of one year, renewable yearly thereafter. The work permit was not transferrable and was location- and occupation-specific, intended solely for those specified on the permit, employer and employee. As Ruhs (2005) argues, the State's rationale for such 'tying' was to ensure that the migrant worker is only admitted into Ireland after having secured a job and ensuring that the employment is aligned to the labour market needs of the State. In the year 2000, the Government introduced a new policy regime called 'Work Visa/Work Authorisation', which served the purpose of attracting highly skilled professionals into the ICT, healthcare and construction sectors. Unlike its work permit equivalent, the Working Visa/Work Authorisation category allowed for sectorial mobility and was issued for a period of two years. Here, we can see examples of how institutionalised precarity (Anderson 2010; Fudge 2012) has constituted a cornerstone of labour migration in Ireland by enforcing processes described by Lorey (2015) as governmental precarisation. Governmental precarisation refers to modes of governing which destabilise people's ways of living, including through the regulation of labour. In this case, through the employment permit, Government imposes limitations on permit holders' mobility and sectors of employment where they can work.

Despite the preferential treatment of labour migrants in the ICT, healthcare and construction sectors, the uptake of the scheme remained relatively low with just over 10,000 visas/authorisations being issued in the lifetime of the scheme. In order to ensure the alignment of workers to labour market requirements, the State had put in place a 'Labour Market Test'. This required employers to check the availability of 'local workers' in the register of unemployed workers, including other EEA workers, before submitting an application for a work permit on behalf of a migrant. In practice, there was no clarity on the procedure and, until 2002, this policy was loosely implemented. However, in January 2002, with a view to curtailing the number of permits issued for low-paid occupations, a requirement was introduced to advertise a job vacancy with FÁS – the national employment agency – for four weeks prior to the processing of a work permit application. Due to the high demand for labour and a scarcity of supply, the policy had no effect, and the number of permits issued continued to increase, reaching a record high of 40,000 by the end of 2002. Effectively, any employer prepared to advertise a vacancy for the required period, and able to pay the corresponding fee for the employment permit, was able to recruit a non-EU worker.

In April 2003, in arguably the most significant migration policy decision to date (Ruhs 2003; Ruhs 2005), Ireland opted not to restrict access to the Irish labour market for nationals of Member States acceding to the EU following the 2004 enlargement. In doing so, Ireland joined Sweden and the United Kingdom as the only three countries allowing for full mobility. At the time of this decision, nationals of those States constituted a third of those employed through the work permit system. Undoubtedly, the Government had taken a strategic decision to favour EU migration. Tánaiste Mary Harney announced that she was “*confident that, in light of EU Accession, Irish employers will be able to find the great majority of their overseas personnel needs met from within the enlarged EU, thus obviating the need for work permits*”(Ruhs 2005, p.39). To date, this remains the policy of the State, and the regime continues to monitor closely the entry, stay and employment of non-EU nationals. This policy change has had a significant impact on the process of racializing the Irish labour market. To facilitate this policy, the *Employment Permits Act, 2003* was published, introducing occupational categories deemed ineligible for the purpose of new employment permits. This obliged employers to give preference to EEA nationals from ‘old’ member states as well as those from the future accession countries. The legislation was accompanied by an announcement from the Department of Employment, Trade and Enterprise that it would no longer consider applications for work permits in low-skilled occupations. It is important to note that the policy change came in 2003 when there was a slow-down in growth and an increase in unemployment, which raised fear and speculation about the role of immigration in generating labour market tensions. Starting from October 2003, applications for new employment permits for non-EU nationals (except for nationals of future accession states) were being systematically refused.

The changes had the desired effect, resulting in a significant decrease in the number of work permits issued: for example, the number between May and December 2004 was 34% lower than the corresponding figure for May to December 2003 (Ruhs 2005). Conversely, the year preceding May 2004 saw a 35% increase in permits being issued to nationals of EU accession countries; this was coupled with a significant number of them entering the labour market irregularly, expecting to be regularised after May 2004 (Ruhs 2005). In the year following enlargement, over 34,000 nationals of New Member States (NMS) migrated to Ireland. The number of those who arrived prior to the onset of the economic recession (May 2004 – May 2008) totalled 227,000 or 5.6% of Ireland’s population (CSO 2006, 2011).

EU enlargement changed the demographics of Ireland and brought the monthly number of new work permits issued back to 1999 levels. However, it certainly did not eliminate the demand for workers from outside the enlarged EU, as can be evidenced by the increase in numbers of those entering the country through non-employment-based channels (MRCI 2015a). For instance, the number of nationals arriving from the acceding countries increased from 34,000 in 2004 to almost 55,000 in 2008. In late 2005, the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs released a report, commissioned by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Employment, titled “*Skills Needs in the Irish Economy: The Role of Migration*”. It identified the need for annual inward migration of approximately 25,000 individuals in the period between 2006-2011 in order to sustain growth levels and found that Ireland was able to meet its demand for unskilled labour from within the enlarged EU. It also found that during the same period there would be a significant need for graduate labour. It therefore recommended that a framework be developed to facilitate the immigration of high-skilled labour from countries outside the European Union.

Following the findings of the report in June 2006, the Government published the *Employment Permits Act, 2006*. Among other things, it ended the Working Visa/Work Authorisation scheme to replace it with a new ‘Green Card Scheme’. Unlike its predecessor, which aimed at filling gaps in occupational sectors deemed “highly-skilled”, the new Green Card used annual remuneration as a proxy for skills. This new scheme was open to any employment with an annual remuneration above €60,000 and specified “critical sectors”, such as healthcare and ICT, for which the annual remuneration was lowered to €30,000. Unlike the Working Visa/Work Authorisation, the Green Card did not grant any labour market mobility for the initial two-year period but did grant full access thereafter. The 2006 Act also introduced a minimum salary requirement of €30,000 for other work permits, strengthened the labour market test and extended the list of ineligible job categories.

Other important policies were also introduced. Among them, the Long Term Residency Scheme allowed work permit holders to gain full mobility in the labour market and the right to reside for five years once they had completed 60 months of legal residence in the State (compared to a requirement of just two years for holders of Green Cards).¹ The act also allowed, for the first time, the possibility for employees (rather than employers) to

¹ For the purpose of making a residence and citizenship application, immigration registrations are counted by the exact number of days or months. As processing delays were frequent, as well as waiting time for registration with the authorities, these did not necessarily match the length of the employment permits. For example, a one-year employment permit could result in just 9 months of registration due to the above-mentioned delays.

submit a new or renewal application. It also extended the duration of permits to two years, provided the offer of employment was made for that length of time. Unlike in 2003, the State decided not to allow Romanians and Bulgarians (who were joining the EU in January 2007) to have free access to the labour market. Instead, they were required to obtain an employment permit for one year, after which they would be granted full access. While some of the changes in policy were welcomed, such as the introduction of the Long Term Residency Scheme or the possibility of the employee making the application, the changes increased the complexity of the system by creating multiple subcategories among both EU and non-EU nationals. The changes also had the effect of further cementing the low-skill/high-skill and temporary/permanent divides (Rajkumar et al. 2012).

In 2008, the onset of the economic recession cast doubts over the future of Ireland's labour migration policy, and by the end of 2009 both the GNP and employment contracted by over 8%. Amid increasing unemployment, Tánaiste Mary Coughlan announced further reforms to the employment permit system with a view to ensuring preference for Irish and EEA workers. The proposed changes, which came into effect from 1 June 2009, strengthened the labour market test by extending the period during which a vacancy should be advertised for the uptake of Irish and EEA workers, and further extending the list of ineligible job categories. Initially it was intended for a labour market test to be introduced at the renewal stage, but strong opposition from civil society resulted in the proposal being dropped. Groups advocating for migrant rights also obtained concessions in relation to employment permit holders who had lost their jobs. A period of 6 months was introduced during which an individual could find an alternative employer and apply under a facilitated redundancy scheme, without needing to leave the country or meet the new and stricter labour migration rules.

Very few policy and legislative developments were made during the period of economic recession and recovery that lasted until 2013. The *Employment Permits (Amendments) Act, 2014* was the first piece of legislation dealing with the employment permit system introduced since 2006. According to Minister for Jobs Richard Bruton, it aimed to “update provisions for the employment permits schemes in line with policy and economic developments since 2007” (MerrionStreet.ie 2014). The Act introduced nine categories for which an employment permit could be introduced. As the economy continued on a strong path of recovery, there were shortages of labour and skills once again, yet the main changes in the legislation related only to highly skilled occupations. These are summarised below:

- The Critical Skills Employment Permit replaces the Green Card. It also introduces immediate family reunification and a fast track to long-term residency. An extended list of highly skilled occupations points to the increased gaps in skills, particularly in the ICT sector.
- The General Employment Permit replaces the Work Permit. The broad provisions in place are kept, while reducing the required period of advertising of the vacancy to just two weeks.
- The Spouses, Civil Partners and Dependants Employment Permit replaces the “Spousal/Dependant Permit” and limits it to family members of Critical Skills Employment Permit holders or recognised researchers. This means that family members of other employment permit holders have to apply for permits with no preferential access to the labour market, ending a scheme which had been in place since 2004.
- The remaining categories deal with very specific employment circumstances such as intra-company transfers, exchange agreements, etc.

As economic recovery gives way to a renewed period of strong economic growth and full employment, Ireland’s labour migration policy continues to be stubbornly focused on attracting higher-skilled workers. In 2019, labour and skills shortages were once again becoming apparent, CIPD (2019) report how 84% of surveyed organisations experience skills shortages in a range of sectors including ICT, financial services and customer service. A September 2018 *Review of Ireland’s Economic Migration Policy* saw the introduction of several quota-based schemes for employment in the horticulture, hospitality, meat processing and dairy industries (otherwise ineligible under the General Employment Permit category) and the reintroduction of a Seasonal Employment Permit (which had been removed in 2007).

Table 2 summarizes the above discussion and the main legislative and policy developments underpinning the employment permit system. Overall, Ireland’s labour migration policy continues to evolve according to a dual framework, where higher-skilled migrants are offered permanency, protection and rights, while lower-skilled migrants are met with temporariness, vulnerabilities and restriction, creating liminal lives (Lewis et al. 2014). This restrictive approach, which started in 2003, resulted in an increased use of non-employment related migration channels, to which I dedicate the next section of this chapter.

Table 2 - Legislative and policy developments underpinning the Irish employment permit system

Year	Legislation/Policy	Main Focus
2003	Employment Permits Act	Legislates the employment permit system. Introduces preference for EEA nationals.
2006	Employment Permits Act	Introduces the Green Card. Allows workers to submit applications. Introduces two-year permits.
2009	Policy Change	Extends the labour market test. Introduces redundancy arrangements.
2014	Employment Permits Act	Introduces a total of 9 different permits. Reforms the spousal/dependant permit.
2018	Review of Ireland's Economic Migration Policy	Advances recommendations for reform of the employment permit. Reintroduces Seasonal Permit. Introduces quota-based schemes.

Source: Author

Other Categories of Migrants

As outlined earlier in this chapter, many categories of migrants do not fall under Ireland's labour migration policy but do participate in the labour market. Over the years, Ireland's categorisation of migrants became more complex and, in turn, access to its labour market (whether regularly or irregularly) has also become multifaceted. Once the main category of migrants in the country, employment permit holders have now become a minority both among the overall migrant population and among non-EU residents. For reference, there were just over 13,000 employment permits holders in 2018, among 168,700 non-EU migrants resident in Ireland. In the same year, non-EU migrants represented 27% of the total of 622,700 migrants residing in the country (CSO 2019b, DJE 2019). While the primary focus of this research is the experiences of labour migrants (specifically those who entered Ireland on work permits prior to the EU's enlargement), the various wider categories of migrants who participate in the labour market are relevant as they impact

on the overall structure of the labour market and so affect the experience of employment of labour migrants. They are also in themselves sources of hyper-precarity and liminal lives. Here I find similarities with Lewis and Waite (2015) when they describe the experience of asylum seekers in the UK labour market, despite them not being explicitly considered in debates around precarity and exploitation. The discussion below categorises the status of the main non-EU groups found in Ireland:

The Process of Family Reunification and the Status of Dependants

The definition of a dependant varies according to the status of the resident. Overall, in 2017 fewer than 40,000 migrants were registered under this family category. Ireland only affords legislated rights to family reunification to those who have been granted refugee status. For everyone else, a non-legislative system based on ministerial discretion is in place. For the purposes of such applications, only legally married spouses and dependants under the age of 18 are considered. The Department of Justice first introduced guidelines for this process in December 2013, differentiating between those who can benefit from immediate family reunification and those who must have a year's residence before applying. Aside from these requirements, the main condition is to demonstrate that one has sufficient earnings. Currently, the income threshold is set at €40,000 in income over the two years prior to application for Irish sponsors, and €30,000 in the previous 12 months for non-EEA sponsors. Since 25 July 2008, as an outcome of the ruling from the European Court of Justice in *Metock v Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform* (2008), EEA nationals who are in employment can apply to have their non-EEA spouses and children under the age of 20 join them in Ireland. These qualifying dependants are given unrestricted access to the labour market.

These financial thresholds are adjusted according to the number of dependents for whom reunification is sought. The main concern of the State is that an applicant displays an annual income of the amount required to disqualify them from accessing State benefits, such as the Working Family Payment (formally known as Family Income Supplement). Similarly, a sponsor's previous history of reliance on State benefits will be considered and may result in an application being disqualified, even if the sponsor now earns above the indicated income thresholds at the time of applying. The bottom line is family reunification should not represent a risk to the State incurring any financial burden for migrants exercising their right to family life.

Family members who joined their non-EU spouses in Ireland are granted a Stamp 3 – permission to reside in the country. Along with not allowing them to work, it prevents them from accessing public funds, such as social welfare entitlements and HSE services. Effectively, this requires them to hold private medical insurance to be granted the right to live in Ireland, representing yet another financial burden on precarious households. The ability to renew a dependant’s permission to reside is conditional on the main sponsor’s residence. Effectively, this represents a ‘tying’ between family members. There is no guarantee of maintaining legal status in case of divorce, separation or dispute. Also, if for any reason the main sponsor loses his right to reside (loss of employment, revocation of status) there are no ways to reverse the dependency between family members. There is a clear gendered impact of such a policy, with women representing the majority of those on spousal residence permits. A few years ago, thanks to civil society efforts, a mechanism was introduced in order to allow victims of domestic violence to maintain an immigration status following separation (INIS 2019).

The dependants of non-EEA nationals, who, if successful, can remain in the State, no longer have permission to enter employment. The Spousal/Dependant employment permit was relinquished in 2014. This was an application submitted by dependants of non-EEA workers resident in Ireland to acquire permission to work and did not require a labour market test, a minimum remuneration or minimum number of hours, or a processing fee. Instead, dependants are now required to secure their own employment permit without any concession. In contrast, dependants of those holding the new Critical Skills Permit are granted access to the labour market without the need for any additional permission.

Ireland’s approach to family reunification rights helps deepen the stratification of migrants, differentiating between those worthy of migrating as a family unit and those who must first be scrutinised in the eye of the State. Family reunification policy development is an example of how immigration policy, through its complex system of categorisation and ever-changing rules, acts as a tool for racializing migrant groups in society and in the labour market (Mora and Undurraga 2013). Unlike several European countries, Ireland does not currently require integration, civic or language tests for spouses and children seeking to join family members, yet the process remains discretionary. Although the introduction of guidelines has helped to add clarity to the process, it remains arbitrary in nature and refusals cannot be legally challenged. Applicants are required to wait several months before re-applying, with time ticking in

their disfavour. Critical skills permit holders are most often associated with non-European Anglo-Saxon workers and a small fraction of highly skilled individuals from emerging economies, namely India and China. General Employment Permits linked to lower-paid occupations are generally issued to nationals of developing countries. By limiting access to the labour market for spouses of the latter but not the former, government policy is not only sanctioning an increase in number of one-income households for one group (an example of governmental precarisation) but also gendering and racializing the labour market.

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Between 1992 and 2017 there were over 98,000 applications for asylum in Ireland. Applications started increasing in the mid-1990s to reach a peak of 11,634 in 2002; by the end of 2018 there were 5,700 asylum seekers in Ireland (DJE 2019). Much like the overall immigration system, the asylum and refugee framework developed in reaction to these increased flows. Initially, overall success rates for asylum seekers and refugees seeking protection averaged roughly 10%. However, over the years, a significant number of applicants were granted status under several other categories, or on appeal. From the year 2000 onwards, regardless of circumstances, asylum seekers were restricted from working in Ireland. This policy put Ireland, as one of just two EU countries with an outright ban, at odds with European counterparts. In June 2018, the Government responded to a legal challenge to its employment ban with legislation allowing asylum seekers to access the labour market through an employment registration system nine months after the date their protection application is lodged. This policy change has not had a significant impact on the labour market, other than perhaps formalising to a certain extent the employment of a small number of asylum seekers. Once a positive decision is made, refugees have full access to the labour market and can avail of activation measures as well as other employment support schemes.

International Student Migration

Because EU nationals are not required to register in Ireland, or state their reason for migrating, governmental policy on international students focuses on non-EEA students (hence future reference to international students in this thesis denotes non-EEA students). International student migration has long been a feature of the Irish immigration system. Their numbers have increased alongside other migrant flows. Census 2002 found there were approximately 11,000 non-EEA students present in the country across all types of institutions (third level, further education and English language teaching). These numbers continued to grow as other categories of non-EEA migration, such as employment permits and asylum seekers, were increasingly restricted. In 2004, after the EU enlargement, the figure rose to 21,270 and continued to increase throughout periods of both economic growth and recession. In 2015, registrations reached a peak of 43,540, or the equivalent of 38% of the overall registration of non-EEA migrants in the same year. Among the overall number of registrations, students in third-level education and those in English language teaching represent roughly 40% each; the remaining are enrolled in secondary schooling and vocational training (Pan 2011). Even though third level courses and language courses are subjected to very different policies, they both reflect Ireland's efforts to internationalise its education sector (DES 2016).

Until 2010, there was no limit to the period that an international student could be registered in the State. They were entitled to take up employment in the State for a maximum of forty hours a week for the equivalent of six months and twenty hours a week for the equivalent of the remaining six months. In 2007, a graduate scheme was introduced by which non-EEA students who completed a third-level education degree could work full-time for six months (later gradually increased to two years) before applying for an employment permit in the area of their studies. Conversely, students in English language teaching were perceived with suspicion, and often assumed to be exploiting the system to gain access to the labour market that was otherwise limited to non-EEA workers. Motivated by a fear of "abuse of the system", the Minister for Justice announced an overhaul of the student immigration system in September 2010. Time limits were introduced for those seeking to register as international students in Ireland. Individuals pursuing a degree programme would be allowed to remain up to seven consecutive years while all other students' permission to stay would be capped at three years (Gilmartin et al. 2016; Gilmartin et al. 2020).

Because of the abrupt change in policy, a significant number of students “timed-out” over the next 12 months and fell into irregularity. After much advocacy by civil society organisations, the “2004 Student Probationary Scheme” was introduced. Those who were affected by the policy change and who had arrived before 2004 were able to apply for a two-year probationary residence before having access to long-term residence status (Gilmartin et al. 2016). While over 10,000 are believed to have kept or regained residence under this scheme, the problem was not entirely solved, so a second similar scheme was introduced in October 2018 catering for those who resided in the State with student permission between 2005 and 2011. The processing of those applications is still ongoing (Gilmartin et al. 2020). The difference in treatment between the two categories of international students (degree and non-degree) reflects a problematic approach to international student migration. International students are highly desirable due to their ability to fill labour shortages, but policymakers continue to question the nature of their residence in Ireland. For instance, in January 2015, once again citing motives of “abuse of the system”, the Government introduced stricter regulations limiting the work concessions and residence limits afforded to such students. From that date onwards, full-time work could only be carried out by international students for five months across fixed periods of the year, and their overall permitted residence in Ireland was reduced to two years (Gilmartin et al. 2020).

This is a clear example of how the State benefits from the use of non-employment-based channels. Residence status is limited and their availability for employment is restricted; in addition, legislation prevents them from accessing social welfare entitlements, and their status precludes them from gaining residency and citizenship. All of this makes it difficult for them to develop attachments in the labour market and in society. However, due to the increased interest in Ireland as an educational destination, there is a constant supply of students/workers replacing the previous ones who had to leave due to immigration restrictions. Employers benefit from subservient workers, more interested in keeping their employment for as long as they reside in the state than in seeking improved conditions, and the State is able to fulfil labour market shortages without the need to consider entitlements to mobility, welfare or citizenship (MRCI 2015a). It is a win-win situation to the detriment of the workers’ conditions and is another source of liminal lives.

Parents of Irish Children

Prior to 2005, every child born in the Republic of Ireland was an Irish citizen, and as a result, their parents obtained residency and unrestricted access to the labour market. This changed when, in January 2003, the Supreme Court removed such rights for parents, citing abuse of the system. This led to a referendum in 2004 to determine whether birth-right citizenship should be maintained, and voters agreed on the introduction of *jus sanguinis* (citizenship based on the parents' nationality). Strong racial undertones informed the backdrop for the citizenship referendum. In particular, the reference to the need to protect Ireland from "*women from eastern Europe and elsewhere in the world who have come here on holiday visas, given birth, collected the birth certificate and the passport for the child and returned home*" as expressed by then-Minister for Justice, Michael McDowell (Brennock 2004) shows how the Government played on nativism in order to influence the outcome of the vote. The changes in policies and legislation meant that a large cohort of people who were parents of Irish citizens had no access to residency rights. The Government introduced a temporary scheme, called the Irish Born Child Scheme, which regularised approximately 17,000 individuals falling into this category (Ruhs and Quinn 2009). In March 2011, the European Court of Justice delivered a ruling in the *Zambrano v Belgium* case that parents of a child under 18 who is also an EU national must have rights to residency and employment in the country of the child's nationality, insofar as the child is present. In Ireland this closed the legislative loophole resulting from the cessation of the Irish Born Child Scheme. Thanks to the permanent mechanism, an estimated 5,000 or more individuals subsequently gained residence and unrestricted access to the labour market (Ruhs and Quinn 2009).

Irregular Migration

Ireland's relatively small economy and peripheral island location means it is less likely be a destination for irregular migration. The very nature of irregular migration makes it impossible to determine exactly the number of individuals affected and, as the data of this thesis illustrates, many irregular migrants entered Ireland legally and subsequently became undocumented (MRCI 2014a). In 2009, the Department of Justice introduced a regularisation scheme for undocumented migrants who previously held an employment permit in the State. This policy measure is estimated to have regularised over 3,000

applicants (Gilmartin et al. 2016), including some of the participants interviewed in this study. The criteria stipulated by the scheme was later introduced as a legislative measure in the *Employment Permits Regulations 2014*, becoming a permanent regularisation mechanism for employment permit holders who became undocumented through no fault of their own. Consistent with the *Clandestino* project – a European Union-funded project to quantify the incidence of irregular migration across the Member States (Triandafyllidou 2009), MRCI estimated the number of undocumented adults to be between 20,000 and 26,000 (MRCI 2014a) with 87% of those surveyed in employment, mainly concentrated in low-paid sectors such as restaurants, domestic work and cleaning, where over 80% of the undocumented worked. Unsurprisingly, in the early 2000s these were sectors associated with the employment permit system until they were included in the list of ineligible job categories. Most undocumented migrants entered the country legally and fell into irregularity due to overstaying their permission or being unable to renew or amend their permission to legally reside on a longer-term basis (MRCI 2014a). The employment of undocumented migrants can often be precarious in nature. In their work, Lewis et al. (2015) theorise these constraints alongside a ‘continuum of unfreedom’. Undocumented migrants have particularly limited agency, which prevents them from advocating for improved conditions of employment (MRCI, 2014a; MRCI 2015a), and enjoy limited avenues for redress from exploitation, often fearing being deported if they make complaints.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the developments associated with migration, particularly labour migration, to Ireland. I have shown that the Irish legislative and policy framework was unprepared to accommodate the large flow of migrants arriving with the onset of the period of economic growth known as the ‘Celtic Tiger’. The *laissez-faire* attitude taken by successive governments has facilitated segmentation of the labour market by successive labour migration policy reforms and by embedding a division between low-skilled and high-skilled migration according to the type of permit and further categorisation. The context described in this chapter is essential to understand how precarity traps were developed in the Irish labour migration system. The lack of mobility and barriers to move from one category to another and the change in policy associated with the enlargement of the European Union helped further cement this entrapment. Increased competition from European migrants and other categories has limited the avenues for progression for labour migrants over the years.

While successive reforms were made over the past two decades, many structural problems regarding the governance of migration in Ireland remain, including limited legislative coverage of processes such as family reunification and overreliance on ministerial discretion – implemented by civil servants – in individual decision-making. The next chapter theoretically links the migrant regime with concepts of precarity. Because the migration regime creates entrapment and unfreedoms in the labour market and outside of it, a simple conceptualisation of precarity is not enough to accurately describe the experiences of labour migrants. The chapter offers the concept of hyper-precarity as more useful. Ireland’s social welfare regime to some degree determines how and whether precarious work creates precarious lives. The next chapter also examines how the labour and welfare regime intersects with the migration regime to deepen the realities of entrapment and unfreedom, rather than alleviating them.

Chapter 3 - Precarity

Introduction

As previously outlined, my research question focuses on the extent to which labour migrants experience precarity traps in Ireland and the extent to which government policy is responsible for and responsive to these traps. The previous chapter outlined the migration regime and its role in creating such traps. This chapter will conceptualise precarity both in and out of the labour market and, in assessing the precarity literature, adopts employment-based definitions of precarity arguing the concept of hyper-precarity is most useful in the context of this study. It also describes the Irish labour and welfare regime and their intersection with the migration regime and assesses the regimes' relationship to precarious migrants, asking whether they might mitigate employment hyper-precarity or cause it to trap such workers more and bleed into everyday life.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, I discuss the historical conceptualisation of precarity, giving a short overview of its recent emergence as a research topic and the usefulness of the concept for the purpose of my study. In the following section, I define precarious employment using the work of Vosko (2010), who incorporates both social location and social context as useful factors for understanding the relation between migration and precarious employment, particularly for those employed in gendered sectors such as domestic work. The third section further develops the links between precarity and migration, moving beyond the employment of migrants and introducing the concept of precarious migrant status and how it intersects with precarious employment to create hyper-precarity. The fourth section gives an overview of research on precarity in Ireland, introducing the main research findings on the experiences of precarious and non-standard employment. The final section overviews the Irish labour and welfare regimes and the extent to which they are responsive to those experiencing precarity, including migrants.

Defining Precarity

While the concept of ‘precarity’ has emerged over the past decade and a half as a key concept, the origins of the term can be traced as far back as the 1970s, when the term *precarité* was associated with experiences of poverty in France (Pitrou 1978). The term later became associated with employment, particularly as employment structures changed and the mere fact of working no longer implied a safeguard from poverty, opening discussions about the ‘working poor’. The early 2000s saw the revival of the May Day movement and a call for a unified EuroMayDay across European cities, focusing on experiences of precarity. These were joined by the *San Precario* and the *Precarias*, aimed at highlighting the gender perspective of precarity. Addressing the increased precarisation of life became the central focus of such social movements, starting in Southern European countries and spreading across Europe (Foti 2005; Neilson and Rossiter 2008; Rubery et al. 2018). Guy Standing (2011) coined the word *precariat* – a portmanteau of the words precarious and proletariat, which aimed to introduce the concept, and the political agenda associated with it, into the mainstream. He describes the creation of a new “global class”, sharing experiences of insecurity and over-flexibility. According to him, the precariat represents, to today’s post-industrialist society, what the proletariat represented to the industrialist age. Standing (2011) focuses his conceptualisation of the precariat around access to stable employment, the possibility of upward mobility, security of income, protection against being laid off, and access to trade union representation. In moving the concept to a global stage, Standing was commended by some, but also fairly criticized for attempting to establish far-fetched comparisons among very diverse groups such as textile workers in South Asia and young creative workers in California. He was equally criticised for ignoring the much longer history of precarity in the Global South (Munck 2013; Scully 2016) including through experiences of colonialism and post-colonial globalisation (Said 1993; Barnett 1997; Rattansi 1997; Blunt and McEwan 2002).

Other scholars have also sought to theorise precarity outside of its relationship to work and the labour market. Butler (2004, 2006) discusses precarity from the point of view of the fragility of human existence, its powerlessness to increased everyday governmentality, the authoritarian nature of capital, and the increased risk of ecological disasters. Ettliger (2007:320) goes as far as describing precarity as “an enduring feature of the human condition. It is not limited to a specific context in which precarity is imposed by global events or macrostructures”. Lorey (2015) introduces three social conditions of

the precarious: precariousness, precarity and governmental precarisation. Precarisation, her original theoretical contribution, relates to the process by which precariousness and precarity become modes of government. Paret and Gleeson (2016: 280), instead, call for a study of the multiple dimensions of precarity in order to analyse how political and economic shifts “reshape the relationships between individuals and groups on the one hand, and capital and the state on the other”. While such broad conceptualisations have specific value, they are less useful in understanding the relative position of extremely vulnerable groups, including migrant workers.

Vulnerability is a concept that is often discussed alongside precarity. Having similarities to the concept of precarity, Blaikie et al. (2005) have described vulnerability as a combination of the characteristics of a person or group derived from their social and economic condition. Watts and Bohle (1993) focus on the construction of “spaces of vulnerability”, which Findlay (2005) later developed as “vulnerable spatialities”. Their focus on the structures that generate vulnerability allows one to rethink vulnerability not as a characteristic of individuals or groups but a result of power imbalance. Anderson (2007), for example, argues that research attempting to understand the experiences of vulnerable workers, such as migrants, can prioritise the individual rather than the structural context in which relations are forged, obviating those who are to blame for the construction of vulnerabilities. A similar approach is needed in the study of precarity. Waite (2009), for example, argues that precarity is a useful concept precisely because it can represent a point for mobilisation. Neilson and Rossiter (2008) argue that the value of studying precarity is not to define the characteristics of a new group, as Standing would suggest, but rather to frame precarity as an experience that affects people in a distinctive manner. This also allows researchers to incorporate the role of agency in the experiences of precarity, as is discussed in detail later in this chapter. The role of agency helps to shed light on why people experiencing precarity may not feel precarious. Rogaly (2008) calls for scholars to avoid constructing workers as persistent victims of precarious environments and to develop both subjective and objective understandings of precarity which account for the agency that individuals exercise throughout their lives. This focus on agency reflects my own decades-long experience of advocacy with migrant workers; hence the concept of agency, and an understanding of its limitations, is an important variable in this thesis.

Precarious Employment

Scholars have long studied changes in employment patterns (Schellenberg and Clark 1996; Vosko 1997; Letourneux 1998; Rubery et al. 2018). Many discern a shift away from the standard employment model, defined broadly as employment where a worker has one employer, works for the whole year, for a full working week, enjoys access to statutory social benefits and expects to be employed indefinitely (Cranford, Vosko and Zukewich 2003). The sustained interest in the study of precarious employment over the years has not been limited to academic circles but has also developed in different public policy fields (Rubery 1989; Tucker 2002; McKay et al. 2012). While many definitions of precarious employment exist, Vosko's (2010) definition is particularly useful, precisely because it is formulated from an analysis of the factors that *construct* precarious employment, including social context and social location/relation:

Precarious work is work for remuneration characterised by uncertainty, low income and limited social benefits and statutory entitlements. Precarious employment is shaped by the relationship between employment status (self-employed or paid employment), form of employment (temporary or permanent, full-time or part-time), and dimension of the labour market insecurity, as well as social context (occupation, industry and geography) and social location (the interaction of social relations such as gender, and legal and political categories, such as citizenship). (Vosko 2010: 2)

Like the definition of precarious employment is that of non-standard employment. Such employment is often characterised by short or long-term irregularity, unpredictability of current or future income (Quinlan 2012), and/or insecurity related to the fixed-term nature of a contract. Examples of non-standard employment are part-time work, on-call contracts, fixed-term contracts, seasonal work, agency work, apprenticeship contracts, freelancing, self-employment and other forms of informal work (Delsen 1991:123; Bobek et al. 2018). Atkinson (1984) argues that non-standard employment allows companies to differentiate their employees between 'core' and 'periphery'. The core is made up of permanent employees who are indispensable to the company because of their skills, while the periphery is comprised of workers valued only by their labour and as such not seen as essential. They are recruited when there is a peak of labour need (seasonal or short-term

workers) or under alternative arrangements (such as self-employment) to make savings on labour costs (Murphy 2016).

Not all non-standard employment is necessarily precarious. Part-time employment may suit the personal or financial needs of a person and is, therefore, not always precarious. Nevertheless, when part-time work is also short-term, or when the hours vary at the discretion of the employer, then it can be considered precarious. There are also part-time jobs that may be categorised as “secondary” jobs (Tilly 1996). These are jobs where the employer assigns the hours when they see a need for it, with no concrete expectation of ongoing frequency by the employee and, sometimes, obligations to accept the hours in order for the contract to remain valid. Such arrangements are known as “zero-hours” contracts, or in the case of Ireland, “if-and-when contracts” without specified hours (O’Sullivan et al. 2017). Short-term contracts or seasonal contracts are other forms of non-standard employment that have an assigned specific period of duration.

Historically, employment has been associated with permanency and an expectation of continuity (Nienhueser 2005) and temporary work has traditionally been associated with the seasonal accrual of unskilled labour needs. Academics have argued that skilled and highly skilled workers are no longer attracted to ‘jobs for life’ and prefer to change employment in order to advance their careers (Briscoe and Hall 2006). However, this masks the fact that it is often an employer’s desire for increased flexibility that is pushing the normalisation of temporary work (Kalleberg 2000). Likewise, involuntary self-employment allows employers to circumvent payroll costs, pension, and insurance contributions, for which they would otherwise be liable.² Aside from a lack of protection, such workers experience a constant lack of security and control over their own work. Unlike the scholars that focus on the entrepreneurship and independence of such arrangements, detractors point out to the high incidence of low pay, unpredictability of income and poor social protection coverage in these arrangements (Dokko, Mumford and Schanzenbach 2015; Berg 2016).

² The growth in such practices is linked to an increase in the outsourcing of certain basic functions of companies, including cleaning, catering, or security. In these arrangements, workers are sub-contracted, usually by means of an agency or a subsidiary company, but their work arrangements remain dictated by one employer. The primary employer waives any obligation to the worker since it is merely contracting a service. Workers then have limited employment and social security rights because they are registered as self-employed with the contractor or employer. This practice has been defined as ‘bogus self-employment’ (Behling and Harvey 2015). Often associated with sectors such as construction or cleaning, this practice is now widespread in industries associated with creative jobs and new technologies (Wickham and Bobek 2016).

The final element often associated with non-standard contracts and precarious work is low payment. Many countries have a minimum wage rate set in legislation, which determines the minimum legal remuneration for work in the determined area. However, this does not necessarily define low pay, which is defined in relative terms by the OECD (2019) as less than two-thirds of the median wage in a determined country or region. Annex 10 provides calculations for the yearly low pay thresholds. Low-wage work and precarious work often overlap, but one does not automatically imply the other. Low-wage work may take place under the framework of the standard employment contract, and work that is deemed precarious because it is atypical may pay an hourly rate above the low-pay threshold. Table 3 below, inspired by the work of Bobek et al. (2018:22), helps to make sense of the complexities of all elements that may be associated with precarious work and non-standard employment and how they interact with each other.

Table 3 - Elements associated with precarious and non-standard employment

	Employed	Non-Standard	Precarious
Low-paid employment	Y	N	N
Temporary contract	Y	Y	Y
Regular part-time	Y	Y	N
Irregular part-time	Y	Y	Y
Regular self-employed	N	Y	Y
Bogus self-employed	N	Y	Y
Portal Economy	N	Y	Y

Source: Author's compilation based on Bobek et al. (2018: 2).

While attention to the growing precariousness of employment increased during the economic recession, it is important to understand its evolution as a gradual process, and to understand that historically precarious work was a feature of the pre-Fordist labour

market or mode of production. Non-standard contractual arrangements have been common over history among so-called ‘non-skilled’ workers, as the demand for their labour varied according to seasonal practices or fluctuating needs (for labourers or dockworkers, for example). Two phenomena influenced the growth of non-standard employment: the gradual increase in participation of women in the labour market and the post-Fordist ‘flexibilisation’ of the labour market. The increased employment of women contributed to the growth of part-time employment in order to facilitate home-care arrangements as societies moved away from the male-breadwinner model (Kelleberg 2000). For employers, post-Fordism represented a push towards lower operating costs and more flexible employer-employee relationships. Both trends led to more flexible employment arrangements such as increasing levels of self-employment (Cappelli 1999). Because of both phenomena, non-standard employment moved from being a feature of the secondary labour market (Bruegel 1979) and began to become an expectation in the primary labour market (Ross 2008).

Precurity and Migration

Scholarship in the field of labour migration tends to focus on the global movement of ‘highly-skilled migrants’ (Chiswick 2005), the policy solutions required to facilitate their movement (Lowell and Findlay 2002) and how to attract them (Cervantes 2004). At the other end of the division of labour, we find the category of migrants subjected to low wages, insecurity, immigration control and fragile employment relations (May et al. 2007; Shelley 2007; Anderson 2010, Lewis et al 2014, 2015). Often, the poor working conditions of migrant labour at the bottom of the pay spectrum are associated with abnormalities in the labour market or in the immigration system (Anderson 2010). However, McIlwaine et al. (2006) show how State policies across different regimes advertently or inadvertently construct the identities of low-paid workers through illegality, uncertainty and hyper-flexibility (Anderson 2012; Lewis et al. 2015). Mackenzie and Forde (2009) used an extended-case study method to contrast the attitude and strategies of a large UK-based employer with the realities of their vulnerable workers, who had limited bargaining power, and found that the practices of employers can explain how migrants have limited labour market power in segmented labour markets (Piore 1986). Other research demonstrates how employers benefit from minimal compliance and

large availability of workers to keep their production costs to a minimum. For migrant workers, these employments represent a ‘rite of passage’ where they must acquire ‘location-specific human capital’ (Krupka 2009).

Sassen (2014) associates globalisation and increased income inequality with the rise in migration. Movement, as such, must not be interpreted as a simple voluntary decision to leave one’s country of origin, rather a process of ‘uprooting’ that affects the lives of individuals and their communities. It is in this context that the notion of precarity is particularly relevant to the study of migration. In the field of migration studies there is a growing body of literature focusing on the rise of temporary migration schemes (Ruhs and Martin 2008; Rajkumar et al. 2012; Dauvergne and Marsden 2014) and how these schemes impact on the lives of migrants in the destination country (Goldring, Berinstein and Bernhard 2009; Goldring and Landolt 2011; Zou 2015). The term ‘precarious migrant status’ was coined to describe the uncertainty that temporary migration creates, and to link it with the broader literatures on precariousness and precarious employment. ‘Precarious migrant status’ is defined as a migration status marked by the absence of elements normally associated with permanent residency and citizenship. These include work authorisation, the right to remain permanently in the country, not depending on a third party for one’s right to reside, social citizenship rights such as public education or public health coverage, and access to family reunification rights (Goldring et al. 2009). The studies of precarious migrant status have been linked to, and overlap with, the much broader literature on irregular migration (Jordan and Duvell 2002; Ahmad 2008; Bloch and McKay 2014), particularly when discussing the role that state policies play in creating irregularities that lead to insecurity and precarity. The state plays a role in producing what Goldring et al. (2009: 241) describe as the “systematic production of illegality”; such an approach shifts the responsibility and the blame from individuals to policymakers, in order to focus on the structural processes that create precarity.

Lewis et al (2015) reject the notion of binary. Studying precariousness in migratory processes allows us to see beyond the dichotomy of ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ and acknowledge the experience of those who feel “legally in-between” (Menjívar 2006) or “permanently temporary” (Bailey et al. 2002). It also enables better appreciation of the fear of irregularity, which is a constant in the lives of migrants experiencing precarity. A dominant trend in contemporary migration scholarship emphasizes the vulnerability associated with ‘illegality’ and ‘deportability,’ which centres on the power of nation-states to surveil, detain, and remove migrants from their respective territories (Menjívar

and Kanstroom 2013; Lewis et al. 2015). As in conditional welfare regimes, it is the fear rather than the incidence of the penalty that matters (Finn 2019). For non-citizens, the perpetual possibility of removal from their country of residence underscores their precarious legal status. This “deportation regime” (De Genova 2010) is organised around the assignment of varied legal statuses – permanent residents, temporary workers, humanitarian leave to remain, international students, undocumented migrants – which, in turn, justifies regulation of migration by the State. Undocumented migrants are most vulnerable to deportation, but even non-citizens with some form of legal status may have it revoked and then be deported.

Precarious legal status, in turn, goes hand in hand with precarious employment and livelihood. Lack of citizenship and vulnerability to deportation, for example, commonly push migrant workers into grey areas of the economy where wages are low, benefits are non-existent, and basic workplace protections have limited penetration (Paret 2014, 2015). An upshot of this policy tension is that there are growing numbers of asylum seekers being denied permission to stay and undocumented migrants who now occupy invisible, liminal labour market spaces tainted by minimal rights and leading to liminal lives (Morris 2013; Lewis et al. 2015). In the worst cases, they end up experiencing conditions that are tantamount to modern slavery (Lewis et al. 2014). According to Anderson (2010: 300), “immigration controls function as a mould, helping to ... produce ‘precarious workers’ over whom employers and labour users have particular mechanisms of control”. Anderson (2010) finds non-British born migrant labourers in low-paid sectors of the economy are distinguishable from other low-status workers in that they are subject to the restrictive framework of the government’s ‘managed migration’ policies. These policies inform the process of labour market racialisation (Mora and Undurruga 2013) and direct migrant labourers towards certain areas of the UK labour market (low-paid/low-status) where they often stay for a significant period. Similarly, McDowell (2008: 500) points to another distinctive feature of economic migrants when she says, “For many migrants, although not all, movement across space is accompanied by downward social mobility, resulting in a precarious location on the fringes of the British working class”. Experiences of precarity can also be subjective and while migrant workers may be in precarious situations, they may relativize these experiences in relation to their pre-migratory experiences and the improvements they may have achieved for family members. Incorporating people’s self-perception of their position in the labour market and society is important. To date, no Irish study documents the causes, reality and

consequences of Ireland's precarious migrant work regime, hence this study fills an important gap.

Hyper-Precarity and Hyper-Dependence

Several scholars have been working on the intersection between precarious employment and precarious migrant status and have coined the concept of hyper-precarity (Lewis and Waite 2015; Lewis et al. 2015; Zou 2015). As Lewis and Waite (2015:52) describe, “constrained choices facing migrants seeking a livelihood under hyper-precarious conditions may leave them with few options but to engage in severely exploitative work”. In fact, hyper-precarity goes hand in hand with exploitative employment by creating different categories of racialised immigrants, imposing specific subordinate relations among them in the labour market, and institutionalising immigration control. By constructing uncertainty, states are producing precarious workers (Anderson 2010) who cluster at the bottom of the labour market (Anderson 2010). These workers experience hyper-dependence (Zou 2015) vis-à-vis their employer, resulting in a level of uncertainty and unpredictability that contributes to them living “precarious lives”, since they have a very limited ability to make long-term plans (Bourdieu 1998).

Two key indicators of precarious lives include a fear of irregularity regarding their employment and immigration status (whether in relation to contracts, cash flow, or threat of being deported, for example) and the inability of workers to complain about their working conditions at risk of losing their jobs. Both of these factors help to show how hyper-precarity functions in practice. Such indicators are often interconnected and jointly construct what Zou (2015) describes as “hyper-dependent precarity” or “hyper-precarious dependency”. In their work on precarious lives, Lewis and Waite (2015: 54) talk about an “ever-present threat of destitution and homelessness”, which also constitutes the backdrop to the labour relations of the participants in my study.

Agency

Immigrants can and do exert forms of agency in securing a livelihood. Their precarious position becomes simultaneously a motivating and a constraining factor. Immigrant precarity is a quality that some employers seek out (Waldinger and Lichter 2003; Rodriguez 2004) and a factor shaping when and how workers come forward to contest forms of abuse (Gleeson 2010). Immigrant workers often make nuanced decisions about when to call out employer abuse, and when to persevere even in the face of egregious violations. These survival strategies represent a form of constrained agency, even if it is ultimately not emancipatory. Individual agency can manifest in informal complaints, as well as formal or legal complaints. In these situations, the workers make decisions about what to do and what not to do.

Related here are the observations of Anderson et al. (2006) and Anderson (2007) that while workers may strive for security of employment, they also want freedom to leave if they have a better offer. Employers, for their part, generally want to control the length of time that the employee works, as they want ease of hire and fire. Critically, they also want to be able to control the workers themselves. Flexible de-regulated labour markets pose questions as to who controls labour mobility among the precarious. The pursuit of this question implies the importance of opening an analytical space for agency, even in the context of constraints. The entrapment that migrants in the work permit system may experience can be conceptualised through Hirschman's (1970) framework of "Exit, Voice and Loyalty". In this framework, "voice" is interpreted as a mechanism to improve working conditions, such as complaints, collective bargaining, or joining a trade union. Conversely, "exit" is interpreted as leaving the employment relationship to seek better conditions. Exit and voice are perceived as a trade-off, where a lack of one element increases the likelihood of the other (Freeman 1980; Zou 2015). "Loyalty" relates to the mechanisms used by an employer to minimise the possibility of employees opting for either "exit" or "voice" strategies. Later I interrogate how the ability to exercise "exit, voice and loyalty" at different times informed the trajectories of participants.

Alberti's (2014) research on "exit power" details how precarious workers in London's hospitality sector used mobility strategies to improve their long-term employment conditions. The use of "voice" by resorting to individual and collective, formal and informal channels, such as legal proceedings, collective bargaining, and internal grievance procedures, is undermined in these situations. Migrants may be reluctant to voice any discontent or complaint with their sponsor/employer when exit is not a viable

possibility. Often, the situations that trigger their use of voice or exit are encounters with organisations advocating for migrant rights. These organisations help mobilise migrants' collective agency and assist precarious workers in gaining confidence to stand up for their rights (Wickramasekara 2008).

In sum, migrant existence is often precarious in multiple and reinforcing ways, combining vulnerability to deportation and state violence (Zizek 2008), exclusion from public services and basic state protections, insecure employment and exploitation at work, insecure livelihood, and everyday discrimination or isolation. Not all migrants experience all these conditions. However, the notion of precarity and particularly hyper-precariety provides a useful point of analytical departure. Most importantly, it allows us to pose a question that is central to this thesis: what makes a migrant life precarious? The answer will vary across space and time, within historical moments, and between groups with varying characteristics. Examining these differences lies at the heart of the analysis of precarity associated with migration, which I will apply in my study in order to understand the extent to which precarity may spill over negatively (Bruton 2006) into their daily lives.

Precarity in Ireland

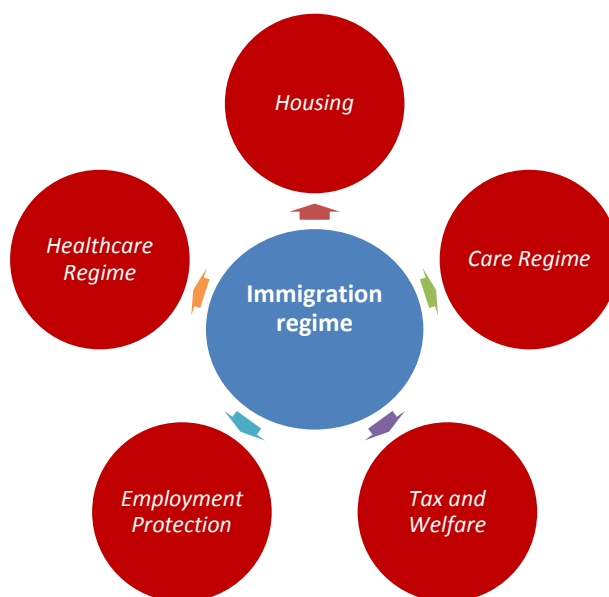
The literature on precarious employment in Ireland has developed in recent years (Loftus 2012; Murphy and Loftus 2015; Nugent 2017, O'Sullivan et al. 2017) addressing two key elements: the incidence of low pay in Ireland (Collins 2015; Collins and Murphy 2016) and labour market insecurity (Loftus 2012; Murphy and Loftus 2015; Wickham and Bobek 2016; Murphy 2017; O'Sullivan et al. 2017). In 2018, 5.4% of employed people (approximately 110,000 workers) are living at risk of poverty (CSO 2018b). Over time, poverty figures for the working poor have shown little movement, reflecting a persistent problem with low earnings (Social Justice Ireland 2019). According to Bobek et al. (2018), at 24% (more than 10 points above the EU average of 13.5%), Ireland has the third highest incidence of low pay in the EU. Defined as earnings below two-thirds of the gross national median earnings, Ireland has the highest incidence of low pay among all "small open economies". State income supplements, such as Child Benefit payments and the Family Income Supplement/Working Family Payment, work to lift low-paid workers out of poverty (Collins and Murphy 2016), but they are far from perfect in terms of access

and coverage of vulnerable workers (Gray and Rooney 2018; Millar et al. 2018; Gray and Rooney 2019). These programmes also end up subsidising a low-pay economy to the benefit of employers, who incur below average labour costs (Bobek et al. 2018).

Many precarious or low-paid workers, including young people and students, may be secondary earners living in households with access to income and resources. However, precarious migrant workers are more likely to be primary earners and have family members depending on their incomes, putting them in a much more vulnerable position. Certain groups are more exposed to poverty, such as women, who present higher rates of under-employment and lower rates of participation in the labour market. Ireland also has a higher number of 'low work intensity' households than the European average. This means Ireland has more households with working-age members working less than 20% of their potential working time. According to NESCF (2014), childcare costs and welfare policies are partly responsible for low work intensity among certain households, together with the low-paid conditions associated with low-skilled jobs in Ireland.

While certain authors have addressed precarious employment in sectors where migrants are over-represented (Bobek and Wickham 2015) or have pointed out to the specific vulnerability of non-Irish workers to precarious employment (Gray, Geraghty and Ralph 2017; Murphy 2017; Nugent 2017), there have been very few studies on the intersection of migration policies and precarious employment (MRCI 2015a; Gilmartin et al. 2016). A key finding in Bobek et al. (2018) was that precarious workers in Ireland are particularly vulnerable in the context of weak public services and the absence of a social wage dividend in terms of universal access to healthcare, housing, childcare and other forms of subsidised services including transport and leisure, which allow low-paid and precarious workers some degree of social integration; that finding applies to indigenous and migrant workers alike. In order to understand how precarity and precarious employment manifest in Ireland, and to set the scene for the later empirical findings the next section outlines some key features of Ireland's welfare regimes, including institutional aspects of the labour market and social protection system, healthcare, housing and childcare policies. Figure 2 outlines how Ireland's welfare regimes intersect.

Figure 2 - The Intersection of Ireland's Regimes



Source: Author

Tax and Transfers

Turning first to Ireland's interaction of taxes and transfers, it is important to acknowledge the difference between pre-tax inequality, which in Ireland is very high and has risen constantly over the past decades, and disposable income inequality, which has remained stable. The explanation for this is the role of the State in maintaining income distribution through taxes and social transfers to lower-income groups (Watson and Corrigan 2019). For precarious workers, access to an effective social protection system is necessary to improve their quality of life. Understanding how welfare policy functions is therefore central to understanding the adverse effects of precarious employment. For example, qualifying for in-work benefit may address the shortcomings of part-time work, while precarious work will, in turn, influence the future pension entitlements of workers. Ireland's social welfare system is based on three types of payment: social insurance payments, means-tested payments, and universal payments. Each scheme or payment has specific rules for applicants to qualify. For migrants, there are additional requirements associated with type and length of residence permits and habitual residence criteria (MRCI 2015a). Social insurance payments include jobseekers' benefit, illness benefit, and contributory pensions, which are awarded based on the social insurance contributions (PRSI) paid by applicants each week they earn over 38 euros. Eligibility conditions that require a claimant to have made enough social insurance contributions in a preceding

governing contribution year discriminate against new entrants. In turn, means-tested payments are available to those who have not made the necessary social insurance contributions, or who have exhausted them. Such payments include jobseekers' allowance or statutory pensions. Universal payments, including the monthly child benefit, are not dependent on a person's income or social contributions and are awarded based on specific criteria.

Access to Social Protection

Under certain conditions, a precarious worker in employment up to three days may receive jobseekers' benefit/allowance. Moreover, if they have children, they may qualify for the one-parent family payment or working family payment. Those working precariously often move between insurance-based payments and means-tested payments as they transition in and out of full-time or part-time employment. Several barriers to accessing welfare payments have been highlighted. Individuals working irregular hours on a part-time basis may find it difficult to continue to receive jobseekers' payments because they work a few hours every day, meaning that they do not meet the three-day threshold to be entitled to payments. Thresholds are not applied flexibly to meet the needs of precarious workers. For example, by working an additional 30 minutes per week, a worker may lose their remaining eligibility to a jobseekers' payment or up to 122 euros of weekly payment. In the case of migrants, a complex assessment of immigration status, insured contributions and length of residence determines access to payments. Furthermore, accessing such payments often exposes migrant workers to negative attitudes from employers, civil servants, and society overall (Morris et al. 2018). Vulnerable workers may find it difficult to negotiate with employers to obtain a schedule necessary to continue receiving payments to which they are entitled. Similarly, lack of appropriate and targeted information, which is also conditioned by the migrants' language ability, may result in workers not accessing such payments. Migrants are often unaware or may refrain from seeking information regarding their entitlements due to negative stereotypes about migrants accessing welfare (MRCI 2015a).

Employment Protection

Protection of workers, including precarious workers, remains weak in Ireland. Despite trade-union membership remaining close to the EU average, the rights of only a third of workers are protected by collective bargaining (Bobek et al. 2018). The situation is particularly bad for lower-paid sectors such as hospitality, where wages represent just 54% of the national average. In terms of its employment protection legislation, Ireland is ranked third last among 24 countries surveyed in the EU (OECD 2013) and it is relatively easy for employers to terminate employment contracts (Murphy 2016). From the perspective of precarious work, the non-standard employment relationships with the highest incidence in Ireland are part-time work, zero-hour contracts or if-and-when contracts, and bogus self-employment (Bobek et al. 2018). According to Eurostat (2018)'s Labour Force Survey, part-time work represents 19.7% of the total employment in Ireland, temporary work stands at 10.8%, and self-employment represents 13.3%. In terms of sectoral division, Pembroke (2018) found that the highest incidences of part-time work were in accommodation (38.5%), administration (35.2%), retail (33.3%) and health (32.3%). In the transport sector 80% were self-employed and 72% were self-employed in construction. Temporary work was high in the education (12%), construction (11.5%) and administration (11.2%) sectors. Compared to other EU countries, the rate of non-standard employment is not significantly high, but a distinct feature of the Irish labour market is the over-reliance on low-paid work. This plays to the advantage of employers, who, due to low-paid work and weak employment protections, do not need to resort to non-standard employment to source cheap labour.

Healthcare

Since 1991, there is universal free hospital care in Ireland for those ordinarily resident in the State. However, access to primary care, often provided by a general practitioner (GP), costs between 55 and 65 euros per visit. There are two means-tested schemes, one covering full free access to services provided by the Health Service Executive (the medical card), the other providing free visits to a primary care provider (GP visit card). The weekly net household income ceiling to qualify for the medical card ranges between 164 and 266 euros, depending on family situation, while the GP visit card threshold is between 246 and 400 euros with additional allowances for dependent children. Pembroke (2018) argue that Ireland's health system is in fact three-tiered: those who have private

health insurance representing about 46% of the population, those who have access to a medical card representing 36%, and the remaining 16% who own neither a medical card nor health insurance. Migrants are more likely to be in this third and final category. Immigrant access to healthcare is also conditioned by the type and length of their residence. The uncertainty associated with precarity has an impact on both physical and mental health, and precarious employment shapes migrant workers' access to healthcare in several ways. Primary care fees often pose a barrier to those who do not qualify for medical or GP cards, which results in them delaying seeing a doctor unless absolutely necessary. Mental health services are seen as a luxury and often face negative cultural perceptions. While private health insurance may cover some of the costs of primary or mental health care, it is often at an expense beyond reach of precarious workers. Additionally, lack of sick leave entitlement means that often that precarious workers usually cannot take a day off, which may cause their health to deteriorate further (Bobek et al. 2018)

Housing

In Ireland, housing is structured in three categories: home ownership, the private rental sector and local authority housing, also known as social housing. Until recently, Ireland has been characterised by high levels of home ownership, but since the 1990s this has been steadily decreasing, from 79.3% in 1991 to 67.6% in 2016. Private rental increased from 8% to 18.2% and the rate of social housing decreased slightly from 9.7% to 9.4% in the same period (McVerry, Carroll and Burns 2017). During the economic recession the price of rent decreased significantly but since 2012 it has grown continuously, with the average rental price in Ireland €1,122 in 2012 and €1,620 in 2018 (O'Toole, Allen-Coghlan and Martinez-Cillero 2019). The average rent for a single and a double room in Dublin city centre went from €502 and €665 in 2008 to €700 and €785 in 2019 respectively. As a reference, during the same period, the average weekly wage went from €670.12 to €724.32 but in the case of the A&F sector, the change was only from €367.70 to €367.96. A 4% cap on rent increases in areas experiencing 'rent pressure' was introduced January 2017 but it has failed to stop rent increasing. Immigrants face additional barriers, aside from high costs to access appropriate housing in the rental market; these include experiences of discrimination and higher incidences of illegal practices by landlords (Long et al. 2019)

Ireland is considered a country with low protection for tenants, making it hard for renters to develop a sense of belonging, safety and security and to avoid housing precarity (Byrne and Norris 2018; Hearne and Murphy 2018). Local housing authorities provide social housing based on eligibility and needs. Currently there are over 127,000 social housing tenancies, but there over 90,000 people on waiting lists, the large majority of which are Irish nationals. The economic recession reduced funding for social housing by 88.4%, causing waiting lists to grow. Migrants must prove that they have been permanent residents of Ireland for five years before they can apply for social housing, putting them at a disadvantage compared to Irish nationals³. Once accommodation is allocated, the household is required to pay a differential rent to the local authority. This rent payment is based on income and household composition.

In 2014, the government introduced the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP). This is a private rental subsidy scheme under which landlords are paid directly by local authorities and tenants make a partial reimbursement based on their household income. The rental agreement is between the landlord and the tenant, and as such, HAP-funded housing is subject to private rental regulations. Those who receive the payment are removed from local authorities' housing waiting lists, and if the rental agreement falls through, they must re-apply to be included on the waiting list. Precarious workers are disproportionately represented in the private rental market. Their employment patterns often preclude them from securing mortgages from the bank. Finding affordable rental housing has become increasingly difficult, adding to their sense of insecurity. It has led many indigenous workers to stay in their family home or return to live there, an option not open to migrant workers. In 2018, the Low Pay Commission found that monthly rent payments comprised up to 50% of low-paid workers' monthly income (LPC 2018). For many migrants the only option is often substandard accommodation where their tenancy rights are frequently disregarded. In a recent study, Fahey et al. (2019) found high incidence of racial discrimination in access to housing. Little wonder that, squeezed out of the private rental market and with few options to access social housing, migrant families are disproportionately represented in the growing phenomena of homelessness. In 2018, migrant families represented a disproportionate 35% of homeless families in Ireland (Long et al. 2019).

³ To qualify for social housing, a household must earn below a maximum income threshold. In Dublin, for example, this ranges between 35,000 and 42,000 euros depending on household composition. Each local housing authority manages the waiting lists for allocation, and depending on circumstances, some applicants can wait for more than ten years.

Childcare

Ireland's approach to care differs from most European countries as it is largely privatised and developed in an ad-hoc manner. Currently, 70% of childcare places are run by for-profit providers and the remaining 30% by community crèches. Often, childcare centres are staffed by precarious (sometimes migrant) workers with low-wage, fixed-term contracts. Only 33% of childcare providers offer full-time services linked to a 9 to 5 schedule. In 2019, childcare fees in the country averaged €184.36 per week, but in County Dublin these ranged between €207.40 and €246.03 depending on the area (DCYA 2019). Childcare costs represent a significant expenditure in a household's budget: up to 40% of weekly income for lone parent households and 30% of household income for two-parent families. These figures represent the fourth highest net childcare costs for parents in the OECD and second in the European Union (SVP 2019). For migrant workers, who can rarely rely on extended family networks, the cost of childcare is a key consideration in decisions related to women's participation in the labour market; this is even more pronounced in one-income households. Hence why I will seek to understand the extent to which migrants, and in particular dependant spouses, are able to circumvent such barriers. In 2010, the government introduced the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme, a state-funded pre-school programme. The scheme is offered for three hours per day, five days a week, and 38 weeks of the year. Children are eligible to start the ECCE scheme in the September of the year that they turn three years old, and they are eligible for two full academic years. In late 2017, the Affordable Childcare Scheme was introduced under a subsidy model. It is available universally for parents of children under three years of age and involves an income-contingent payment for parents of children up to 15 years old. Due to the high costs of formal care, up to 80% of parents resort to the use of unregulated and often home-based childcare services (Eurofound 2018) – this compares to fewer than 20% in Scandinavian countries. Similarly, nannies may provide care for children in live-in or live-out arrangements. Migrant women are significantly over-represented in the provision of childcare and in those arrangements where care is provided at the family home.

Childcare policies also include policies on parental leave. Currently in Ireland women are entitled to 26 weeks of paid leave and 16 weeks of unpaid leave; they receive a rate of 240 euros per week, dependent on PRSI contributions. Fathers and same-sex partners are entitled to two weeks of leave at the same rate, and everyone is entitled to an additional

18 weeks of unpaid parental leave which can be taken in different arrangements up to the eighth birthday of the child. For migrants, all parental benefit payments are conditioned by the type and length of residence permit. The availability and accessibility of childcare policies fashion and condition the employment and family formation of precarious households. For instance, many in precarious employment may choose to delay forming a family due to the costs associated with having children. In addition, high childcare costs may deter parents from participating in the labour market and favour a one-income household model. This is particularly relevant for migrant women who must often navigate cultural differences to child rearing. Individuals working irregular hours may also need to find alternative childcare solutions and must often rely on informal arrangements through family and friends, where possible.

Conclusion

Having discussed the concept of precarity from a number of perspectives I have adopted a clear position in the literature, associating with those who confine the concept of precarious to employment and with those who argue for the concept of hyper-precarity to describe the extremity of experiences in migrants' lives. The chapter described how the organisation of migration regimes along the lines of temporality and deportability creates precarity for migrants, which in the intersection with precarious employment develops into hyper-precarity. Growing research on the topic has provided important insights into how the vulnerabilities of precarious migrant workers in a segmented labour market spill over into their daily lives. This framework helps me to better describe the experiences of labour migrants in Ireland. I go on, in the empirical and analysis chapters in the second half of the thesis, to apply these concepts to understand the experiences of migrants situated at the margins of the Irish labour market and to show how precarity traps bleed over into migrants' everyday lives as well as those of their household. To set the context for these later chapters I have discussed the specificities of precarity in Ireland, including precarious employment, and addressed the limitations of different welfare regimes in responding to the experiences of precarious migrant households. In the next chapter, I discuss the concept of integration. Having determined thus far the limitations of the welfare regime in responding to the precarity traps created by the intersection of Ireland's employment and migration regimes, I move to question whether integration policy is responding to these traps or whether migrants are left to rely on their ability to exercise agency in decision-making processes to minimise the impact of precarity in their households' daily lives.

Chapter 4 – Migration and Integration

Introduction

My research question is focused on the extent to which government policy is reactive to migrants' experience of precarity and the degree to which it has the capacity to minimise its effect from spilling into everyday life. In the previous chapter I have outlined that migration status represents a pre-condition to accessing Ireland's welfare regime. These restrictions, limit labour migrants' capacity to access the safety net across income, health care, childcare and housing which other precarious workers use to some extent to partially mitigate the impact of employment precarity. This chapter has two objectives; the first to critically examine the concept of integration and to interrogate key aspects of Ireland's integration regime; the second to introduce seven conceptual tools that can enable analysis of the experiences of participants in this study.

In the first half of this chapter I interrogate whether the development of integration policy in Ireland has had or has the capacity to limit the adverse effects of the restrictive migration regime in place. I examine the conceptualisation of migrant integration both from an academic and policy perspective. I present this as a contested subject and outline the various interpretations and critiques of integration that co-exist. I, then, focus on economic integration by providing an overview of the main determinants of economic integration, then outlines the main research studies carried out in Ireland on the economic integration of migrants based on those determinants. The next section discusses migrant integration in Ireland, outlining the organisation and funding of service provision and a critical analysis of the current integration strategy and the limitations of the policy in fostering socio-economic integration and countering racialisation and precarity embedded in the migration regime.

In the second part of the chapter I introduce seven concepts associated with the use of agency in the migration processes. These concepts, Voluntariness, Agency, Intersectionality of Gender, Class and Race, Networks, Migration as a Family Strategy, Mobilities, and Labour Market Trajectories help to make sense of the factors that influence migrant decision-making. These concepts, together with the concepts introduced in the previous chapters, including concepts of temporality, liminality,

hyper-precarity and entrapment inform the analytical framework that will be used in later chapters to interpret the findings of my research.

The Concept of Integration

Conceptualising Integration

A key problem in conceptualising the integration of migrants is, as Joppke and Morawska (2003) argue, the underlying assumption that national identity of a destination country is well-defined, and that the receiving society is already well-integrated. My focus here is understanding how integration shapes service provision in Ireland. The organisation of integration services should facilitate the adaptation of immigrants into society, including into the labour market; and should be responsive to mitigating experiences of precarity, both in work and in daily lives. How governments conceptualise integration and where they place the onus of responsibility (on migrants or on the host society) is important in shaping the experiences of migrants, including their sense of belonging.

Carrera (2006) problematizes the notion of integration, which he sees as a process of nationalisation, as opposed to diversity and interculturalism. Robinson (1998: 118) has suggested that “integration is a chaotic concept: a word used by many but understood differently by most”. Despite the clear difficulties in defining and understanding integration, a working definition is necessary, since it is now a key element of immigration policy, both at national and international levels (Carrera 2006; Joppke 2007). Entzinger and Biezeveld (2003) developed a model for benchmarking integration, which is based on work carried out by Granovetter (1983). They identified four fields, or aspects, of integration, where the interrelationship between incidence and identification take place:

- Socio-economic integration is often understood as labour market participation, which can occur through employment or self-employment, but also through income levels, occupational attainment and participation in welfare programmes.
- Cultural integration relates to the process of acculturation (Berry 1997) that immigrants experience in relation to the host society, through interaction with its values and rules. A homogenous definition of the values and rules of a society does not exist, and markers of identification may be disputed. This makes it

difficult for immigrants to understand what is expected of them, or to establish where the boundaries between the group and the individual are drawn.

- Legal and political integration relate to migrants' access to rights and their political participation. The EU purports to place great importance on the granting of equal rights to immigrants, as emphasised in the conclusions of the European Council meeting in Tampere (1999). Acquisition of rights and political participation for migrants stems from citizenship of the host country. Access to naturalisation is a key factor in achieving legal and political integration, however the rights of migrants before naturalisation also play an important role.
- The responsibility that the host society has for the integration of migrants is often shadowed by the great emphasis placed on the ability and the obligations of migrants to integrate. The prevalence of incidences of racism and discrimination, be it at an individual or institutional level, hamper the ability of migrants to integrate in different aspects of their new lives (de Beijl 2000). Coincidentally, diversity and representation across institutions has a positive impact in fostering integration.

Assimilation, Exclusionism and Multiculturalism

Brubaker (2001) defines assimilation as being a process through which an individual (the migrant) changes to increase their degree of similarity towards the host society. Assimilationist policies and public discourses see national identity as something that is clearly defined and is shared by the whole population. According to assimilationists, a migrant will gradually integrate into this commonly accepted national identity, and at the end of the assimilation journey will bear no difference to the rest of the population.

The exclusionist model views migrants as 'guests' whose main purpose is to fulfil labour market needs. Because exclusionists view citizenship as a matter of 'ancestry', integration policy is kept to a minimum to allow migrants to participate in the economy without any focus on addressing social or political participation.

At the opposite end of the theoretical spectrum, we find the concept of multiculturalism. Berry (2011) defines multiculturalism as a situation in which cultural diversity is a feature of the society, including all the various ethnocultural groups. This concept grew in importance throughout the 1980s to establish itself as the dominant line of thought in the 1990s in countries considered 'nations of immigrants', such as the USA, Canada or

Australia. The concept gradually attracted attention across Europe and become the basis for integration policies. In recent years, there has been increased rejection of multiculturalism and a renewed growth of nationalism in migrant-receiving countries. These views, often linked to security concerns, frame immigration as something that is detrimental to national identity. Scholars such as Brubaker (2001); Back et al. (2002); Carrera (2006) and Vasta (2007) have argued that we are experiencing a return to assimilationist ideas, which are exemplified by the introduction of residency conditions dependant on participation in integration programme, discussed in the previous chapter.

Economic Integration

While I do not seek to argue that one field of integration is more important than the others, socio-economic integration is the field most relevant to research questions focusing on the labour market experience of labour migrants. Nonetheless, at times, I draw on other fields of migrant integration when this is relevant for the analysis of my interviews with participants, when they discuss issues of identity and everyday life. Economic integration is the process by which the economic performance of an immigrant converges with that of natives, after controlling for certain characteristics such as age, gender, educational attainment and occupation (Hum and Simpson 2004; Carrera 2006). It is measured according to the performance of an immigrant in the labour market. Ireland, like the EU, places emphasis on employment as a vehicle for the ‘successful’ integration of migrants. Most EU Member States have considered a range of policies aimed at enhancing labour market participation. These range from language courses to job training or wage supplements. Much of the academic scholarship in the area of economic integration of migrants lies in measuring the impact of policies in achieving their intended outcome (Hum and Simpson 2004; Constant and Zimmermann 2009; Aydemir 2013) or hindering it (Dustmann 2000; Aydemir 2009; Zimmermann 2014). Aydemir (2013) attempts to determine whether some categories of immigrant experience greater advantage or disadvantage from the onset when it comes to economic integration. He finds that the temporary nature of immigration schemes hinders the economic integration of migrants. This underscores the importance of any study on integration to be interpreted in perspective to the broader literature addressing temporality (Bastia and McGrath 2011; Castles and Ozkul 2014; Lewis et al. 2015).

A growing body of literature seeks to understand the process required for immigrants to assimilate into the labour market or achieve economic integration. Such studies compare the labour market performance of immigrant groups to that of natives, who are considered the baseline. The purpose of such studies is to understand how immigrants become integrated; how economic integration can be hastened; whether there are specific factors that hinder economic integration among migrant communities, and how those factors can be addressed. Such studies rely on the human capital theory developed by Mincer (1974) and later re-formulated by Becker (1994) to suit contemporary migration studies. Scholarship starting with Chiswick (1978) hypothesises that wage disparity and the concentration in certain employment sectors of newly arrived immigrants is the result of a mismatch in human capital; and that this mismatch will be reversed over time as the migrant spends more years living in the host country. Another body of scholarship (Borjas 1985; Kossoudji 1989; Friedberg 1992) is concerned with identifying patterns and determinants of economic integration. A key finding in those studies is that earnings convergence might not happen within one generation, and that earnings disadvantage is intergenerational (Borjas 1992). This is the starting point of scholarship that focus on the personal characteristics of immigrants (age, gender, year of arrival, educational attainment, occupational background) to understand how they interplay with the characteristic of the labour market (mobility, segmentation, policies). Such literature is relatively narrow in its approach and fails to give due cognisance to the underlying labour migration regime as a fundamental arbiter of integration.

Early Research on the Determinants of Economic Integration in Ireland

Drawing from this human capital-oriented scholarship, the changes observed in migration flows were the focus of several research streams concerned with the labour market participation of immigrants in Ireland. While mostly quantitative in nature and overly focused on the labour market characteristics of migrants, they have nonetheless identified emerging barriers to economic integration. A brief chronological review highlights the main findings focus on occupational and earning gaps as principal factors limiting immigrant performance in the Irish labour market.

Ruhs (2003) pioneered the first analysis of work permit holders labour migration to Ireland and found that by December 2002 the ten countries with the largest numbers of work permit represented 61.6% of all permits issued. The top five nationalities of work

permit holders, excluding future EU accession countries (which represented 34% of permit holders) were Philippines, South Africa, Ukraine, Brazil and the Russian Federation. The average age for those obtaining their first permit was 30 years old, with 62.6% being male. Pointing out to early evidence of labour market racialisation, work-permit holders from outside the EU (excluding OECD countries) were over-represented in the domestic work sector (57.5%), in the medical and nursing sector (73.8%) and in catering (60.5%). Data limitations meant Ruhs was unable to provide an analysis of earnings and working hours. He concludes that the lack of studies on the labour market characteristics and the labour market integration of migrants "...is both surprising and disconcerting: it suggests that some of the recent labour immigration policy-making and public debates had to be carried out without a thorough understanding of the magnitudes, patterns and nature of immigration flows involved. This naturally creates the danger of misguided policies and misinformed public debates" (Ruhs 2003: 3). No further studies have been conducted specifically on the characteristics or the outcomes of work-permit holders, which is a strong justification for the present research.

Barrett et al. (2006) reviewed the labour market characteristics of all immigrants arriving between 1993 and 2003. While migrants across categories were over-represented among three age categories (20-24 years; 25-34 years and 35-44 years); non-EU migrants (excluding Americans) were concentrated in the first two cohorts. They found that migrants "have notably higher levels of education relative to the domestic population" (Barrett et al. 2006:2) but their occupational distribution does not fully reflect their educational attainment, pointing out to an "occupational gap". The study also found that, regardless of having higher labour market participation than natives (by 5%), the rate of unemployment among immigrants was higher (by 2.6%). Focusing on educational attainment, the study found that the percentage of immigrants with third-level qualifications (54.2%) was almost double that of the Irish population (27.3%) and for non-EU migrants the figure was even higher (55.7%). They found higher levels of unemployment, coupled with a lack of location-specific human capital, might explain migrants taking lower-level jobs relative to their skills. Like Ruhs (2003) they concluded that further research is needed to address occupational disadvantages and to understand whether that disadvantage disappears over time as immigrants 'assimilate' into the labour market.

Barrett and McCarthy's (2007) use of 2005 Survey of Income and Living Conditions (SILC) data to review the wage differentials among immigrants and natives in Ireland

found immigrants earn 18% less than native workers after controlling for educational attainment and length of labour market experience. Immigrants from non-English speaking countries earned 31% less. While data limitations meant inconclusive results, the difference in earnings was higher among those with a third-level degree suggesting that the occupational gap might be responsible for the wage differential. Migrant women have lower participation rates, 48.9% as opposed to 66.5%, and earn 12% less than migrant men, while earning 14% less than native women. Given 38% of women had third-level education, it seems that immigrant women find it more difficult to have their qualifications recognised and to acquire location-specific human capital. Barrett and Duffy (2008) compared labour market outcomes for immigrants and natives using a data sample from 2005, which included their year of arrival, while they found no change in the low levels of unemployment among migrants, they found an occupational gap had developed.⁴

Barrett and Kelly (2012) reviewed the impact that the economic recession had on Ireland's immigrants by using data from the Quarterly National Household Survey (2004 to 2009), and migrants were more vulnerable to losing their employment due to limited labour market attachment or integration affecting their labour market retention from the onset of the crisis. Men experienced higher rates of unemployment than women did over the recession, both among immigrants and the native population, while female immigrants became significantly less likely to be employed than Irish women, and 5.5% less likely to be employed than immigrant men. Non-EU migrants were the worst affected in terms of employability. These findings contrasted with experiences in both the UK and Germany, where the impact of the downturn did not hit the immigrants disproportionately, suggesting issues of labour market integration might indeed influence employment loss (Barrett and Kelly 2012).

⁴ A theoretical framework developed by Chiswick, Lee and Miller (2005) was used to measure whether the immigrant's experience of occupational attainment was "U-shaped", i.e. that they would eventually regain work at the same level as the one they had before leaving in the home country. After controlling for the year of arrival, Barrett and Duffy (2008), found that those who entered Ireland between 2000 and 2001 showed the same occupational distribution as natives. For the cohort of arrivals between 2002 and 2003, the difference compared to natives was -5.1%, and for those arriving between 2004 and 2005, the difference was -18.3%. While their findings may seem consistent with Chiswick's framework as they relate to the first cohort, the analysis fails to see patterns of labour market integration for the remaining cohorts that could be associated with nationality, educational attainment or number of years spent in the labour market.

Integration in Ireland

Having illustrated how research on economic integration in Ireland has been approached to date in Ireland and pointed to the absence of qualitative studies of low paid migrant workers, the focus now shifts to the responsiveness of wider integration policy in Ireland. Developments at an EU level provide the backdrop to how integration is perceived and discussed, while Ireland has not necessarily followed EU policy direction.

As a country marked by emigration until the late 1990s, Ireland traditionally thought of integration policy in terms of the return and the reintegration into Irish society of Irish emigrants. However, with the demographic changes of the late 1990s, the issue of migrant integration gained prominence. In the year 2000, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (DJELR) issued its first policy document adopting a working definition of refugee integration:

Integration means the ability to participate in Irish society to the extent that a person needs and wishes in all of the major components of society, without having to relinquish his or her own cultural identity. (DJELR, 2000:9)

In 1998, the government tasked the Interdepartmental Working Group on the Integration of Refugees in Ireland (DJELR 2000:8)

To formulate a strategy for implementing the Government's policy of responding positively to the needs of people granted refugee status or leave to remain.

As a result, the group published the report *Integration: A Two-Way Process*, which elaborates on the concept of integration as a dual process and defines integration as (DJELR 2000:44)

... a two-way process that places a real obligation on both society and the individual refugee. From the refugee's perspective, integration requires a willingness to adapt to the lifestyle of Irish society without abandoning or being expected to abandon one's own cultural identity. From the point of view of Irish society; it requires a willingness to accept refugees on the basis of equality and to take action to facilitate access to services, resources and decision-making processes in parity with Irish nationals...

The Working Group “took inspiration from societies that embrace cultural diversity, such as the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland and Denmark” (DJELR 2000: 38). Despite having consulted NGOs by means of a call for written submissions, the Working Group was criticised for not including refugees in the membership of the group (Gray 2006). In 2005, at a time when immigration to Ireland had amplified and diversified in terms of flows and compositions, the National Economic and Social Council published *People, Productivity and Purpose*, a report reviewing “key economic, social and environmental developments”. Integration was identified as a key determinant as to whether immigration would be a success or a failure. As a result, and following the 2007 general elections, the Government established the Office of the Minister for Integration under the auspices of the newly created role of Minister of State for Integration. The office was tasked with producing Ireland’s first ever strategy for migrant integration, titled *Migration Nation*. The key elements of the strategy centred on the mainstreaming of service provision for migrant communities, the emphasis on migrant integration as part of a broad social inclusion and equality framework, and the reassertion of integration as a two-way process. A number of departmental and institutional strategies were developed, including by the Health Service Executive, *An Garda Siochana*, and the Department of Education, to respond to the increasingly diverse nature of Irish society. However, following the economic crisis, *Migration Nation* remained largely unimplemented, and while the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration remained, the role of the Junior Minister was scrapped in 2011 and the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturality was closed in 2008 (Harvey 2012).

After years of relative inactivity in the field of migrant integration, resulting from the economic crisis and the return to net emigration, the position of Minister for State for Equality, Immigration and Integration was established in 2016. Minister David Stanton’s first task was to draft a new strategy, which, following stakeholders’ consultation, was published in February 2017, and titled *The Migrant Integration Strategy: A Blueprint for the Future*. The strategy is based on the EU CBPs (Appendix 1), which have been in place since November 2004 (DJE 2017:14) and aims to move beyond addressing the needs of communities and into addressing inequality in outcomes for long-standing migrant communities in Ireland. Unlike its predecessor, *Migration Nation* (OMI 2008), with its focus on principles, this strategy focuses on two types of actions: the first actions target all Government departments and relate to how they operationalise their work *vis-à-vis* migrant communities. The second actions address specific issues identified through the consultation process, such as encouraging increasing diversity in the civil service or

monitoring school enrolment. The table in Appendix 3, prepared by Gilmartin and Dagg (2018:54) categorises the types of actions envisaged by the migrant integration strategy, as well as the competent bodies to deliver them. Positive aspects of the strategy include a focus on shared values and participation across Irish society and the recognition of data collection gaps. Criticisms include its lack of grounding in human rights law, the exclusion of undocumented migrants and asylum seekers from its actions, and the lack of tangible and actionable language across some areas (Murphy, Caulfield and Gilmartin 2017). As it stands, the strategy does not refer to the resources necessary for implementation of the actions it recommends, including supports to public bodies.

Recent Research on Indicators of Migrant Integration in Ireland

In general, EU level Zaragoza integration indicators are less effective once we move outside a national focus and there is a lack of indicators to capture the specificity of integration at a local and regional level (Gregurovic and Zuparic-Ilijic 2018). To date, the assessment of migrant integration policies in Ireland has been processed through a series of reports published initially by The Integration Centre in conjunction with the ESRI, between 2010 and 2013 and annually since 2017, under the format of the Monitoring Report on Integration, prepared by the ESRI with the Department of Justice and Equality. The reports focus on four key indicators of integration: employment, education, social inclusion and active citizenship. The main findings since the introduction of the latest integration strategy are as follows:

- **Employment Indicators**

Although the employment rates of Irish citizens and immigrants are broadly similar, there is a significant difference in the unemployment rate of both groups. McGinnity et al. (2018) found that in 2015 the unemployment rate for Irish workers stood at 9.6% compared to 13.1% for immigrants (by 2019 the gap had narrowed with the unemployment rate of Irish nationals down to 5.2% compared to 6.2% for immigrants (CSO 2019)). Barrett, McGinnity and Quinn (2017) have found the self-employment rate of immigrants to be significantly lower than among the Irish population. A joint OECD and European Commission report published in 2015 found that the employment rate in Ireland of non-EU women was broadly similar to other non-EU women in other EU countries, but that the employment rate of non-EU men was 3.6% lower in Ireland than the EU average of 63.1%. Compared to Irish nationals there was a slightly higher

incidence of temporary contracts among immigrant workers (9.18% compared to 8.46%) and a significantly higher incidence of over qualification among immigrant workers (40.7% compared to 29.2%). Immigrant women were less likely than immigrant men to undergo on-the-job training (OECD/EU 2015)

- **Education Indicators**

In 2017 the number of migrants with a third-level qualification stood at 47.5% compared to 35.2% among Irish citizens. This difference narrowed down to just 4.2% among younger groups (McGinnity et al. 2018). Groups that present a higher-than-average third-level education level are citizens of early EU Member States (67.3% have third-level education) and citizens from English-speaking countries (70.8% have third-level education). Barrett et al. (2017) have found that differences in English language proficiency may account for the key skills gap between the two categories.

- **Social Inclusion Indicators**

Looking first at income and poverty rates, the 2017 median equivalised household income was €15,600 for immigrants, compared to €18,500 for their Irish counterparts, immigrants were 5.5% more likely to be at risk of poverty than the Irish population (21.1% compared to 15.5%) with this risk highest among those from outside the EU (McGinnity et al. 2018). The self-reported health status of immigrants was higher than that of Irish, in line with the ‘healthy immigrant’ theory, which states that migrants are generally healthier than the average population but that their health status risks faster deterioration in the host country (Kennedy et al. 2015). In 2014, 77% of Irish nationals were homeowners, compared to just 24.8% of immigrants, while, 69.8% of the latter lived in private rented accommodations compared to just 11.8% of the former. Access to social housing is also significantly higher among Irish (11.2% for Irish and 5.4% for immigrants). OECD/EU (2018:247) finds the rate of home ownership of non-EU migrants in Ireland to be 5.2% below the comparable average figure for the EU. Migrant families are disproportionately represented in the growing phenomena of homelessness, with migrant families representing 35% of homeless families in 2018 (Long et al. 2019).

- **Active Citizenship Indicators**

In the period 2010–2015, 101,123 naturalisation certificates were issued, of which 89.9% were to non-EU nationals. In comparative terms, access to long-term residence is much lower among non-EU nationals, with just 1.8% of non-EEA migrants having achieved

this status in 2015 (Barrett et al. 2017), significantly lower than the EU average of 31.7%. It may be explained by the fact that longer residency requirements are needed to secure long-term residence than for naturalisation. The number of non-Irish registered to vote, an indicator of civic and political participation, stood at 35.6% in 2017. All immigrants, irrespective of residence status, are entitled to vote and stand as candidates in local elections, whereas referenda and presidential elections are restricted to Irish citizens, parliamentary elections are restricted to Irish and British citizens, and European elections are restricted to citizens of EU Member States. The number of immigrant candidates at local elections decreased from 39 in 2009 to 31 in 2014, and increased to 50 in 2019, with three candidates being elected to office that year.

Analysis of the Current Migrant Integration Strategy

Gilmartin and Dagg (2018) in the first comprehensive analysis of immigrant integration and settlement services in Ireland, found that up until 2017 there was very little information about which services migrants were entitled to and their availability. While the government strategy specifies that integration-related issues should be mainstreamed into the general work of relevant government departments, there is very little evidence that this has happened or is in the process of being implemented (Murphy et al. 2017). Gilmartin and Dagg (2018:55) identify five funding schemes operated by the DJE, which provide support for migrant integration projects, and outlines their respective focus areas (see Appendix 4). The reliance on European funding for the implementation of integration measures is a reminder of the key role that EU policy plays in determining the implementation of the integration strategy in Ireland.

In addition to specified funding streams, general social inclusion and community development schemes may also target migrant communities. Since 2017, €16 million was allocated for the five specified schemes, of which 60% of funds were granted to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), 21% was given local development companies (LDCs)⁵ and 6% to private companies. No specific funds were allocated to government departments or local authorities, which makes it difficult to foresee how they will effectively mainstream integration in their work. Gilmartin and Dagg (2018) found that

⁵ Local development companies are not-for-profit community-led local development organisations which operate in urban, rural and island communities in Ireland targeting all population profiles and densities and working with communities to develop local solutions to local issues and tackle inequality and social exclusion and focus on promoting local economic development. There are over 40 of them across Ireland.

services are disproportionately provided by non-governmental organisations and that these vary greatly in terms of capacity, profile and reach. While some of these NGOs are staffed by remunerated workers and have a national reach, most are small scale NGOs that provide services locally and are often run on a voluntary basis by co-nationals. This leads to difficulties in providing sustainable long-term services (Ejorh 2015), while also promoting competition among providers who often rely on these funding sources to continue their existence. Finally, the high levels of restrictions governing access to services (associated with residence status) mean that many categories of migrants, such as asylum seekers, undocumented migrants, and international students, cannot benefit from many integration-related services (Gilmartin et al. 2016). Broader social inclusion programmes impose additional requirements, such as the Habitual Residence Conditions, or may not be available to migrants in employment but in precarious situations (MRCI 2015a). An assessment needs to be carried out to understand whether the funding allocated, and services provided are meeting the integration needs of migrant communities across the nation. Such an assessment would also help to identify areas of underdevelopment that need to be addressed.

The first part of this chapter reviewed migrant integration in Ireland. To conclude given the traditional concern was emigration this remains a relatively new policy field in Ireland. While the Irish State officially takes an intercultural approach to migrant integration and describes it as a “two-way process”, migrants arriving during the late 1990s and in the early 2000s had limited access to services and were not covered by any defined policy goals. The recent integration strategy published in 2017 represented the first thorough attempt to address the topic. The studies of economic integration reviewed in this chapter have pointed out to an over-representation of immigrant workers in low-paid sectors of employment as well as an over qualification and underemployment in reference to Irish workers. A significant income gap, more pronounced for non-EU workers, exists when compared to Irish workers and higher levels of unemployment and lower labour market attachment are found among labour migrants. These indicators are an important benchmark and starting point for the qualitative assessment of experiences of precarious employment among migrants.

Analysis of the development of labour and welfare regimes as well as integration policies indicates that such regimes and policies are unlikely to improve the labour market position of immigrants in Ireland or mitigate the reality of labour migrants who find themselves in hyper precarity resulting from the restrictive migration regime.

Section Two of this chapter takes on the task of outlining seven key concepts, *Voluntariness, Agency, Intersectionality of Gender, Class and Race, Networks, Mobilities, Migration as a Family Strategy, and Labour Market Trajectories* that both allow a deeper understanding of how migrant workers might themselves adopt strategies to cope with vulnerability and precarity. Such concepts enable deeper understanding of the reality of migration and may also feed into integration policy.

Key Concepts Regarding the Migration Process

Voluntariness

The concept of ‘voluntariness’ plays a major role in the study of migration, both for the purpose of developing a theory of migration and for public policy design. The notion of ‘voluntariness’ has been employed to discern, in turn, who is a ‘forced migrant’ and, in recent contexts, to try to ascertain who is a ‘proper refugee’ in the eyes of government officials (Shacknove 1985; Ottonelli and Torresi 2013). The rejection of binaries and the notion of a ‘continuum of unfreedoms’ put forward by Skrivankova (2010) and further developed by Lewis et al. (2015) helps to move from this dichotomous debate. Much of the need to differentiate ‘voluntary migrants’ from ‘forced migrants’ comes from the need to determine what duties states have towards those individuals and as a means to clarify specific rights. Some argue that if migration is a matter of preference, then states have a limited responsibility to ensure their well-being; whereas others argue that because international migration happens in a context of global injustice, much of contemporary migration cannot be classified as voluntary, and that states have a duty of care towards those migrants. Ottonelli and Torresi’s (2013) framework utilises four conditions to define non-voluntary migration:

1. **Non-Coercion:** Coercion is defined in the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (2000) as being both physical or psychological, and incorporating threats, intimidation or deception. This protocol’s interpretation of coercion is problematic and has been subject to widespread criticism (Fredette 2009). Many argue that, in the field of human trafficking, states have placed an emphasis on the means of entry in order to criminalise migrants (Gallagher 2002; Musto 2009). Regardless of the outcomes for the migrant in a destination country,

entry cannot be categorised as voluntary if it takes place under coercive circumstances.

2. **Sufficiency:** Mayer (2005) introduced the concept of sufficiency, arguing that if the only alternative available to a person is starvation, destitution, bodily injury or incapacitating poverty, then migration cannot be conceived of as voluntary. Significant literature on asylum seekers and refugees (Castles 2002; Price 2006) argues that states tend to overlook insufficiency, focusing instead on protection from persecution.
3. **Exit Options:** Another requirement for the voluntariness of migration, is the availability of ‘exit options.’ This can be interpreted as “the availability of alternatives which do not represent unbearable costs for the migrant” (Ottonelli and Torresi, 2013: 801) and goes beyond being able to return to one’s country of origin. This concept indicates that migration that was once voluntary may become forced by the lack of viable exit options. This can also relate to the lack of available options for migrants to maintain their legal status.
4. **Information:** For potential migrants to make a voluntary choice they need to have access to accurate information. Someone who is interested in exploiting migrants, such as traffickers, can purposely act deceptively. Migrants can also fall victim of deceitful information from uninterested parties, such as return migrants who distort the realities of their experience and might entice potential migrants to follow their path (Sayad 2004). With the growth of new technologies, the information available to migrants has grown exponentially but not all information is relevant, accurate or reliable (Gonzalez 2008). This can result in mechanisms of self-deception (Parrenas 2001; Sayad 2004) where migrants become incapable of calculating the benefits and costs of migrating due to an internalised idealised image of the destination country.

While the debate about forced versus voluntary migration has been overshadowed academically by newer models of understanding migration processes, its constant re-emergence in policy and public debate makes Ottonelli and Torresi’s (2013) framework useful for discussing migration, particularly economic migration, where participants are usually assumed to be exercising full agency in the choices they make. For instance, for

analysing the Irish employment permit system, the above conditions help us understand how the ‘tying’ of a worker to an employer can act as a coercive measure to limit exit choices or how poverty and indebtedness, whether associated to the migration process or not, can restrict migrant’s voluntary choices. It is nonetheless important to supplement this analysis with other concepts, such as the aforementioned ‘continuum of unfreedoms’ (Skrivankova 2010; Lewis et al. 2015)

Agency

Understanding the relationship between structure and agency in migration theory and research remains one of the greatest academic challenges in this field (Bakewell 2010). The debate about agency in migration plays a significant role in the development of policy (Faist 2000) as it is generally understood to distinguish between forced, humanitarian migration and voluntary, mainly economic migration (De Jong and Fawcett 1981). With his development of social transformation theory, Castles (2007, 2010) sought to bridge the gap between structure and agency by offering a model to understand the use of agency in structural processes that are often categorised as forceful or coercive, such as humanitarian flows or irregular migration. In her ethnographic study of Filipino domestic workers in Canada, Barber (2000) discusses how Filipina migrant women have practiced agency to navigate structures of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1989; Kraus 1993) associated with gendered migration and work in domestic services. Despite those structures, the workers exercise their agency to accumulate what Bourdieu (1986) calls ‘cultural capital’, such as their newly acquired social status as breadwinners, which they use to renegotiate conventions of femininity, gender-roles and family ties. Barber (2000) argues that the social capital amassed through working feminine diasporic ties (Brah 2006) and the cultural capital associated with their social status and power allowed those women to counterbalance the negative effects of the often-coercive labour migration systems (Bakan and Stasiulis 1995), and pave the way for more equitable migration patterns in the future. Understanding how participants interpret and apply agency in decision-making, both in employment and outside, is a central focus of my research. In addition, I seek to find out the extent to which precarity impacts on their ability to exercise such agency.

Intersectionality of Gender, Class and Race

The study of class is a mainstay of social sciences and applied to understand a wide range of sociological phenomena. Yet, in the field of migration studies, it has been eclipsed by a focus on other forms of social affinity or difference, such as gender or ethnicity (Van Hear 2014). But with the advent of transnational studies (Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992; Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999; Faist 2000), and more recently, the ‘new mobilities paradigm’ (Urry 2000; Sheller and Urry 2006), the study of class has become essential to understanding who moves and who stays behind. From a Marxist perspective, class relates to how societies are shaped by the relationship of individuals to the ownership of the means of production. However, when studying contemporary migration, Bourdieu’s analysis of class is particularly useful. Bourdieu (1986) developed a conceptual framework for understanding class through the disposition of different forms of capital and can be applied to gender and race.

- Economic capital relates to the command of financial resources and assets.
- Social capital relates to group membership, connections and networks.
- Cultural capital relates to knowledge skills education and other advantages.
- Symbolic capital relates to resources made available through prestige, honour or recognition.

Bourdieu’s framework is linked to other understandings of capital, such as human capital (Becker 1962) and to the development of new theories of capital, such as ethnic capital (Borjas 1992) or linguistic capital (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). Bourdieu also underlines that different forms of capital can be accumulated, transformed and converted (Bourdieu 1986; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). This is particularly useful to explain how labour migrants with limited economic capital are able to mobilise other forms of capital (for example their social networks) to facilitate travel or advance their life projects. In this regard, migrants represent a new model of social class, which is defined by the different kinds of economic, cultural and social resources they possess (Savage et al. 2013). This helps us understand the role that social networks play in facilitating and perpetuating migration, and how ethnic capital develops niches of employment among certain categories of migrants. For example, ethnic and racial capital (Hunter 2011) help us understand how preferences for certain nationalities in specific sectors (Filipina domestic workers, for example) help create and shape migration patterns in Ireland.

There has been limited research on how racialisation takes place in the Irish labour market. Often, we have a tendency to objectify race as an attribute belonging to a person (Omi 2001) and to focus on the interpretation of physical differences (Banton 2000). Yet, racial meaning emerges and is transformed through interactions between individuals in specific institutional contexts (Omi and Winant 2002). Racialisation relates to everyday mechanisms of the reproduction of racial categories, which produces social effects and specific ways of understanding one another (Appiah 2000). The labour market, its segmentation and its increasing demand for mobility, plays a decisive role in construction the migrant as the *other* (Mora and Undurraga 2013). While studies on the role of ethnicity and discrimination in the Irish labour market do exist (O’Connell and McGinnity 2008; Kingston, McGinnity and O’Connell 2015) there has been far less attention on the role of race in creating and sustaining labour market segmentation and other forms of stereotyping in Ireland (Joseph 2018).

Gender, understood as a person’s sex, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, is an essential variable of analysis in experiences of migration, and shapes all aspects of migration experience, causes and consequences of migration, both forced and voluntary (IOM 2019). Gender informs risks, vulnerabilities and needs, roles, expectations, relationships and power dynamics. Gender influences access to social services, economic growth, capacities, risks and vulnerabilities; ensuring diversity and inclusiveness in consultations and participation in activities; and addressing how migration influences gender roles and relations. Studies related to transnational caregiving have shown how families take day-to-day decisions in a transnational space, particularly in relation to care-work and caregiving. Winters (2014) describes how negotiating caregiving becomes a key element in the “power-geometry of mobility” and informs decision-making among migrants, particularly among women. These decisions are intrinsically connected with discussions of race, class, gender and capital. For example, it is easier and more accepted for a Filipina to exercise mobility in order to improve her social status and that of her family by relying on social ties and racialised demands for Filipina care-workers in Ireland than it is for a Bangladeshi woman of a similar class and educational background to mobilise her human capital for the same purposes. The strength of gendered beliefs around care and employment among certain groups also reinforces those pathways, resulting in lower participation rates (Fuller and Martin 2012). Children often limit the labour market participation for women (Cohen and Bianchi 1999), which, for immigrant women, results in greater likelihood of them taking a family care path or part-time employment.

Networks

Just as migrants' skills and characteristics constitute their human capital, the networks they can exploit represent their social capital. Waldinger and Lichter (2003) argue that social ties can provide access to important resources such as job referrals. Scholars have focused on 'bonding ties' that exist between families and ethnic communities, resulting in a sense of obligation to one another. These ties lead such communities to lend help to each other (Sanders, Nee and Sernau 2002). Proximity is another factor that facilitates employment, since those residing nearer to their social ties can benefit more from relevant assistance, as, for example, in the case of childcare (Greve and Salaff 2003). The interaction between proximity and bonding ties results in the emergence of close-knit ethnic communities, where employment niches may be developed among co-ethnic members (Walton-Roberts and Hiebert 1997) and facilitates ethnic entrepreneurship by providing access to suppliers and an ethnic customer base (Aldrich and Elam 1997), which builds opportunities for self-employment. Conversely, strong ethnic ties can also disadvantage migrants in the long run, by developing into negative ethnic capital (Borjas 1992), slowing down their development of host-country language proficiency and other cultural attributes (Chiswick and Miller 2005). Whilst ethnic networks can be very useful for entry-level jobs, they may not be as helpful for accessing higher-status jobs (Waldinger and Lichter 2003). I will question the role that class, gender and ethnicity as well as ethnic networks play in sourcing employment among workers in the Accommodation & Food as well as the Domestic & Care sectors. I will also interrogate whether such networks represent an advantage, both in the short and long term or whether, as some scholars argue, these employment niches facilitate exploitation rather than mobility, in particular for women (Sanders et al. 2002).

Migration as a Family Strategy

Since the late 1970s, family migration has constituted the predominant form of legal entry in developed countries (Nivalainen 2004). Yet the academic literature has largely favoured the study of labour migration from an individual perspective albeit later research started to look at the use of migration as a family strategy (Lauby and Stark 1988; Orellana et al. 2014). Transnational studies have shifted the perspective from the impact of migration on the individual to the impact on the social structures surrounding them (Portes et al. 1999). It is within this newly conceived transnational space that families

make migratory decisions that may involve separation, unification, reunification but also a renegotiation of pre-conceived notions of work, the family unit, duty of care, breadwinning and indebtedness, among others.

Research on new forms of global care (Zimmerman, Litt and Bose 2006), on global care chains (Hochschild 2000) and transnational parenthood (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Parrenas 2008) sheds light on the different ways families constantly negotiate restrictions and opportunities. These represent a gendered critique on the household strategy theory. Baldassar (2014) presents the combined findings of two large-scale ethnographic projects looking at the role of emotions in migration-related decision-making. She describes the ‘migration guilt’ (Baldassar 2011) present among Italian abroad, and how reactions to it impact on their careers. She also finds that the ‘duty to return’ is often a core psychological experience associated with labour migration (Baldassar 2007).

Complementing the literature on human capital and social capital, there is a growing body of literature that focuses on the role of the household in the labour market trajectories of immigrants. These factors may include household characteristics, resources and understandings of family obligations. However, households operate in accordance to family strategies, meaning that the employability of everyone plays an important role in deciding which family member takes a larger share of the unpaid care-work. Subordination within the household may also entail taking what Creese and Wiebe (2012) describe as ‘survival employment’, which provides supplementary earning but does not relate to any career aspirations. This is often reinforced in immigration systems, such as that in Ireland, where there is a principal applicant who has access to a greater set of entitlements while the stay and rights of dependants is conditioned according to the status of the principal applicant (Boyd and Pikkov 2005). Women often fall into the category of being dependants. This family investment strategy that results in women taking subordinate labour market roles could be responsible for lower rates of labour market assimilation among immigrant women (Hawthorne 2008) as they facilitate the occupational mobility of their husbands (Hum and Simpson 2000). The gendered nature of household strategies tends to redirect educational and skills investment towards men in detriment to the labour market outcomes of women family members (Fuller and Martin 2012). Among my cohort of participants, I will seek to grasp the gendered differences on household strategies, particularly focusing on how women breadwinners exercise agency

and decision-making. Parallel to that I will question what options are available to spouse dependants to reconcile care and career aspirations.

Mobilities

Van Hear (1998) puts forward a useful framework recognising five degrees of movement for understanding the interlinkage between mobility and immobility.

- Moving Out: Out-Migration or Emigration
- Coming In: Inward Movement or Immigration.
- Moving On: Onward Movement or Secondary Migration.
- Moving Back: Return Migration or Repatriation
- Staying Put: Immobility, Staying Behind.

He suggests that someone might experience some or all these stages throughout the course of their lifetime, through choice or not. Within the conceptual framework, class, as previously defined, is the main factor determining who can 'stay put', who 'has to move', who can 'choose to move forward', and who is 'forced to return'. The multiple possibilities have been applied in different areas of transnational studies such as transnational social spaces (Faist 2000), transnational social fields (Levitt and Schiller 2004), transnational living (Guarnizo 2003) and transnational caregiving (Winters 2014). It provides an understanding of the intersection of class and mobility. This allows us to understand the extent to which power and agency lie in the capacity of migrants to manage the relation between mobility and immobility (Franquesa 2011) in transnational spaces. This is particularly relevant to explain household strategies which are coordinated and agreed upon taking into consideration different types of mobilities enjoyed by members.

Migration has not only increased quantitatively in recent years, but it has also changed qualitatively (Castles and Miller 2009; Kahanec and Zimmermann 2009). The 'right' to freedom of movement has arguably become the cornerstone of membership of the European Union. The enlargement of the EU has created a new category of migrants, labelled as 'free movers' (Favell and Recchi 2009; Krings et al. 2013). This new transnational space allows for multiple forms of mobility (Anghel 2008) and blurs the classical patterns of labour migration (Favell and Recchi 2009). Krings et al. (2013) found that Polish migrants in Ireland identify as mobile not only across national borders, but

also within labour markets, and often perceived their migration moves as being part of lifestyle choices or self-development (Kennedy 2010).

Understanding how the enjoyment of mobility, in geographical spaces but also in constructed spaces such as the labour market, inform the decision-making of migrants and their long-term projections helps us appreciate the constraints experienced by those who have restrained mobility. Later in my study, I refer back to the concept of ‘mobility’ in employment, which for labour migrants limited by immigration regulations represents a goal associated with progression. I aim to understand the extent to which their access to mobility, and the period waiting for this to happen, shape their labour market positioning and whether immobility leave lasting effects in their trajectories.

Trajectories or Pathways to Labour Market Integration

The thesis research question interrogates the impact early employment in the Irish work permit system has had, if the lack of mobility affected their future outcomes. In addition, it is concerned with whether experiences of exploitative employment affect migrant’s trajectories and labour market decision-making. Labour market trajectories of participants are a key element in explaining how precarity traps are created and negotiated.

A mixture of labour market characteristics – or human capital – and contextual determinants such as labour market institutions and policies, shape trajectories of economic migrants. According to Chiswick’s (1978) theory of assimilation, the more selective the criteria, the quicker they should ‘catch-up’, as they would have been purposefully chosen. Interestingly, qualitative research has shed light on the impact of early employment in later labour market outcomes, including among those migrants selected through ‘points-system’ (Man 2004; Cardu 2007) and found that it contradicts the assimilation theory. Low-level jobs not only act as ‘de-skillers’ but also limit migrants’ abilities to invest in location-specific human capital, such as education and training. This, in turn, results in atrophy or entrapment (McCoy and Masuch 2007).

Fuller and Martin (2012: 138) define “trajectories as multidimensional and holistic entities, seeking to predict the correlates of a set of typical pathways”. Identifying patterns is useful to understand to what extent trajectories are predictable and remediable. Two conceptual ‘trajectory’ frameworks are outlined below. In her work, Fuller (2011) maps the level of labour market integration achieved by newly arrived migrants to Canada. She

does this by analysing their monthly status according to her conceptual framework, which recognises six different statuses:

1. Full-time dependant employment (dependant means work performed for an employer)
2. Part-time dependant employment.
3. Self-employment
4. Family care
5. Full-time education (without working)
6. Other (job search, language course, preparation for self-employment, etc.)

She argues that each of these statuses impacts on the level of economic security that migrants experience. Full-time work, while most desirable, can often be low-paid, dangerous or insecure, resulting in entrapment. Nonetheless, part-time work generally involves low-pay, scarce options for progression and limited employment regulations (Connolly and Gregory 2007). In contrast to dependant employment (working for an employer), self-employment gives migrants limited access to entitlements such as employment insurance and results in lower financial returns on average (Vosko and Zukewich 2006). Family care is often part of a household strategy and can facilitate the acquisition of capital, but it also represents a loss of autonomy and limits access to social rights that can be obtained through employment (Gilligan et al. 2010). In her study of high-skilled Danish migrants, Liversage (2009) identified five different trajectories or 'paths' that highly skilled migrants generally take. The paths of re-entry, ascent, re-education, marginalisation and re-migration are outlined in detail in the methodology chapter. This typology, while originally applied to interpret highly skilled migrant trajectories, also has potential to work as an analytical tool to understand labour market trajectories of labour migrants in Ireland, including to explain why some withdraw from employment and why others face difficulties in re-entering.

Conclusion

This chapter introduced the concept of migrant integration as a contested one, discussed the main theoretical approaches to this topic, and explained how these are influenced by the politics of migration policy. It also introduced concepts related to migration processes and labour markets trajectories that will provide the basis for the analysis of participants' experience, to the extent that they can explain how migrants use agency in their decision-making to respond to the lack of governmental responsiveness to their experiences of precarity. In the next chapter I outline the research methods employed to answer the research question as well as the process of designing the research study.

Chapter 5 - Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the research methodology used to address the key research question of this thesis. In the first section, I describe the ontological and epistemological considerations that underpin the research project, and issues of reflexivity and positionality as a researcher, which are of key importance to me as a person with a migrant background and a migrant advocate. The following section confirms the key research question and the sub-questions of this thesis. I then discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a range of different research methods in the social sciences, including their application to migration-related research. I follow with a brief summary of research gaps identified in the preparation for undertaking the study and outline how the research design and my approach to the research question will respond to those gaps. As part of this, I describe the process of using descriptive statistics from the Migrants Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) to inform the sampling method, the selection of and access to participants. I follow with the process of gathering qualitative data through interviews. The next section provides demographic data (in tabulated form) of the participants of the study. Next, I describe the process of analysing the data and identifying the concepts that will inform the coding process. I also describe my conceptual framework, reiterating the importance of studies of labour market trajectories and pathways to labour market integration to make sense of participants' trajectories. In the final section, I review the ethical considerations and safeguards used in the course of implementing this research.

Defining My Research Paradigm

The purpose of defining my research paradigm is to allow the reader to understand how I, as a researcher, perceive and find knowledge. A paradigm consists of the following inter-related components: ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods. According to Crotty (1998), ontology relates to the study of being and it is concerned with answering the question *what is there to be known?* Researchers taking an ontological position are making a statement about how they understand the way things *really* are and how things

really work. Epistemology, in turn, is concerned with the nature and shape of knowledge (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2002). It seeks to answer the question *what does it mean to know?* When I am making an epistemological assumption, I am concerned with how knowledge can be created, acquired and communicated. The purpose of epistemology is to establish the relationship between the researcher and what there is to be known (Guba and Lincoln 1994). Methodology is concerned with *why, what, where, when and how* data is collected and analysed. The strategy lies behind the choice and use of a method. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994:108), methodology answers the question “how can the researcher go about finding out what the researcher believes can be known?” Methods are specific techniques and procedures used to collect and analyse data, and they can be traced back, through methodology and epistemology, to the ontological position of the researcher (Crotty 1998).

Every paradigm is based upon its own ontological and epistemological assumptions, and since all assumptions are based on conjecture, paradigms cannot be proven right or wrong. Instead, they outline the researcher’s perception of reality and knowledge. I situate myself in between the interpretative paradigm and the critical paradigm. The interpretive paradigm relies on relativism as its ontological position. The basis for relativism is a view that reality is subjective and, as such, is perceived differently from one person to another. Because different people construct meaning in different ways, knowledge is derived from culture and situated in history. Truth is therefore a consensus between different constructors of knowledge (Pring 2004). The critical paradigm, in turn, is based on the ontological position of historical realism. Historical realism is the view that reality has been shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values. Realities are socially constructed entities that are constantly being internally shaped (Guba and Lincoln 1994). In my research, I place emphasis on understanding the experiences of participants in the labour market, and how those experiences affect their lives; as such, I use an interpretative methodological approach.

As a researcher, my goal is to make meaning of their experiences through my own thinking and cognitive process. I acknowledge that in doing so I am applying my values to the research yet aim to assume a ‘balanced axiology’ (Kivunja and Kuyini 2017) and to present my findings without taking sides. Nevertheless, the aim of my research is to identify improvements that can be made to better the conditions of labour migrants residing in Ireland and to improve the system for newcomers. By aiming to do so, my

research is critical and underpinned by values of social justice⁶; it seeks to improve the livelihood of those researched and is informed by the principle of equality. While my methodology does not involve the active participation of those being researched, as in participatory action research, I still aim to use their experiences to inform recommendations that I believe can improve conditions in the labour market and have a transformative effect.

Positionality and Reflexivity

From the 1990s onwards, there has been a wave of feminist critiques of social research methodologies, particularly challenging old positivist conceptions and emphasising the subjectivity of knowledge production (Rose 1997; Raghuram, Madge and Skelton 1998). Critics of positivism highlight the importance of reflection at all stages of the research – during data collection, data analysis and representation (Ganga and Scott 2006) – and the equal involvement of researcher and participants in social research (Geertz 1992). Much discussion has centred on the ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’ status of the researcher, meaning how they position themselves in relation to the research participants and how much shared commonality they experience. Critics have highlighted what they perceive as ethical issues arising from ‘outsiders’ carrying out social research (Mullings 1999). The insider-outsider dilemma most clearly features at the interview stage, due to the non-neutrality of the research and the power relations involved in the research process (Raghuram et al. 1998). Insider and outsider positions should not be understood as static, but rather as part of a continuum, and in a state of constant fluidity (Rabe 2003). Both require critical reflection (Ganga and Scott 2006), and as a researcher, one should always interrogate oneself regarding how one’s race, class, gender and sexuality affect one’s status as insider or outsider. Reflexivity means engaging with my own research practice in order to understand it better, with a view to improving it, and requires me as a researcher to think about my own social position and how it conditions my approach. In the context of this research I am conscious that reflexivity takes a different dimension when researchers are themselves migrants, as is my case.

⁶ Social justice is a concept of fair and just relations between the individual and society, as measured by the distribution of wealth, opportunities for personal activity, and social privileges. The concept of social justice has often referred to the process of ensuring that individuals fulfil their societal roles and receive what was their due from society (Banai et al. 2011)

Positionality is understood as the ability to locate yourself in the research. It is a process through which you reflect upon your own assumptions and actions and how they influence the actions in your research project (Perez 2006). The limited literature in this field focus mainly on co-ethnic researchers (Louis and Barton 2002; Leung 2015), but in my case I am invited to reflect on my own position as a non-European labour migrant in Ireland who is studying the labour market trajectories of non-European labour migrants in Ireland, particularly as I have myself taken the same entry route as the participants. I am also aware I have a dual role as a researcher and a migrant rights advocate, particularly as I advocate for the rights of the population I am researching. I worked in the MRCI for ten years, including during the time when data was collected through the qualitative interviews. In this employment, I spent the first five years directly advocating on behalf of migrants in vulnerable situations due to their legal status or because of their employment conditions. Such advocacy also involved legal representation. I have personally dealt with the cases of some of the interviewees. I understand research participants may have a 'sense of duty' or 'moral obligation' towards the MRCI, where I have worked, and perhaps even towards me.

I am conscious of the importance of understanding and managing the diverse range of privileges I have, first as an economic migrant with a, self-perceived, successful trajectory in the country, but also the privilege to advocate for the advancement of the rights of the migrant population in Ireland. I am conscious, and was therefore wary, that this could result in overstepping the boundaries between the researcher and the 'researched'. I constantly reminded myself of the need to keep checking how I performed those privileges. Finally, I understand that often academic research can be perceived as providing more benefits to the researcher than to the researched, and with this in mind, I believe in the importance of producing a study that reflects the true story of the participants, and which is centred on advancing their interests.

Research Questions

In summary, the central question of my research is:

To what extent do labour migrants experience precarity traps in Ireland?

The following sub-questions are addressed:

To what extent has Irish government policy been responsible for and responsive to labour migrants' experiences of precarity?

What are the impacts of precarity on migrants' agency and decision-making as well as on family life and sense of belongingness?

My study focuses on assessing migrants' experiences of Ireland's restrictive labour migration policy during their time in Ireland. It differentiates itself from studies on the economic integration of migrants because, rather than focusing on outcomes based on the initial labour market characteristics of migrants, it focuses on understanding the processes that lead to experiences of precarity. I also attempt to assess the impact of such experiences on family life and decision-making, including on spouses and the second generation, by looking, where possible, at the barriers and incentives regarding their participation in the labour market. In addition, I aim to understand how migrant households exercise agency in the context of constraints imposed on them by public policy and the wider international context in which family and care life is framed.

Research Methods

Using Complementary Methods in the Field of Migration Research

Methodologies in migration research have become more varied over recent years and interdisciplinary research has been encouraged for several reasons. First, interdisciplinary research allows scholars to combine a range of methods which are traditionally attached to one discipline or another (Boswell 2008). This allows for what Wallerstein and Smelser

(1969) describe as “complementary articulation” – the idea that different methods of observation can help us obtain a clearer view of the phenomenon we are studying. The expectation is that interdisciplinary research can help to overcome the limitations of each discipline and open up new interpretative possibilities (Bank and Lehmkuhl 2000; Bommers and Morawska 2005). Several cross-disciplinary interactions and initiatives have appeared in the fields of sociology, political science, law, geography and anthropology (Boswell 2008), often employing a range of qualitative methods to understand phenomena in migration. Interdisciplinary collaboration between sociology and economics in migration research has informed the cross-pollination of methods used in this collaboration. These concepts include individual decision-making or labour market assimilation in the study of economic models of migration (Radu 2008).

Ethnography is concerned with tales of social reality and how one culture is portrayed through the eyes of another culture (Willis and Trondman 2000; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Van Maanen 2011). Globalisation has undoubtedly changed how we perceive and study migration (Sassen 1998; Castles and Davidson 2000; King-O’Riain 2014), and the advent of transnationalism (Bauboeck 1994; Vertovec 1999) as a field of study has profoundly shaped ethnographical study (Fitzgerald 2006). The intersection of the global and the local which results from migration movements has generated its own research agenda (Burawoy et al. 2000; Gille and Riain 2002). In that sense, ethnography in migration studies has grown to represent one of the preferred qualitative methods for researchers in this field and can include various methods of interviewing and observation. Several ethnographers have focused on how the advent of new technologies affects and re-constructs the transnational spaces of immigrants (Portes et al. 1999; Boehm 2008; King-O’Riain 2014) and allows them to participate in political, family and social life, albeit at a distance. Researchers such as Noiriell (1991) and Wimmer and Schiller (2002) , have pointed out how the dominant framework of research can reinforce the discourse about national identities. In addition, within this line of research, we find that the study of the immigrant diaspora is a means of reconstructing ideas of nationhood (Jacobson 2002; Marston 2003; Cho 2007), often through a succession of conflicts of belonging. Migration entails both a place of departure and a place of arrival. It involves emigration and immigration and, as such, could be researched from both standpoints (Nyiri 2002; Baldassar and Merla 2013; Echevoyen-Nava 2013).

Finally, some have argued that the study of international migration has much to gain from ethnographies of domestic urbanisation (Zolberg 1999; O’Donnell 2001). Post-modern

ethnographers have suggested that research has been revolutionised by “bursts of global fluid” (Fitzgerald 2006) escaping the traditional constraints of time and space. Migrants are described as one of those factors, with their movements across a transnational space exemplifying deterritorialised movements (Appadurai 1990; Urry 2000). Transnational researchers have emphasized the importance of incorporating a historical approach to their research to understand how migration processes represent a continuity of successive trans-border ties. Case studies are analysis of one research subject through a holistic study using one or more methods (Creswell 2013). Case studies are not necessarily a type of qualitative research, as studies of quantitative data can also constitute case studies (Ragin and Becker 1992). Ethnographies often use one case study to explain the articulation of macro-structures within micro-spaces (Fitzgerald 2006; Yin 2011). Due to the intensity of the study, the ethnographer can only study very few cases at a time, prompting many to suggest that ethnography is ideographic in its nature: meaning it can only represent one concept or idea at a time. However, the introduction of the extended case method by Burawoy (1991; 1998) aims to move beyond the descriptive nature of a case study into theoretical advantage. Researchers have experimented by mixing ethnography and quantitative methods to generalise findings of case study research and develop theories of assimilation and human capital amassment for migrants (Zhou and Bankston 1998; Waters 1999; Levitt 2003). Using ethnographic and interview-based methods can enable researchers to understand the mechanisms and power dynamics that generate and solidify broader patterns of migrant precarity and help to reveal how individual and collective agency is exercised.

Gap in the Research

Scholarship in the field of labour migration, including in Ireland, tends to focus on the global movement of highly-skilled migrants (Chiswick 2005; O’Connor and Crowley-Henry 2019), the policy solutions required to facilitate their movement (Lowell and Findlay 2001), and how to attract them (Cervantes 2004). At the other end of the division of labour are precarious migrants who are subjected to low wages, insecurity, immigration control, and fragile employment relations (May et al. 2007; Shelley 2007; Anderson 2010; Lewis et al. 2015; Lewis and Waite 2015). Often, the poor working conditions of migrant labour at the bottom of the pay spectrum are associated with abnormalities in the labour

market or in the immigration system (Anderson 2010). However, studies such as McIlwaine et al. (2006) and Lewis et al. (2015) have shown how state policies advertently or inadvertently construct the identities of low-paid workers through irregularity, uncertainty and hyper-flexibility.

Globally, more qualitative research is required to understand better how migrants experience precarity and who constructs and benefits from their precarity. In their case study, Mackenzie and Forde (2009) contrasted the attitude and strategies of employers hiring migrant labour with the realities of vulnerable workers with limited bargaining power. Studying the practices of employers can help to explain how migrants end up with limited labour market power in segmented labour markets (Piore 1986). Employers benefit from low compliance requirements and a large availability of workers that help them keep production costs to a minimum. For workers, these employers represent a 'rite of passage' while they acquire location-specific human capital (Krupka 2009).

Emerging scholarship on precarity and migration in Ireland requires further research to keep pace with a changing labour market and renewed post-crisis inward migration. After experiencing over two decades of inward migration, it is now possible to pay attention to the qualitative longer-term experiences of migrant workers in and outside of the labour market. There is a need for research that can help us understand the relationship between migrant status, precarious work, and the nature of the Irish welfare regime. Qualitative research can examine the specific implications of the types of employment and welfare regimes these workers cope with, as well as the strategies they use to circumvent the boundaries within which they must operate. Gender, of course, is a crucial variable in any such analysis.

Research Design

Having identified a gap in qualitative studies dealing with the topic of precarity in migration in Ireland, I now go on to describe my own methodology. My research approach was to use purposeful sampling to identify a relevant cohort of 40 migrants who entered Ireland in the period 1999-2004 through the employment permit system to work in the A&FS and the D&CS, therefore categorised as at risk of precarity. This methodology was chosen after discussing alternative methodological approaches,

including mixed methods. The choice of research design and methods reflects my ontological and epistemological beliefs as described in the second section of this chapter. While initially I had aimed to produce a mixed-methods study, I was unable to find a dataset which captured information regarding migrants and those in the employment permit system. As I have previously outlined, there are no datasets focusing exclusively on the participation of migrants in the Irish labour market. It is also not possible to disaggregate migration status in large datasets such as the Survey of Income and Living Conditions, Labour Force Survey or Earning and Labour Costs. I proceed here by outlining how I used MRCI datasets to construct a purposeful sampling strategy. I then proceed to outline how I approached qualitative interviewing and to briefly outline whom I interviewed and how I analysed the data.

Analysis of MRCI's Dataset

The MRCI is the leading advocacy organisation in Ireland providing services to migrants and advancing policy change. It was founded in 2001 and since then it has operated a drop-in service that enables migrants to access reliable information about their rights and entitlements, and helps them to avail, under defined criteria, of advocacy and legal services provided by the organisation. The MRCI also runs support groups that are linked to specific sectors of employment (for example the restaurant sector or the care sector) or formed around campaigns for policy change (such as a campaign to regularise undocumented migrants). Upon their first visit to the centre, a client case is established in the MRCI's Case Management System. This record contains information related to their arrival, stay, and employment in Ireland. It also includes demographic characteristics, immigration status on arrival, and contact details as well as information related to the sector and conditions of their employment. All information gathered is strictly confidential and safeguarded through the organisation's data capture and data analysis system. Consent is sought at the initial point of contact and users agree to have their information stored for internal purposes, including data analysis and research. While some of the files date as far back as the founding of the organisation in 2001, having been subsequently entered into the computerised system, data has been routinely captured since 2006. I have chosen to cover a ten-year period and limited myself to casefiles opened between 2006 and 2016. This means that the person's first contact with the MRCI was during that period, regardless of the year they entered Ireland. This yielded 18,000 case files for analysis. Given the several data gaps related to migration in Ireland – the Central

Statistics Office (CSO) has for example only recorded the participation of migrant nationality groups in the different sectors of the labour market since 2006 – access to this alternative data from the MRCI was a significant resource. Limitations pertaining to the early years of migration in Ireland make access to this rich dataset an invaluable starting point to access a relevant cohort for qualitative research.

The analysis of the dataset was carried out with SPSS, a statistical software package. I first ran several frequencies to reduce the number of casefiles, based on the following criteria:

- Participants must have been non-EU citizens and holders of an employment permit.
- Participants must have held an employment permit during the period from 1999 to 2004, prior to arrival in or upon entering the State.
- Participants must have secured their first employment permit in the accommodation & food sector (A&FS) or in the domestic & care sector (D&CS).

The reason for applying the criteria above are as follows: my research question relates to the experience of precarity of labour migrants in Ireland, which, according to the official policy of Ireland, are those who entered the country with a work permit, and are therefore non-EU nationals. The choice of time period (1999 to 2004) is associated with the period before the enlargement of the EU, when Ireland decided not to impose restrictions on access to the labour market for nationals of newly acceded countries. I wanted to understand, through the experiences of participants, how the policy change affected their trajectories, how they experienced this change and whether migrants experienced a decline in the interest of employers in recruiting non-EU nationals. The choice of employment sectors is as follows: the A&FS has the largest share of permits issued and the D&CS, while much smaller, has the highest incidence of non-EU workers employed for the period. In addition, given the gendered nature of the latter sector, I was interested in seeing how this affected the trajectories of migrants. By reducing the sample through such filters, a clearer picture of the cohort and their demographic characteristics emerges. The sampling intention was to recruit participants that reflected this diversity, in terms of age, gender, geographical location across Ireland, and year of arrival, while at the same time acknowledging that I am not attempting to generalise the experience of those interviewed to the entire dataset.

Identifying Participants for the Qualitative Study

Participants were selected from MRCI's database to match as closely as possible the characteristics of the sample resulting from the descriptive analysis of MRCI's dataset. There were, nonetheless, certain obstacles to producing a random sample. These included the contact information no longer being up-to-date, participants being unwilling to take part in the study, and limitations in terms of their English-language skills. However, the list of participants (see Table 4 below) remains reflective of the results of the descriptive analysis and contributes to the representativeness of the study.

Qualitative interviews were conducted with 42 migrant workers. Seven interviews were also conducted with adult family members (provided additional consent was obtained) to capture the impact of precarity on family life, the role of household strategies in determining labour market participation, and the process of socio-economic integration of dependants. All interviews took place in 2016 and early 2017. The time and location of interviews was agreed with participants. Many interviews, but not all, were conducted in their homes, which allowed me to briefly observe how they lived. Some interviews were conducted in locations that played a significant role in their lives, such as their favourite cafes, or where they would take their children to play. Interviews were approximately one hour in length. All interviews were pre-recorded and later transcribed for analysis. Prior to the commencement of the interview, a form was used to collect demographic information (Appendix 8). The interviews were semi-structured in nature, following the pre-determined codes mentioned below, which informed the initial coding. The participants were asked to tell me about their socio-economic experiences prior to their migration to Ireland, the process of moving, and how they adapted to their new lives. They also guided me through their labour market trajectories in Ireland, from arrival until the interviews took place. In situations where it was useful, a timeline was used to record key events in their trajectories. The open-ended and semi-structured questions of the interviews allowed participants to express themselves and enabled them to discuss issues that they found relevant when discussing their lives in Ireland (Braun and Clarke 2006; Mason 2017). In turn, I was able to identify additional themes by which to code my interviews.

Information on Participants

I interviewed 49 people: 42 employment permit holders and 7 dependants. They came from 15 different countries and at the time of interviews had been resident in Ireland between 20 to 13 years, and dependants between 17 and 4 years. Table 4 below is a demographic profile of the labour migrant participants in the study, Table 5 below is a demographic profile of adult dependants interviewed for the study. Names and other details have been changed to preserve anonymity. Further information on participants is provided in the next chapter, ordered according to the sector of first employment.

Table 4 - Demographic characteristics of participants

Name	Gender	Country of Origin	Age ⁷	Year of Migration	Education Level	Sector	Nuclear Dependants
Abdel	Male	Bangladesh	38	2001	Third Level	A&F	In Ireland
Achara	Female	Thailand	40	2001	Third Level	A&F	In Ireland
Ahmed	Male	Morocco	41	1999	Secondary Level	D&C	In Ireland
Ahmet	Male	Turkey	41	2003	Secondary Level	A&F	None
Amelia	Female	Philippines	61	2000	Third Level	D&C	In Ireland and abroad
Ana	Female	Philippines	59	2002	Secondary Level	D&C	Abroad
Anele	Female	Zimbabwe	39	2004	Elementary	D&C	Abroad
Anurak	Male	Thai	40	2001	Third Level	A&F	In Ireland
Betty	Female	Philippines	58	2003	Third Level	D&C	In Ireland
Carlitos	Male	Philippines	47	2000	Secondary Level	A&F	Abroad
Caroline	Female	South Africa	37	2001	Secondary Level	A&F	In Ireland
Deepak	Male	India	36	2001	Secondary Level	D&C	In Ireland
Delia	Female	Philippines	55	2004	Third Level	D&C	Abroad

⁷ Age relates to the age in 2016, at the time of the interview. In order to calculate the participant's age at the time of migration, subtract the year of migration from 2016 and then deduct the result from the age in the column. 2016-YoM equals X. Age - X = Age at Migration.

Dolores	Female	Philippines	47	2003	Third Level	D&C	Abroad
Dora	Female	Philippines	53	2002	Secondary Level	D&C	In Ireland
Ellie	Female	Philippines	45	1997	Third Level	D&C	Abroad
Esra	Female	Turkey	38	2003	Secondary Level	A&F	None
Evelyn	Female	South Africa	40	2002	Secondary Level	A&F	In Ireland
Govinder	Male	India	38	2001	Secondary Level	A&F	In Ireland
Horatiu	Male	Romania	40	2001	Third Level	A&F	No
Hossain	Male	Bangladesh	42	2002	Third Level	A&F	In Ireland
Iryna	Female	Ukraine	41	2002	Third Level	A&F	In Ireland
Jayson	Male	Philippines	38	2004	Third Level	D&C	In Ireland
Joyce	Female	Philippines	38	2001	Third Level	D&C	Abroad
Lina	Female	Philippines	55	2001	Third Level	D&C	Abroad
Linda	Female	Philippines	48	2003	Third Level	D&C	Abroad
Lola	Female	Philippines	53	2003	Third Level	D&C	In Ireland
Manish	Male	Malaysia	49	2000	Secondary Level	A&F	None
Marcia	Female	Philippines	42	2003	Secondary Level	D&C	Abroad
Maria	Female	Philippines	53	2002	Third Level	D&C	None
Mercy	Female	Philippines	69	2000	Third Level	D&C	In Ireland
Mina	Female	South Africa	46	2000	Secondary Level	A&F	In Ireland
Nelly	Female	Philippines	58	2002	Third Level	D&C	Abroad
Nina	Female	Philippines	45	2000	Third Level	A&F	In Ireland
Rita	Female	Philippines	67	2003	Third Level	D&C	Abroad
Rosa	Female	Philippines	42	2003	Third Level	D&C	Abroad
Syed	Male	Pakistan	42	2001	Secondary Level	A&F	In Ireland
Tina	Female	Philippines	55	2003	Third Level	D&C	None
Tran	Male	Vietnam	41	2002	Third Level	A&F	Abroad

Tyson	Male	South Africa	50	2000	Secondary Level	A&F	In Ireland and abroad
Vladislav	Male	Ukraine	43	2002	Third Level	A&F	In Ireland
Wendy	Female	South Africa	37	2001	Secondary Level	A&F	In Ireland

Table 5 - Demographic characteristics of dependants interviewed

Name	Linked to Participant	Gender	Country	Age ⁸	Year of Migration
Kamala	Deepak	Female	India	33	2007
Bapti	Abdel	Female	Bangladesh	31	2008
Felicia	Nina	Female	Philippines	45	2013
Gianni	Lola	Male	Philippines	28	2006
Rashmi	Govinder	Female	Mauritius	34	2006
Hector	Mina	Male	South Africa	21	2000
Clara	Jayson	Female	Philippines	39	2002

Analytical Framework

I analysed interviews using MaxQDA, a software tool designed to assist in mixed-methods and qualitative data analysis. I coded the interviews using primary and secondary codes and adding additional sub-coding where necessary. Theoretically, I was informed by the work of Clarke and Braun (2013) on thematic analysis; which allowed me to identify, organise and add insight to patterns of themes across my interviews. They propose a six-phased approach to doing thematic analysis:

⁸ In order to calculate age at time of migration, follow the formula described in the previous table.

1. Data familiarisation
2. Generating initial codes
3. Identifying themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Preparing the report

Before starting the data collection process, I prepared an interview schedule (see Appendix 10) which guided me through the interview process. The interview schedule was structured around four sections (Pre-Migration, Recruitment, Employment Trajectories and Life outside of work) and addressed four key topics (employment conditions, mobility, irregularity and the work permit system).

Prior to the analysis, I familiarised myself with the interviews, both in audio and transcript forms, by reading and listening to them multiple times. Initially, I started by identifying recurrent patterns of data or themes which I labelled them as codes. The coding process was informed by the seven key concepts introduced in the first section of **Chapter 4: Voluntariness, Agency, Intersectionality of Gender, Class and Race, Mobilities, Networks, Migration as a Family Strategy, and Labour Market Trajectories**, and the respective literature addressing them.

As I was diving deeper into the analysis of the transcripts, I continued by identifying sub-codes. I pursued this process until I felt that I had exhausted the coding process. In the next phase, I grouped the codes under themes, taking into consideration the key topics and sections that were part of my interview schedule as well as key elements of the literature. In the next stage, I reviewed the themes and codes and proceeded to merge, collapse and delete where appropriate. The result is presented under the next section, which provides an overview of codes used.

Overview of Codes Used

I used a dual coding system, dividing the transcripts for analysis according to the sector of employment for which they were issued an employment permit: A&FS or D&CS. I then used the same 6 primary codes and 27 secondary codes for all participants. Within those secondary codes I used a multiplicity of sub-codes; when appropriate, these were sector specific. Below I introduce the primary codes and list the secondary codes

1. **At Home:** This code relates to the experience of participants before moving to Ireland. The secondary codes cover the drivers of migration as well as the motivations that they may have experienced
 - Networks Facilitating Migration
 - Work Experience in the Home Country
 - Decision-Making/Decision to Move
 - Life Conditions at Home
 - Previous Migration Experience

2. **Recruitment:** This code deals with the process of being recruited into their first employment in Ireland as well as subsequent recruitments. The secondary codes cover different recruitment types and practices, promises made prior to recruitment and deceit, the processing of documentation associated with hiring and the employment permit system and any other information associated with recruitment, such as the unavailability of workers or the drive to recruit migrant labour
 - Promises
 - Recruitment Practices
 - Processing of Documentation
 - Shortage of Workers

3. **Work Life:** This primary code covers the experience of participants in the Irish labour market. Due to the focus of this study of their labour market experiences

and trajectories, there are 7 secondary codes, which I will describe individually as they cover many sub-codes.

- *Work Conditions*: This secondary code covers issues such as pay and self-satisfaction but also experiences of exploitation, experiences of control and being let go from employment
- *Progression*: This secondary code outlines participants' self-perception of progression, the barriers and strategies identified, as well as experiences of entrapment
- *Precarity*: This secondary code covers the elements associated with precarious employment as described in Chapter 4, but also the overall feeling of insecurity
- *Diversity*: This code relates to their perception of how diversity was viewed in their workplaces
- *Working Outside Your Field*: This code represents participants' frustrations in relation to working in a new field of employment, their attempts to return to previous fields of employment, and their strategies to adapt to their new labour market position
- *Becoming Aware of Rights*: This code relates to their realisation of the rights and entitlements which they possess in Ireland, often through understanding that they were being exploited or having their rights breached

4. **Irregularity**: This primary code related to the process of becoming undocumented, the experience of being undocumented, their experience of irregular employment and the process to become regularised.

- Becoming Undocumented
- The Experience
- Irregular Employment
- Regularisation

5. **Mobility**: This code addresses their experience of mobility in the Irish labour market, including how they perceived being in the work permit system and its lack of mobility, the factors in deciding to change employment, the process of finding jobs and the role of qualifications in allowing or fostering mobility in the labour market.

- Work Permit System
- Factors in Moving
- Finding Jobs
- Qualifications

6. **Life Outside of Work:** This code covers all the aspects of the participants' lives outside of employment and their labour market participation. As it became apparent the extent to which precarity and work experiences affect their daily lives, I used more sub-coding. The secondary codes relate to the difficulties they experience in daily lives such as destitution and risk of homelessness, how they structure family life both in Ireland and transnationally, their plans for the future and their sense of identity and belongingness.

- Difficulties
- Family Life
- Future Plans
- Identity

To develop the latter phase and to bring together the themes used I built upon the typology of trajectories or paths identified by Liversage (2009), which I used to categorise the experiences of participants in my study, and which I describe in the section below.

Labour Market Trajectories

In her work, Liversage (2009) identified five different trajectories or paths that highly skilled migrants take. There are obvious differences in the profiles of the participants in my study compared to hers, as well as the structural conditions of both labour markets and migration regimes, but I argue there is value in using this typology to describe the different paths that labour migrants take in the Irish labour market. Here I introduce Liversage's (2009) conceptual framework and her five steps. In the next chapter, I use

this analytical tool to understand the labour market trajectories of the participants in the study.

Liversage's Trajectory (2009)

Path of re-entry: In this path, immigrants re-enter the labour market of the destination country at the same professional level as in their country of origin. Liversage argues that this path is often employed by migrants who have credentials or qualifications that are easily equalised or transferred, such as professions in sciences or professions that rely on 'hard' or technical skills. There might be an adaptation period, during which credentials are processed or recognised, or during which basic language skills are acquired, even though language skills play a lesser role in this trajectory due to the emphasis on technical skills.

Path of ascent: In this case, immigrants are unable to re-enter the labour market at the same level as in their country of origin, so they accept a temporary downward move in order to acquire the necessary skills to regain their original position. This, she argues, is more common among professions reliant on a multiplicity of soft skills, or where professional identity is less strong. In this case, migrants who are unable to get their home-country experience and/or credentials recognised spend their first period of time in the host country acquiring skills which are essential in the local labour market, such as cultural and linguistic skills, before moving upwards.

Path of re-education: Acknowledging the structural barriers that prevent them from re-entering or regaining their original labour market positions, migrants opt for re-education in the host country. This could mean opting for a 'refresher' qualification in their previous field of work/study or retraining in an entirely new field. Often, for migrants to opt for this path, they need to feel they are at a moment in their life where this investment can yield benefit, i.e. they still feel young enough to retrain or that they are able to manage personal, professional, and educational priorities.

Path of re-migration: This path must be understood differently from a decision to return to the country of origin, or to move to a third country in order to build upon or apply skills gained in the country of current residence. Instead, it is a reaction to the inability to improve one's position in the labour market of the destination country. It

is a strategy to avoid or exit marginalisation and it is linked to the ability to make such a move, i.e. having the personal circumstances that allow for such a move or the required documentation for re-migration.

Path of marginalisation: This is the result of having failed all other paths. Unable to regain one's original labour market position, the migrant is stuck outside their desired area of employment and spends large periods of time in unemployment or becomes inactive in the labour market. This is often associated with those who have fewer portable qualifications or experiences, who have spent longer periods of time removed from the labour market in the destination country, or who experience a language barrier.

Ethical Considerations

I was committed to addressing all the ethical implications that may have arisen out of the implementation of my research project. In the first part of this section, I discuss in detail some of those implications as well as the procedures I put in place to mitigate any risk.

Selection of Participants.

The participants of this study are migrant workers identified through the case files of the MRCI, as described in the section above. At their initial point of contact with the MRCI, they had agreed that their information could be kept in the MRCI's database, and used for advocacy, policy, and research purposes. In order to address any issue relating to power imbalances among the participants, I did not include anyone who was currently accessing the advocacy services of the MRCI, or who had an ongoing working relationship with me as an employee of the MRCI. Some participants had had a working relationship with me through the advocacy services of the MRCI in the past. In order to avoid any conflict of interest or any sense of obligation to participate in the study, I outlined in the information sheet that a refusal to participate or to withdraw from the study at any stage would not affect their interactions with the MRCI as a service provider in the future. This was reiterated to them in the initial phone call, together with an explanation

of my role as a researcher, separate from my role as an advocate with the MRCI. Only after all information had been clearly communicated was informed consent sought.

Vulnerabilities Arising from Migrant Status

Migrants are a vulnerable population and have trouble accessing and realising their civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. Among the participants, there may have been migrants experiencing problems in terms of immigration status, employment conditions, or racism/discrimination. I am experienced in identifying and working with highly vulnerable groups of people, and I ensured that if issues were identified they would receive adequate support for their problems. A referral mechanism was put in place with the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland so that such migrants could access advocacy services if needed.

Mitigating Risks Arising from Participation in the Research Project

During the study there was potential for participants to experience emotional distress, or for the identification of sensitive issues related to immigration or employment status. I was also aware that there could be gender-related issues and risks arising from interviewing adult family members. All participants in my research project had entered Ireland through the employment permit system, an essential condition for participants in the qualitative study. If there were any participants with a subsequent irregular status, I was able to direct them to the advocacy services of the MRCI who could assist in rectifying their legal status, if they so wished. Such a regularisation procedure exists on a statutory basis, but they may not have been aware of it. If any issues relating to work conditions arose, including scenarios in which participants were experiencing breaches of employment rights, I was in a position to link them with the advocacy service of the MRCI. There, they would receive information about their legal entitlements in terms of employment law as well as how to recoup unpaid wages or vindicate any rights violated by their employers.

Gender and Family Issues

I was aware that when seeking to interview adult family members certain family issues may arise and that these may well have a gender dimension. Dealing with issues such as

domestic violence and other gender-related issues is particularly sensitive. I ensured that consent was obtained individually from each adult family member at the interview stage. If any issue was reported to me, I was able to link the person to the advocacy and referral services of the MRCI, who were able to assist migrants in securing independent legal status and to link them with services such as Women's Aid.

Anonymity

Participants were informed that identifiers would be removed in the dataset, thereby anonymising all data obtained in the course of the study. I also informed them that I would replace their names with pseudonyms in any public dissemination. Data relating to identification and pseudonyms was kept in separate filing cabinets to mitigate the risk of real names or identifiers being present in the working documents. Electronic data was kept on my personal laptop, which is encrypted, and password protected. After completion of the study, I will destroy the data to ensure that no risks were taken by participating in the research project. I fully understand the responsibility I have towards each person I interview. Their right to remain anonymous and to be able to give informed consent to the interviews is central to my obligation to participants. The consent form included consent to participate and consent to archive data. In cases where archive consent was given, the guidelines set out by the Irish Qualitative Data Archive will be followed once the research is completed to ensure the data is made available as a public resource for other researchers.

Consent

As outlined previously, consent was obtained individually from each participant at two different stages of the research:

1. Consent obtained retrospectively for information stored in the MRCI's case files. This consent was obtained at the time of their initial visit to the MRCI offices and states that their data can be used for policy and research purposes.
2. Consent obtained for the qualitative interviews from each participant, including every adult family member. The reason why I obtained consent for interviews separately was to allow adult family members to give informed consent individually.

Participants were informed that they could withdraw consent at any time. Prior to participation in the research, terms and conditions were explained and provided in writing, together with the purpose of the research and a timeline of the project (Appendix 5). Consent was obtained from participants directly in written form (Appendix 6). I had initially planned for the possibility of having participants with low literacy levels. In this case, consent would be obtained verbally after a detailed explanation of the research process and providing a period of one week for reflection. There were no participants with low literacy levels. At each stage of contact, participants were given an information leaflet outlining the advocacy & referral services of the MRCI (Appendix 7). I was available to discuss this service if required. Respondents were reassured that I was under obligation to maintain the highest ethical standards by complying with Maynooth University's ethical procedures throughout the research process.

Conclusion

The chosen research methodology reflects the ambition to meet a knowledge gap that can only be filled by a qualitative study of migrants who originally began employment in Ireland prior to 2004 and using the then work permit system. This chapter outlined how my ontological and epistemological position is between the interpretative and the critical paradigm and explored how I incorporated concerns regarding reflexivity and positionality in the research design. Having justified my research design, the remainder of the chapter set out my approach to the key stages of the research, including my descriptive analysis of MRCI's dataset for the purpose of sampling and accessing. Information on 49 participants of the study was outlined, as was my analytical framework including trajectory typology and the primary and secondary codes used as the basis of the conceptual analysis. Finally, I detailed the ethical considerations, including the different procedures to obtain informed consent, to safeguard anonymity, to safeguard vulnerabilities of participants, and the mitigating strategies in case risks arise. In the next chapter, I introduce the findings of my research, starting with a descriptive analysis of sectorial experiences and labour market trajectories.

Chapter 6 – Precarious Migrant Trajectories

“I think the system puts you here and you stop in the place you are in. I know this reality but still I cannot help being stuck in this place.”

Introduction

This chapter seeks to empirically describe and analyse the experiences of workers in Ireland’s two-tier labour migration regime. It draws on the concepts of temporariness, mobility and hyper-precarity to understand better the structural experiences and trajectories of migrant workers who entered Ireland on a work permit in two sectors (A&FS and D&FS). The chapter introduces the first of the empirical findings, provides a descriptive overview of the participants in my study and their labour market characteristics, and categorises them according to the two primary economic sectors for which their initial employment permit was issued (A&FS or D&CS). I provide demographic data and describe the main features of each sector before describing the experiences of participants, focusing on themes such as employment conditions and pay, and mobility and progression. I distinguish specificities in each sector in order to understand how the experiences of precarity of labour migrants are shaped. For A&FS I focus on the ethnic subsector, and for D&CS, the categorisation of care provided between domestic and institutional care industries. The final section of the chapter describes the labour market trajectories of participants and uses a conceptualisation based on a study developed by Liversage (2009) to analyse the different paths present within the cohort. I then explain some of the facilitators and factors that condition such pathways.

The Accommodation and Food Sector (A&FS) in Ireland

The Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) for Q2 2019 records 181,100 employees in the A&FS, the highest figure on record. This reflects a steady annual increase in numbers since 2013. The sector consists largely of small-to-medium employers, with almost 70% of workplaces employing less than 50 people (Watson 2010), and is divided into three main sub-sectors with a turnover share as follows: bars (34%), restaurants (30%) and hotels (27%) (Ernst and Young 2013). Characterised by low pay, it represents the lowest average hourly earnings for employees in the country, standing at just €13.35 in Q2 2019 with average weekly earnings just €365.59 for an average of 27.4 hours. The sector was hit particularly badly by the recession (Bobek and Wickham 2015) and salaries are only recently recovering from depreciation, having increased 14.6% over 2009-2014. Levels of unionisation are lower than in other sectors due to many factors, including high turnover of staff, the fragmented nature of the sector, and employers' hostility to labour unions (Gerogiannis, Kerkofs and Vargas 2012).

The A&FS is the largest employer of migrant workers in the labour market, nominally and proportionally. In 2017 (the last year for which figures are available) it employed 77,032 non-Irish workers, or the equivalent of 45.3% of the overall sectorial workforce; of these, 23,072 were non-European workers – the equivalent of 29.9% of the migrant workforce. This is in sharp contrast to the economy as a whole, where migrant workers represent just 14.2% of the labour force. The sector has long been reliant on migrant labour, with the largest number of employment permits issued prior to the EU enlargement. In 2002, the last year before restrictions were imposed, 25.5% of all employment permits issued were in this sector. Since EU enlargement, nationals of accession countries have constituted the largest group of migrant workers in the sector, accounting for 52.7% of the migrant workforce in 2017 and 31.1% of the sector's labour force. MRCI's Restaurant Workers Action Group (2008) described the sector as having low levels of compliance with employment law. Large numbers of workers surveyed declared that their employment did not meet minimum standards, such as payment of overtime, Sunday pay, or payslips and contracts being issued to them. Bobek and Wickham (2015) find many of these issues remain, and some structural features – including high incidence of part-time employment – became more

structurally embedded in the sector because of the economic crisis, so that in 2019 40.9% of the sectorial workforce is employed on a part-time basis.

Profile of Workers in the Study

Table 6 outlines the demographic characteristics of the twenty research participants who obtained their first work permit in Ireland for a job in the A&FS. Twelve were male and eight were female. The range of nationalities reflects the diversity in the sector and mirrors the countries for which permits were issued prior to 2004. The year of arrival of participants reflects the overall pattern in employment permits, which peaked in 2001 and declined thereafter. The educational profile of participants was evenly divided between holders of a secondary-level degree and a third-level one. All but one participant were in employment prior to moving to Ireland, and eleven of them were working in the A&FS sector prior to taking up their first job in Ireland. On average, it took participants over eight years to acquire labour market mobility through long-term residency criteria or other means. Unlike in the D&CS, almost twenty years later four participants were still in the work permit system and tied to their employers. This can be explained through multiple spans of irregularity associated with loss of work permits, as well as the overall precarious nature of the industry. Many experienced dismissal and difficulties in finding employers who will support a new employment permit application.

Table 6 - Demographic characteristics of participants in the A&FS

Name	Gender	Country of Origin	Age	Year of Migration	Education Level	Acquired labour market mobility	Naturalised
Abdel	Male	Bangladesh	38	2001	Third Level	2011	Yes
Achara	Female	Thai	40	2001	Third Level	2010	Yes
Ahmet	Male	Turkey	41	2003	Secondary Level	2008	No
Anurak	Male	Thai	40	2001	Third Level	2010	Yes
Carlitos	Male	Philippines	47	2000	Secondary Level	2007	Yes
Caroline	Female	South Africa	37	2001	Secondary Level	No	No

Esra	Female	Turkey	38	2003	Secondary Level	2008	No
Evelyn	Female	South Africa	40	2002	Secondary Level	2008	Yes
Govinder	Male	India	38	2001	Secondary Level	No	No
Horatiu	Male	Romania	40	2001	Third Level	2007	No
Hossain	Male	Bangladesh	42	2002	Third Level	2009	Yes
Iryna	Female	Ukraine	41	2002	Third Level	2011	Yes
Manish	Male	Malaysia	49	2000	Secondary Level	No	No
Nina	Female	Philippines	45	2000	Third Level	No	No
Mina	Female	South Africa	46	2000	Secondary Level	2008	No
Tyson	Male	South Africa	50	2000	Secondary Level	2010	No
Syed	Male	Pakistan	42	2001	Secondary Level	2013	No
Tran	Male	Vietnam	41	2002	Third Level	2012	No
Vladislav	Male	Ukraine	43	2002	Third Level	2010	Yes
Wendy	Female	South Africa	37	2001	Secondary Level	2010	No

Employment Conditions and Mobility in the Industry

Aside from two participants who were recruited and employed as managers in the fast food industry, the workers were initially employed in elementary occupations (floor staff, kitchen porters) or as chefs. In terms of salary, at the time of the interview, they were paid between €9.50 and €12 per hour despite each having over fifteen years of experience in Ireland. Participants regularly referred to wage stagnation in the industry, a problem that was aggravated by the economic recession. Several participants have not received a salary increase since the onset of the economic recession in 2008 and others suffered a reduction in their income of up to 25%. This is consistent with the findings of Bobek and Wickham (2015) that 57% of workers in the A&FS were earning less than €400 per week, 30% of employees earned less than €10 per hour, and the median hourly

rate in the industry at €11.51 was 34.4% lower than the average median hourly rate.. This suggests a ‘migrant penalty’ in the industry, with migrant workers concentrated at the bottom end of the pay scale. Because low payment is prevalent across the industry, moving jobs is not seen as a strategy to increase income or to have experience recognised.

Lack of security is a common feature of the industry. Esra, quoted below⁹, has been employed under ‘if and when’ contracts for more than seven years. Initially, her hours averaged 42 per week, but despite an improved economy, hours were steadily reduced to an average of 30 to 35.

Okay, minimum wage has gone up, but my hours go down, so I am getting the same money. It is not as if I am earning more. I even did not notice that because everything is more expensive now. Even if you want to rent house. I don't know how people can live with minimum wage, one person.

(Esra, 38, Turkish restaurant worker)

As the employer is not obliged to offer Esra full-time work or even guarantee her a consistent number of hours after seven years of employment, she has no way to escape the uncertainty. Neither can she apply for technical redundancy as the drop-in hours are kept within the permissible bounds.

Tyson, 50, a former South African restaurant worker, spent six years working for the same company, earning an above-average hourly rate of €15 but employed only on a part-time basis of 24 hours per week and receiving no increase in his hours during the entire period of his employment. For the duration of his employment, he lived with a dilemma of staying at a part-time job which did not provide enough for his family needs or quitting in hope of finding a full-time job where his hourly rate was likely to be a third less for the same work. He eventually decided to leave the industry altogether.

Tyson is not alone in choosing to leave the industry; the A&FS is characterised by a high turnover of staff and workers transitioning in and out of the sector. Among the 20 participants of the study, almost half had moved out of the sector at the time of the interview. Three participants moved into sectors where they could enjoy greater autonomy in their schedules by becoming self-employed, such as hairdressing and taxi driving. Three of them left because of the difficulties in managing childcare duties alongside the hours their employer required them to work. The remaining four left due

⁹ Quotes are presented as they were delivered, with minimal editing regarding structure and grammar.

to unemployment and the economic downturn. For many among them, work in the A&FS represented an entry-point to Ireland, and they had hoped they could over time enjoy upward mobility. However, the sectors most of participants moved into – including cleaning, maintenance and care – do not signify upward mobility; they are similarly precarious sectors of employment, with high incidence of low pay and employment irregularities. This suggests limited mobility and entrapment in low-paid employment. Table 7 below summarises the sectors A&FS participants moved into and the main reason for the change of sectors

Table 7 – Sectors to which A&FS participants moved to and reasons for moving

Name	Moved Into	Reasons for Moving
Achara	Inactivity	Childcare issues
Ahmet	Manufacturing	Job loss/Exploitation
Anurak	Taxi Industry	Flexible working hours
Caroline	Hairdressing	Job loss/Previous work sector
Iryna	Cleaning	No job on arrival
Mina	Inactivity	Childcare issues
Tyson	Upskilling	Unable to find full-time employment
Wendy	Inactivity	Childcare issues
Vladislav	Maintenance	No job on arrival

These sectors are also racialised sectors of employment, and often associated with migrant employment where they are trapped at the bottom to fill otherwise undesirable positions (Standing 2014). The different regimes intersect to create the entrapment of workers: precarious but legal conditions in the sector converge with the limited mobility associated with labour migration regime requirements to create transit barriers to better-paid industries. Such entrapment is more than structural; the practices of the employers, the immobility of the migration regime and the uncertainty associated with the industry become embedded in workers and have a lasting effect that remains after structural barriers are no longer there. When I asked Esra if she sometimes considers moving out

of her current employment given the poor conditions and limited prospect of improvement, she explained how uncertainty and fear keep her there:

... you are accepting what they are giving to you...I think the system puts you here and you stop in the place you are in...I am scared to start new things and I have the excuse of 'we are getting old' and I know am making up the excuse myself to stay in the position... I know this reality but still I cannot help being stuck in the place...

(Esra, 38, Turkish restaurant worker)

The Ethnic A&FS

The hospitality sector in globalised economies has been increasingly restructured and redefined as an “ethnic sector” (Salt and Millar 2006; Batnitzky and McDowell 2013) that draws on migrant labour to address staff shortages. It has also been reimagined as a space migrants are drawn to when searching for employment because they can circumvent barriers such as local experience and discrimination. The nature of the Irish hospitality sector, with its over-representation of small-sized eateries, and the rapid increase of fast food and take away outlets during the ‘boom years’ helped develop such an ethnic economy in urban centres across Ireland (Wickham et al. 2011). Customers generally consider restaurants “ethnic” if they sell a specific type of cuisine, often non-European (such Chinese, Indian, and Thai), and they are generally expected to be cheaper than other restaurants, undoubtedly affecting workers’ wages. While the MRCI’s surveys (2008; 2015b) indicate that there is widespread exploitation across the industry, they show that conditions in ethnic restaurants are significantly worse.

While one may be tempted to interpret the emergence of an ethnic subsector as a form of ethnic entrepreneurship, the reality is that restaurants and eateries are concentrated in the hands of a few restaurant owners who have taken advantage of an inefficient work permit system that places the onus for compliance on the worker and not on the employer. The system reacted to an increased demand for casual and affordable food options during the early years of the economic boom. Its laissez-faire nature and lack of oversight facilitated deceitful and illegal recruitment of workers, and exploitative employment practices helped keep operational costs low. Unsurprisingly, three participants employed in the ethnic subsector were victims of forced labour, and this whilst in the employment permit system. According to Batnitzky and McDowell (2013), the emergence of an ethnic subsector is an indicator of labour market segmentation. For

racialised migrants, particularly in their early years, this is the only viable option to circumvent the discrimination they face in the primary labour market. Participants faced difficulties having their experience recognised by employers outside of the subsector as it would not be considered suitable for other types of restaurants, even as floor staff – another clear example of how categorisation based on nationality works to create racialised labour markets.

It was clear that long hours, linguistic isolation, and low socio-economic status impacted on participants' spatial mobility and resulted in an over-reliance on networks developed in these ethnic enclaves, creating entrapment. In the quote below, Rashmi, who is married to Govinder, an Indian restaurant worker, explains how the employers took advantage of this over-reliance due to his irregularity

Can I say, it's like the perception that Govinder has, kind of, not good documents, he's kind of black-listed let's say. Permit is not there; passport is not there. So, they have him to work cash in hand, nicely. And they are happy with this. Govinder get to stay here, he was OK with it. And then it was just promising 'I'll do that'. And some way maybe, I dunno, I could see that this would never end up. So, for them for all of these years they would have somebody who'd work for them, who'd never go home, because he cannot go home. And who would accept everything.

(Rashmi, 34, Mauritian student)

For them, leaving the sub-sector was perceived as a form of progress and upward mobility, but was hard to conceive of in reality. They often spoke of leaving the ethnic sector and finding an Irish or European employer. Making the move was nonetheless no guarantee of security: Hossain left the ethnic industry after working in it for almost 12 years, only to find himself working just over 20 hours per week in an Italian restaurant. He explains why he has subsequently turned down full-time employment in the ethnic subsector:

No, no. Ethnic no. No even you will ask me to go back to ethnic I don't like to go because ethnic restaurant there is all exploitation and slavery all you know what I mean. It cannot be changed. Ethnic sectors they are growing up like this.

(Hossain, 42, Bangladeshi restaurant worker)

The Domestic and Care Sector in Ireland

The D&CS includes occupations related to the provision of care across employer classifications such as Human Health and Social Work and Activities of Households. While research has been carried out on unpaid care provision and different models of care (Russell, O’Connell and McGinnity 2008; Barry and Conlon 2010; Murphy 2011; Russell, Leschke and Smith 2019), research on the Domestic and Care Sector, as a paid profession, is limited. Where available, such research focuses on the provision of care in residential settings, owing to the difficulties of capturing data related to employment in the private home. Nonetheless, the MRCI has published several reports focusing on migrant workers in private homes and in the residential care industry, working as *au pairs* or carers for the elderly (2004; 2012a; 2012b; 2014b; 2015b; 2015c). Yet a gap in academic research remains. Residential care sector data from 2015 shows that there are 7,180 public residential care beds and 22,405 private sector residential care beds (including 280 provided in welfare homes); capacity stands at 95% with an expected annual increase of at least 4% (DKM Economic Consultants 2015). The share of short-stay and long-stay beds are distributed as 26% and 74% respectively, but with 92% of all residents needing long-stay beds it is such demand that is driving growth in this sector.

A lack of homogenous categorisation makes it difficult to measure the numbers of workers in care roles in a residential setting. Workers are often classified according to the type of people they provide care for: children, elderly people, people with disabilities, people suffering from short- or long-term illnesses. Nursing Homes Ireland (2014) estimated the sector provided direct employment to over 23,000 workers. Different schemes to subsidise the cost of caring exist, most notably the Fair Deal scheme introduced in 2009 which covers up to 20% of the overall cost and is dependent on income. The average weekly cost in 2019 of caring for a resident in a nursing home is now €1,615 for HSE-run homes, compared to €1,050 for privately-run homes. The higher costs in HSE-run homes relate to higher number of staff per resident and higher levels of remuneration. Nursing homes, particularly private ones, seek to remain competitive by reducing costs to the detriment of employment conditions. They increasingly rely on overseas staff in the sector, while there is competition among staff who favour employment in the HSE over private providers.

The DKM (2015) report illustrates a growing demand for care workers in elderly care and healthcare and identifies a shortage of suitable qualified staff as the main barrier to growth in the sector. The high costs of care push families to find alternative means, including care in the private home. The MRCI (2012a) found migrant workers represent 27% of all elderly care workers and IOM (2010) expect the role of migrant workers to increase in the industry. There is no exact data on the numbers of migrants in care roles, and the reality of care in the private home is barely covered. Care work was one of the sought-after occupations following the enlargement of the EU, with many new EU workers filling in gaps in residential care. In 2009, the category of domestic worker was deemed ineligible (with no exceptions) for the purpose of employment permits, which in the early 2000s had been the main entry route for individuals working in a domestic setting. This decision and successive restrictions in the employment permit system helped create a segmented and racialised sector, where white European workers are found in managerial roles and in well-funded public and private nursing homes whereas non-European racialised migrants are found at the bottom end of those institutions and in the provision of care in the private home. Similarly, the increased demand and corresponding increasing costs for childcare services, coupled with the difficulties in obtaining new employment permits, resulted in greater demand for childcare in private homes. The MRCI (2012b) found that the lack of enforcement of already weak regulations contributed to the abuse of the *au pair* system. Under the pretence of cultural exchange, some employers were engaging workers to provide full-time care for as little as €100 per week (MRCI 2014b).

Table 8 - Demographic characteristics of participants in the D&CS

Name	Gender	Country of Origin	Age	Year of Migration	Education Level	Acquired labour market mobility	Naturalised
Ahmed	Male	Morocco	41	1999	Secondary Level	2007	Yes
Amelia	Female	Philippines	61	2000	Third Level	2009	Yes
Ana	Female	Philippines	59	2002	Secondary Level	2010	No
Anele	Female	Zimbabwe	39	2004	Elementary	2013	No
Betty	Female	Philippines	58	2003	Third Level	2009	Yes
Deepak	Male	India	36	2001	Secondary Level	2009	Yes
Delia	Female	Philippines	55	2006	Third Level	2009	No
Dolores	Female	Philippines	47	2003	Third Level	2009	Yes
Dora	Female	Philippines	53	2002	Secondary Level	2009	No
Ellie	Female	Philippines	45	1997	Third Level	2007	Yes
Jayson	Male	Philippines	38	2004	Third Level	2010	Yes
Joyce	Female	Philippines	38	2001	Third Level	2008	Yes
Lina	Female	Philippines	55	2001	Third Level	2009	No
Linda	Female	Philippines	48	2003	Third Level	2009	Yes
Lola	Female	Philippines	53	2003	Third Level	2011	Yes
Marcia	Female	Philippines	42	2003	Secondary Level	2009	Yes
Maria	Female	Philippines	53	2002	Third Level	2010	No
Mercy	Female	Philippines	69	2000	Third Level	2007	No
Nelly	Female	Philippines	58	2002	Third Level	2008	No
Rita	Female	Philippines	67	2003	Third Level	2011	Yes
Rosa	Female	Philippines	42	2003	Third Level	2010	No
Tina	Female	Philippines	55	2003	Third Level	2015	No

Twenty-two domestic and care workers were interviewed for this study. Of these, nineteen were from the Philippines, one was from Zimbabwe, one was from Morocco and one was from India. Filipino migrants have long been well represented in healthcare positions across the developed world (Choy 2003; Anderson 2014) and Ireland is no exception (Humphries, Brugha and McGee 2008; McGonagle et al. 2014; Coppari 2019). Filipino migration to Ireland is a good example of how networks are developed and utilised to entice further migration. Many Filipino nurses arrived in Ireland in the early years of the Celtic Tiger. This migration facilitated the development of networks that helped fill labour market gaps. Filipinas were encouraged to take up care roles – both in institutional contexts and in domestic households – and Filipinos to work in skilled trade occupations and manufacturing. Among the participants fourteen were recruited through ‘direct hire’, which is a term used to indicate reliance on an introduction or recommendation of a friend or colleague for their domestic work job. This person was usually a fellow domestic worker, resident in Ireland, whose employer could recommend them to other prospective hirers.

This practice facilitated the growth of the domestic work sector and contributed to the construction of racialised perceptions of Filipino domestic workers as being more desirable because of their flexible, caring, and submissive qualities (Paul 2011; Coppari 2019). Interestingly, these narratives and stereotypes were readily interiorised by Filipino workers who happily embodied, perpetuated, and transmitted such perceptions, which often preceded migration to Ireland and further solidified once here. For example, someone like Rita – who regularly expressed frustration and feelings of demotivation after having transitioned from being a financial controller in Manila to a private carer in South Dublin – demonstrated nationalistic pride (tainted with a sense of exceptionalism) when describing the Filipino culture of care:

You see, because we Filipinos, we care for our parents, our parents stay with us or we stay with our parents' house, we look after them from the last ...up to their last breath, so we have this passion, that is why I think we Filipinos we are so soft. We are very famous carers.

(Rita, 67, Filipina former care worker)

Across the D&CS, women are overrepresented. This is reflected in the sample taken for this study: only three men took part, of whom only one was employed in a private household. Low representation of men in the sector is a common feature in many countries due to gendered views of care and the role of women in affective labour. It is

also a feature of gendered labour migration regime, where the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment refused to issue employment permits for men in private homes (except where an exceptional reason was provided, such as a previous well-established emotional and employment relationship).

Like the A&FS, the sample shows a concentration between the years 2001 and 2003, with a significantly higher number of first-time work permits issued in 2003. The concentration of permits issued in the year prior to EU enlargement and the changed Irish labour migration regime makes the D&CS distinct. There are a few reasons for this peak. Most of these employment permits were issued for employment in the private home. The employment of domestic household personnel had never been a common practice in Ireland; it developed along with rising standards of living resulting from the economic boom, alongside rising costs of childcare and elderly care in nursing homes and crèches. In this context, the relatively low minimum wage option of domestic care became financially attractive. Moreover, lack of oversight and regulations made the employment of migrant workers attractive, as they could work long hours in live-in arrangements and provide a range of domestic household services at a very low cost. The high number of permits issued in 2003 is also partly linked to the anticipated changes in labour migration policy: as rumours spread about future restrictions, more people made use of their networks to come over to work in Ireland, showing how important networks are in transmitting information.

The participants from the D&CS sample are highly qualified, with 16 out of 22 having completed third-level education. Prior to moving to Ireland, 12 held professional occupations, including secondary-level teachers, financial controllers, civil servants and sales managers. The higher-than-average level of education among the sample contrasts with the relatively unskilled nature of the jobs they secured in the industry. Nineteen were employed as workers in a domestic household while two – both men – were employed as entry-level care assistants in a residential setting. Nine of the 22 had experience of living abroad before, in Asian countries (Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan) or in the Gulf Region (Kuwait and Saudi Arabia) where all but one worked as domestic helpers or domestic care workers. This is consistent with the global care chain (Raghuram 2012; Yeates 2012) and suggests Ireland is no exception to the globalised nature of the care industry. For those who had been living abroad, re-migration to Ireland was a mobility strategy and was understood as an opportunity to improve financial and employment conditions.

Employment and Mobility in the Industry

The slow and incremental pace in which regulations were brought into the D&CS industry has impacted on employment conditions and mobility. Following the Health Act 2004, minimum qualifications were required to work in the field. Since July 2019 the inspection of such standards has been transferred to the Health Information and Quality Authority, an independent body. Similarly, the regulation of childcare has evolved over time, most notably since the creation of the Child and Family Agency in 2013 and the publication of regulations for the provision of care for pre-school children in 2016 and for school-aged children in 2019. Such regulations and standards do not apply for employment in the private home, and these have evolved in an ad-hoc manner and often reactively in response to the advocacy of NGOs such as the MRCI and its Domestic Workers Action Group. Table 9 categorises the D&CS according to the type of care or service provided, the location where it takes place and the contractual arrangement which underpins it and enables a more coherent discussion of employment across the sector.

Table 9 - Framework of categorisation of care work

Type of care/service provided	Setting in which care is provided	Contractual arrangement
Cleaning services	Private home	Directly employed
Childcare services	Residential settings	Self-employed
Elderly care	Hospital	Employed by a third party
Care for persons with disabilities or suffering from medical conditions		
A combination of the above		

Source: Author

There are several overlaps possible among these categorisations. For example, a person may be employed directly by a family to provide both cleaning and childcare in the house, and another can be employed by an agency to provide elderly care and care for people with disabilities, in both residential settings and private homes. This framework is useful for conceptualising intra-sectorial mobility, since participants may choose to move across categories to achieve better conditions of employment, to progress their

careers, or to minimise precarity. Certain specificities of the sector – considerations regarding live-in arrangements, which I discuss in greater detail in Chapter 8 – mean that decisions are taken not only based on improving salary or obtaining a supervisory role but are related to deficits in Ireland’s wider regime, including the cost of accommodation. In the next section I reflect on discussions and participants’ analysis of employment in private homes and employment in residential settings.

Mobility Between Residential and Private Care

The nature of employment in the private home is precarious in nature. By default, most care roles are not permanent; instead they are dependent on children growing up and no longer requiring care or elderly persons being moved to nursing homes or passing away. The salary or hourly rate is not conditioned by years of experience or any sectorial agreement and rather depends on the decision of the employer. Most participants reported earning between €10 and €12 when working in private homes, and only one participant earned above the low-pay threshold of €13.30 at the time. For the purpose of providing long-term and ‘around-the-clock’ care for elderly patients, a system of ‘shifts’ is used. These shifts are generally 12 to 15 hours of non-stop care, alternating between nights and days. At night, it involves looking after patients while they sleep and attending to any needs they may have before, during and after sleep. During the day, depending on the patient, it can mean keeping them company or looking after any specific needs. Carers in this context, are paid either by shift or per week, and are paid ‘cash-in-hand’ between €4.50 and €8 per hour, which is below the minimum wage rate. Because shifts are continuous, several carers rotate; in certain cases – depending on entitlements and funding available – some of the hours may be covered by HSE-funded carers, whose hourly rates are compliant with sectorial arrangements. These precarious and exploitative employment arrangements are clear examples of the role that non-EU racialised migrants play in filling gaps at the bottom end of the demand and responding to the failure of the State to provide affordable care to its elderly citizens.

Hierarchies, including racialised ones, also exist in the provision of care in residential settings. The first clear distinction when discussing employment conditions with participants related to whether they were employed by private nursing homes or HSE-funded ones. The most apparent differences included rates of pay, access to contractual permanency and availability of pension schemes, but also the overall quality of working

conditions. Participants working in privately-run homes received on average between €11 and €14 per hour; those working for HSE-funded ones received a minimum of €14 per hour with salaries rising according to seniority and position and in some cases exceeding €20. Job security also differed between the two categories. Those employed by the HSE had permanent contracts which guaranteed full-time hours, while those in private-run homes were employed under a range of different arrangements: management usually decided the number of hours allocated and how shifts were distributed, impacting on the stability of weekly schedules and the workers' capacity to plan their lives and/or take up other employment options. Little wonder HSE-funded providers were perceived as a more attractive elder-care employment option.

For those working in childcare, the choice was limited to working in the private home or with a childcare provider. Among childcare providers, there is also significant competition to keep costs down, but depending on how affluent the location is, fees might be higher. At times this translated into better pay: the two participants who transitioned from childminding at home to working with a childcare provider had progressed to supervisory roles and their hourly pay was €16 and €17.50 respectively (albeit in one case the offer was a permanent part-time contract, which she supplemented with hourly childminding in private homes).

Unlike in the A&FS, only one participant has left the D&CS. As there is little mobility outside of the sector, it is important to analyse the role that internal mobility plays in terms of progression and improvement. Here migrant workers exercise agency and decision-making but in the context of constraints including racialisation and the structure of the migration regime. For many, the preferred progression route was to move from the private home to a residential setting, preferably one that offers job security and a possibility of internal progression.

I am thinking of getting into HSE. Yeah because it's a little bit better because you have a pension scheme. Because there for example I learned that there are lots of people stay there for 10 years. [In work] There is a man, he stayed 17 years in the work and he is 56 years old now. It's a private home, so there is no pension scheme...after 17 years you get nothing... I work here for long time and you know L--- she is in HSE now and when she retires, she would get a pension.

(Dolores, 47, Filipina care worker)

Dolores' quote reflects the status that HSE employment holds among care workers. It also reflects their need to feel they have accomplished something beyond temporary work: the desire to access a pension scheme is interpreted as a will to belong. Narratives of work in the private home were varied and at times conflicting. Participants providing care in private homes, particularly for elderly people, felt they were not necessarily trained to deal with the significant responsibilities they associated with the job, nor did they feel supported and supervised. Care in a residential setting felt less onerous, because they felt that they could always seek help or share the burden of responsibility with colleagues.

Work in a nursing home is better than a live-in, yes because when you are working in a live-in, you are afraid of what will happen to your client when she is falling... We are afraid that she is put in the nursing home... If you are working in the nursing home, your job is very stable but as a carer [in private home] you are afraid to lose your job, you afraid that they investigate what is happening, like that.

(Nina, 45, Filipina Care Worker)

There were nonetheless trade-offs. Some felt that in a domestic setting, the work was lighter, that they could get to know the people they cared for, and most importantly, that they only had to take orders from one person. They emphasised a greater sense of autonomy. Criticism of work in nursing homes related to the heavy workload – they had to attend to several patients' needs at the same time, sometimes as many as 15 patients per floor. The cost-reduction approach in place in most nursing homes meant very little support from nurses and doctors, and a high-pressure environment. Dolores highlights the difficulties faced in meeting expectations from patients and their families, maintaining good relationships with colleagues, and meeting the targets agreed by the management.

[We are] ...under staff really. So sometimes you feel. Sometimes the residents are kind of complaining, 'I pay 4,000 euro a month and I just get this kind of treatment', or...you know, sometimes we are rushing because there are loads, not only one because there is loads there and here so, sometimes we have to put you here and sit you there and go to the next room and leave you here and go to the next and come back to them. Because if you will not do that, you can't finish.

(Dolores, 47, Filipina care worker)

Many recognised that increased competition in the provision of care resulted in deterioration in terms of its quality, removing a patient-centred approach and replacing it with a business model concerned with delivering results by minimising costs. This, of

course, translates into precarity through deteriorating conditions of employment, including low wages, all facilitated by a large supply of workers in the industry. Many among those workers are migrant women with qualifications for various skilled sectors, who had not previously envisaged work in the care industry but were driven towards it as a result of the restrictive intersection of the migration regime (such as the dependent work permit system), the cultural and gendered expectations of providing affective labour and the racialised and gendered nature of the Irish labour market, which pushes women of colour to the margins where they are disregarded and perceived as unobtrusive (Cuban 2013; Vaittinen 2014). In my sample this was evidenced by comments made by Kamala and Bapti, two spouse dependents with third-level qualifications in education and engineering respectively. They were both hoping to get a job as childminders, as this would allow them to circumvent language barriers and the recognition of their foreign qualifications. They also believed that the schedule of a childminding job would also help them meet their own childcare obligations.

In certain cases, the mobility among subsectors was circular, with workers who secured employment in nursing homes returning to work in private homes. The return was motivated by a desire to avoid the hard conditions of nursing home work, the degree to which salaries did not compensate for the effort required, the potential cost-saving nature of work in the private home, savings associated with transportation, time-effective schedules due to reduced travel times, the desire for a more relaxing work environment or a better personal connection with children or patients in their home. In **Chapter 8**, I describe in more detail how live-in arrangements circumvent rising housing costs.

Labour Market Trajectories

Liversage's (2009) typology, which she developed to analyse the trajectories of highly skilled immigrants in Denmark, was introduced in both Chapters 3 and 5 and is now used to further analyse and discuss the labour market trajectories of the research participants. Her five trajectories include Re-entry, Ascent, Re-Education, Marginalisation, and Re-Migration. Table 10 below analyses the 49 participants in this study according to these trajectories, while the subsequent discussion introduces practical experiences within each category. Despite differences between the sectors and

skillsets covered by Liversage's study and this study, the analysis and discussion demonstrate how the typology nonetheless offers a framework that can categorise the likely trajectories of participants. However there are with some limitations: Liversage's research is concerned with individuals defined as "highly skilled" and who had, prior to migration, completed education in professions often recognised as such, and were in most cases working in those professions prior to moving to Denmark (e.g. in medicine and law). In the case of my sample, the level of educational attainment among participants is varied: 24 pursued third-level education and they represent a majority in the D&CS; 16 pursued secondary-level education, a majority among the A&FS, and one person in the D&CS has elementary education. Unlike Liversage's participants who had a background in high-status professions (such as law, engineering or medical fields), many participants in this study were employed in professions which are traditionally associated with lower or medium skills (domestic workers, restaurant workers, welders). In Liversage's sample, all but one participant had entered Denmark through marriage to a Danish national or through a refugee determination process; they were considerably less exposed to the Danish migration regime and enjoyed mobility from the outset. All but three were from other EU member states by the time of the study; this differs significantly from the sample of this study, all but four of whom are racialised persons of colour. While the process of racialisation is not limited to perceptions of 'race', it is undeniable that it plays a considerable role in how it intersects with nationality, migrant status and other forms of stereotyping to create expectations regarding labour market positioning. While both studies are concerned with what Liversage describes as a qualitative time-geographical approach for investigating processes of immigrant labour market incorporation, including through the concept of "temporalities" (Giddens 1984; Liversage 2009), this research is equally concerned with participants' self-perception of success and the meaning of work and occupational attainment in their new lives (Roberman 2013). Effectively, this means that I seek to understand what determines participants' perception of progress and in so doing, contribute to the theorisation of labour market typologies.

Table 10 - Summary of paths identified among participants

Path Category	Re-entry	Ascent	Re-education	Marginalisation	Re-Migration
Number of research participants	2	Full 10 Partial 13	Attempted 2	Full 4 Semi 8 Partial 15	Failed 3 Considering 1

- a. **Path of re-entry:** Horatiu and Evelyn are both restaurant managers employed by a fast-food chain in separate ventures. They were both working in managerial roles in their respective countries of origin before migrating to Ireland. Horatiu’s employment was facilitated by an intra-company transfer and Evelyn was recommended by a friend. Over the years in Ireland they were provided with several opportunities by their employer, including internal progression and change of roles and occupations to suit their careers and their personal lives. Their self-declared perception was one of success and progression, as evidenced by Horatiu’s quote below:

I'm at a stage where everything functions very well, and we had the best year ever in this restaurant in terms of results, profits and sales. And so, I was asked this year to do a...to help with training in head office so I'm gonna start that in May. There's always something new that keeps me here...

However, when discussing how the employment permit system and issues regarding mobility impacted in their careers, they acknowledged that it was a consideration they had had, and that they were aware that changing employers could risk their immigration status in the country. For instance, Evelyn mentioned how she felt she had to put up with poor employment practices in her job in order not to jeopardise her immigration history:

[Regarding] rules and standards and procedures this was just another world. But I was coming up to my five years, just over my five years, and I was just, I didn't want to jeopardise any of that. I said I just don't wanna break... I don't want another break in my work permits... I just stuck it out to get the year. And then I was desperate to go anywhere.

They were also conscious of how being white and fluent in English (Evelyn is a native English speaker) impacted on how they were perceived by employers, colleagues and the general public. In one striking example, Evelyn recalls being asked to step out of the immigration registration queue in her local Garda station and told that Irish people ‘do not need to queue.’

Unlike among Liversage’s sample, most participants did not indicate wanting to regain their previous professions in Ireland. Among domestic and care workers who had previous migration experience, their professional identity had been shaped by years working in care work and perceived the care industry in Ireland as their natural point of entry and continuation. Others – particularly those who entered through the A&FS – expressed that their initial intention was to re-skill or have their qualifications recognised, but no one expressed a clear intention of regaining their previous occupation.

- b. **Path of ascent:** For the purpose of this study I have used two interpretations of ‘ascent’: first, I have assessed professional progress in Ireland. This is in relation to certain criteria such as pay rates, security of employment and freedom from exploitation. In the second interpretation, the concept is related to an improvement in life conditions and that of their household. It is, of course, a subjective approach to determining progression because it relies on participants’ self-perception and is embedded and somewhat embodied in personal circumstances. Using this approach has advantages and disadvantages. For example, measuring progress based solely on their first employment in Ireland as a reference point ignores the fact that many experienced deceitful and exploitative recruitment which led to very poor conditions of employment from the outset, as described in Chapter 7. From a human capital approach, this does not tell us much about which characteristics rendered them vulnerable to precarity or why they fail to ‘catch up’ with other categories of workers, such as European migrants or Irish workers. It does however tell us a lot about agency, the use of networks and how they acquire location-specific knowledge and skills so that they can maximise their decision-making opportunities within constrained choices informed by the migration regime (mobility) and employment regime (labour market segmentation, racialisation and prevalence of precarious condition across sectors). It does also tell us a lot about the factors which allow certain participants to exercise agency and others not. For example, when

Dolores, a 47-year-old Filipina care worker started a new job, she took advantage of the fact that her employment conditions were good to enrol in a health care course that she could exceptionally follow despite being an employment permit holder.

I talked to them that I am going to get a course, I wanted to change...So, I decided to go to school in 2014, so I took my health care course that is why I moved to the care-assistant job now because you cannot go to the job now without any qualification. It's very hard because you go to work, and you go to school but at the very end it's really really...your hard work is really paid... so when I apply to the job, I just get the job quickly

The second interpretation relates to people's self-perception of their trajectories. Trajectories in this case represent both their professional career and their life course. While this interpretation is equally subjective, it takes into consideration the participants' aspirations and priorities. This interpretation helps to understand how and why decision-making in relation to employment and career takes into consideration factors outside of the labour market, which may be transnational in nature. Similarly, this helps to recognise that trajectories do not exist in isolation to other life considerations such as security, stability, values, family formation or household wellbeing. This approach is particularly useful to understand how migration as a family strategy works and how these strategies are transnational in nature. A clear example of this, further discussed in Chapter 8, is how the decision to reunify with family members is carefully considered in its implications for future employment opportunities and the overall purchasing power of the household.

I identified ten cases in which there was a clear path of ascent, meaning that the workers had assessed the life conditions for their household as similar to or better than what they experienced before migrating to Ireland. This does not necessarily mean that their conditions of employment were not precarious in nature, but it is an acknowledgement that some of them (three cases) were coming from highly precarious situations at home, including poverty, unemployment and difficult personal domestic situations. In five cases, there was a clear upward trajectory since their arrival to Ireland. Those five participants were all working in the care industry and moved into permanent jobs in the public health system. A key factor in their ascent from domestic work to qualified care work is their experience of re-skilling. All five took advantage of publicly funded further education courses in health care,

at a time when Ireland was investing in formalising standards in the sector. This is a clear example of agency in decision-making, including in their approach to negotiating time with employers in the distribution of tasks to manage employment and education. It is equally important to acknowledge that such an option was not open to participants in exploitative employment, who could not negotiate the time off. For many, the transition from domestic work to health care work involved a passage through less favourable conditions in private nursing homes. This movement shows that there is a clear progression path, involving the acquisition of location-specific skills which can be recognised and transferred into the Irish healthcare system.

In another thirteen cases, I identified what I describe as ‘partial ascent’, indicating that while there has been an improvement in the labour market trajectories of the participants in Ireland, they may still be affected by precarious conditions of employment, such as low pay or lack of security, or they have not reached a position that they feel corresponds to their efforts, educational attainment or professional experience. Ahmed is 41 years old and originally from Morocco. He is now a supervisor in a publicly funded healthcare provider for persons with mental health issues. His trajectory shows clear upward mobility, yet he feels that due to racism and discrimination he is unable to obtain the positions that correspond to his educational attainment (including a Master programme in Ireland).

I have [applied] numerous times and the people I competed against, I knew them, and they were less qualified than me. I had more experience than them. Management used me for a good few occasions dealing with dangerous situations regarding the lads, challenging behaviours. I was known for my own expertise in management situations in Ireland and I never seen them who applied for the same jobs you know...But I got the nudge that I am not getting [the jobs].

By contrast Nelly, a 58-year-old domestic worker who had previously worked as a bank manager in the Philippines, described her trajectory as successful and an improvement because her migration to Ireland allowed her to build a house for her family and pay for her children’s college education.

I am still continuing [to support them], although they are already finished school... Yes, but still I am doing projects for them, you know... I was able to buy a house for them to stay... and I gave them their own rooms, so my eldest one has his own block... he lives on his own. The youngest one I am going to build another room for him with a kitchen and toilet, so he can live on his own. I explained that to them and my project is still going on... I said to them that I'm not coming home yet [laughs] I told them that I have to finish my project...

- c. **Path of re-education:** There are two possibilities when discussing this path. Re-education, which relates to enrolling in a course in a field different from the one where the person is currently employed, and re-skilling, which can be interpreted as acquiring new skills through courses or training programmes in their current field of employment. There are two main obstacles for labour migrants in following third-level education courses. Non-EU migrants (except for beneficiaries of international protection) are required to pay international fees which average €12,000 per year for an undergraduate degree and €13,500 for a postgraduate degree. These fees are prohibitive, representing over half the pre-tax earnings of most participants. Additionally, while in the employment permit system a migrant is required to work full-time hours, making it difficult to re-educate themselves. In practice, this means that re-education only becomes an option after they have secured residency and only becomes affordable after obtaining naturalisation. The cost of third-level fees was recurrently mentioned as a barrier to changing careers, together with the difficulties in juggling employment hours and study and family-related circumstances such as childcare. Only two participants followed third-level courses, one paid by his employer, but neither felt any significant improvement in their employment.

Opportunities for re-skilling are also limited in Ireland's wider welfare and employment regime. Many in the D&CS benefited from the formalisation of the care industry, following professionalisation courses in childcare and elderly care which opened the doors to more secure employment in the care industry and, for many, a way out from work in the private home. These courses were also subsidised and compatible with their employment schedules. For many participants, it was a clear departing point in their trajectories. Yet opportunities like these are very limited. Those employed in large publicly owned care providers can benefit from training programmes, but those working in private homes or privately-run nursing

homes do not enjoy similar opportunities. Those working in the A&FS mentioned not only that opportunities were unavailable but that working schedules made it almost impossible to follow any course without sacrificing employment hours. In the quote below, Rashmi a 34-year old Mauritian married to Govinder, a 38-year old Indian restaurant worker describes the difficulties he faces in upskilling:

Govinder never had time in this way... It's just, he has many hours, sometimes it's morning he's doing, sometime night. We need to be fixed somewhere to go for these courses... So, you have to make sure that one person is working, always yeah... So now it's on me, when I start working, then he can do... if Govinder goes for that course, like it's 8-9,000 [euros]. And it's like, OK, you pay that money and somebody's working, that's fine.

The Irish focus on labour market activation means that most publicly funded courses, including training, are only open to those registered as job seekers and formally unemployed. This obstacle is not unique to migrants, but it is further compounded by requirements in relation to immigration status. The reality is that the focus on retraining workers in order to return them to the labour market as soon as possible is not adapted to labour migrants, who in their initial period of residence are required to be in full employment. These barriers make it difficult for workers to acquire new skills, and this is coupled with very little in-work progression, with participants often in the same role and/or occupation for the duration of their employment. Over time, pre-migration skills become obsolete and the difficulties in developing current in-work skills or acquiring new ones create the conditions for entrapment. Participants acknowledged that even improving language skills is difficult because both the hours and the content of such courses are not adapted for persons who have years of experience in the Irish labour market.

- d. **Path of marginalisation:** Like the path of ascent, 'marginalisation' must also be interpreted with a degree of subjectivity to cater for participants' self-perception. Four participants experienced clear downward mobility to the point of falling out of the labour market. All four are women with caring responsibilities, including two who experienced relationship breakdowns in Ireland and are now sole care providers. All of them attempted to re-enter the labour market, and continue to express a will to do so, but have identified obstacles in the lack of support from the State and the high costs of childcare making affordability an issue. Both lone

parents were in a particularly vulnerable situation, and over the years they struggled to maintain their legal status and to cope with housing costs. Both experienced period of homelessness which were further compounded by the immigration regime and how it limits their entitlement, such is the case of Wendy, 37, a former South African restaurant worker whose child has a lifelong development disability.

I didn't I really manage. I really struggled, I was borrowing and lending, it was really bad but what can you do, you know... we had just become homeless then as well, we had lost our home because we really couldn't afford the apartment, we couldn't afford anything... I had been minding my son because he has huge problems at school... because of what is going on with my son I can't really commit to set hours of work because sometimes school will ring me in and I will have to go in and calm him down or collect him or whatever it is so...

In eight cases, participants expressed dissatisfaction with their employment trajectories, describing feelings of entrapment, stagnation and insecurity. These include four participants who continue to be subjected to the employment permit regime. When asked to reflect on how his employment history and his current temporary status made him feel, Manish, a 49-year old Malaysian restaurant worker responded:

I don't know what kind of system is that... I am here, I am working and every week the taxes are going under my name... I put my heart and soul but that is not the ultimate...they bring you down... They don't recognize you; you know... but they use you. The industry is very very bad. I don't know, it's not good...

I acknowledge that differentiating these eight cases from the previous four is a personal choice to distinguish the latter's inactivity in the labour market. Both groups share the fact that they have experienced large periods of irregularity and, to a certain extent, multiple experiences of exploitation. Some were still in situations of exploitation. What differentiates them is the caring responsibilities the former group has and how they act as a barrier to re-entering the labour market. From both groups we note that the longer the periods of irregularity, the harder it is to bounce back into a path of upward mobility. It is a similar case for long periods of exploitation. This can be partly explained by the difficulties in developing contacts

and networks in situations of irregularity, as well as in gaining location-specific skills which can be transposed into better employment once regularised or out of exploitation.

Finally, in fifteen cases I have indicted partial marginalisation. Among these, participants were experiencing indicators of precarity, such as low pay or insecurity, but these experiences have clearly diminished when compared to their experience prior to Ireland or compared to their first employments in the country. Vladislav, a 43-year-old Ukrainian man currently working in maintenance, feels that he is now worse off than when he was a contractual cleaner, even though in his current job he earns a better hourly rate, has a permanent contract and has progressively gained responsibility.

Well, it's - to be honest, when we both worked, we can afford a holiday, she can go on holiday wintertime and summertime. But because now baby and she's not working, we are kind of tight with money. Cos you have to save a few bobs... social life is not for now... before it was different it was possible for us to go out or meet friends but now, we can't.

- e. **Path of re-migration:** The path of re-migration includes both departure to a new destination and return to the country of origin to seek employment. Before continuing, it is important to stress that all the participants in the sample were non-EU citizens at the time of first entry. Twenty-one participants became naturalised and one participant, originally from Romania, became an EU citizen as a result of his country joining the EU. If non-EU citizens re-migrate before acquiring Irish citizenship, they lose their right to reside in Ireland, as even long-term residency has a minimum time specified that the person must spend in the country. Re-migration, is thus, very carefully considered. Among participants, three had attempted re-migration in the context of experiences of marginalisation. One person returned home while the remaining two attempted migration to a third country. All three returned as a result of inability to re-establish themselves in their new environment, using temporary and precarious migration status (students, tourist entry), and took several years to regain status through the work permit system or other forms of secure residency. They are all in situations of marginalisation.

At the time of interviews, Hossain, a 42-year-old Bangladeshi restaurant worker, was considering relocating with his family to the United Kingdom after thirteen years in Ireland. He alleged difficulties in coping with the rising cost of living as he was the sole earner for his family of four. Hossain had recently left the ethnic restaurant industry after many years and was only able to find part-time employment in the A&FS. He was reliant on in-work benefits and social housing, but he found the Irish welfare regime did not support precarious workers. He was confident that in the UK, his networks and the tight-knit nature of the Bangladeshi community would support him and his wife to get employment and, in particular, he felt his wife would face fewer obstacles in relation to combining employment and childcare and would be less isolated. A few participants discussed how they had entertained the idea of returning home at different points throughout their career, particularly during times in which they were vulnerable (undocumented, being exploited or unemployed) but also discussed how difficult it is to return and the perception of being a failure for doing so. The quote below from Manish captures well the ambivalence and the difficulties in making a choice. He describes his life in irregularity and the hesitation to return to Malaysia:

...to be honest with you it's a very horrible life. It's very very boring. You were thinking to yourself 'why are you like that' but you don't want to go home because you've been a failure. You think of this you know and then you look very bad in front of the mirror.

(Manish, 49, Malaysian Restaurant Worker)

This adapted and expanded use of Liversage's (2009) typology has enabled a richer interpretation of the different trajectories of this study's research participants. The effects of marginalisation in the labour market were quite evident, and many participants remain affected by some indicator of precarious employment: low pay, part-time employment, or temporary contracts. It has also allowed me to discuss different understandings of progression and success within the context of participants' lives and aspirations. If we focus only on labour market determinants, we will only see human capital limitations and mismatch, and may mistakenly believe that participants are unprepared for Ireland's labour market. Instead, if we attempt to understand how decision-making takes place and what constitutes improvement according to migrants' self-perception, a different story emerges, and we can better discern the implications of Ireland's regimes. Both interpretations are not exclusive but rather complementary.

Gaining labour market autonomy, being free from exploitative conditions, or removing the fear of irregularity are goals which tell us a lot about the courage and efforts of labour migrants. A story of success often means a lot more than simple expectations of salary attainment. Equally, from a gender perspective, a few female participants describe their migration to Ireland as a way of subverting gender roles. They could assert themselves as the head of their households in Ireland and gain the respect associated with it. In the following chapters I describe in more detail how their migration and employment formed part of their broader life projects and household strategies. This insight is useful for better understanding how participants perceive their own trajectories.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided a description of the main labour market characteristics of the participants in my study and I have outlined paths of labour market trajectories in the sample by adapting Liversage's (2009) categorisation to Ireland.

By adapting Liversage's conceptualisation of labour market paths to the trajectories of low-paid migrants I have contributed to the understanding of migrant careers. By incorporating self-perception into Liversage's framework, I have highlighted how the use of agency in decision-making is applied albeit constrained choices. I have also shown the transnational impact of migrant trajectories and the role that non-work-related factors play in career choices. This is particularly important for low-paid labour migrants, whom unlike the highly skilled one interviewed by Liversage do not or cannot aspire to reach the higher parts of the host country's labour market. In this context, the paths of re-entry, ascent and re-education are re-imagined accordingly.

Despite its limitations, applying Liversage's conceptualisation of labour market paths provided a useful way of highlighting and understanding the barriers affecting labour migrants. I have also examined and compared the A&FS and the D&CS and noticed similar patterns of entrapment among both cohorts, as well as similar shared experiences that led to precarity. In the next chapters I discuss these experiences in detail. I have shown that individuals migrating into lower-skilled occupations often

experience a downward trajectory and are at a high risk of marginalisation in the labour market. Two key factors were identified as contributing to marginalisation: experiences of exploitation and experiences of irregularity. The longer a person is subjected to either of these experiences, the longer it will take for them to reverse their downward trajectory. A key factor in building resilience against exploitation and irregularity is securing labour market mobility, but as the employment permit system does not afford mobility this process is often delayed and tied to the acquisition of citizenship or long-term residency. Acquiring a more secure status is not in itself a guarantee of avoiding exploitation or exiting labour market stagnation, as the experiences of many participants have demonstrated. Access to re-training or re-education facilitates progression by allowing immigrants to circumvent, to some extent, the barriers associated with skills validation and recognition of foreign professional experience. However, these opportunities are limited and depend on the ability of households to bear the associated costs. Overall, the findings reveal that migrants under the work permit system experience considerable entrapment, precarious employment, and in some cases hyper-precarity. The findings also show the complex decision-making processes migrants must undergo and the considerable agency they need to demonstrate in order to overcome the structural conditions that entrap them in precarity. In the next chapters, I also outline how work schedule, age and family circumstances shape the ability of migrants to make such decisions. I also discuss the participants' experiences and narratives of migration to Ireland to help us situate their trajectories in broader processes and life-cycle stages.

Chapter 7 - Narratives of Hyper-Precarity

“But you are working and talking with fear.

You always smile with fear, talk with fear, deal with fear.”

Introduction

This chapter continues to empirically describe and analyse the experience of workers in Ireland’s two-tier labour migration regime, drawing on the 42 interviews to understand how the labour migration regime, employment regime and broader welfare regime intersect to produce hyper-precarity (Lewis et al. 2014, 2015) and hyper-dependent precarity (Zou 2015) for vulnerable migrant workers in specific sectors of the Irish economy. The chapter therefore draws on concepts introduced in Chapter 1 and 4 which enable a deeper examination of how hyper-precarity manifests in some migrants’ lives. These include (im)mobility, irregularity, voluntariness, social networks, and the intersectional experience of class, race and gender exploitation. In this chapter, the participants’ narratives tell the story of their journey, from the start of the migration process through the experiences of recruitment to the adjustment to their new life. The first section focuses on the experiences of participants in making the decision to move and organising their move to Ireland. It focuses on the decision-making process, motivation and agency, access to information, and reliance on networks. It is followed by their experience of (im)mobility, irregularity and exploitation. Through their accounts we see the processes of precarisation which are embedded in the migration and employment regimes. The third section concludes by outlining some of the results of this process of precarisation, namely income poverty and experiences of discrimination and racism. The description of their experience highlights how easy it is to fall into precarity and the limited safety net offered by the welfare regime, in part due to the conditionality¹⁰ of access and the intersection with the migration regime. These experiences, including the experiences of discrimination shared among participants, can

¹⁰ Welfare conditionality is understood as linking welfare rights, benefits, or services to “responsible” behaviour or particular obligations (Watts & Fitzpatrick, 2018).

be linked to their status as low-paid and precarious workers in a racialised and segmented labour market which on one hand renders them invisible for their contribution and on the other exposes them to class and race relations in occupations associated with the fringes.

Experiences of Migration

Reasons for Migrating

Migration requires the mobilisation of resources largely unavailable to those at the bottom end of the resources scale (Geist and McManus 2008). Thus, individuals and households in the middle bracket of the earnings scale are over-represented among those migrating – a trend that is accentuated in developing countries (Mora and Taylor 2006). The Irish work permit system and the Irish State's *laissez-faire* approach in the early years facilitated migrants' self-selection (Ruhs 2005). This is reflected in the trajectories of participants in the study. Based on self-perception, almost half of the participants described their life conditions in their country of origin or prior residence as either "good" or "above average" compared to the communities they were living in, while only a quarter said they were "struggling" before coming to Ireland. The majority of those who described their economic circumstance in their home country as difficult had already made previous migration attempts or were re-migrating to improve their household conditions. Those with previous experience of living and working abroad found that readjusting to their country of origin was difficult, both socially and financially, and were more responsive to the opportunity of secondary migration and more likely to seek options to move abroad.

Three main reasons to move to Ireland emerged in the interviews: improving family conditions, increasing family income, and experiencing life abroad. These motives are not mutually exclusive and rather overlap in the narrative of interviewees. For example, Evelyn, a 40-year-old single parent from South Africa, described how she was struggling to make end meet as a young single mother in South Africa. Even though she had not thought about emigrating, when a friend offered her the opportunity to take up employment in the hospitality sector in Ireland, she quickly accepted the offer. She first considered the financial gains and the ability to provide a better life for her daughter,

but she was equally captivated by the opportunity to live abroad and travel overseas – something she always thought of as being off-limits to her. Many among the domestic and care workers had in the past disregarded opportunities to work overseas, citing their role as parents as the main reason to do so. As children grew older and required less care, they reconsidered the opportunity to emigrate and migration became a strategy to afford the cost of third-level education for older children. Migration appears as a clearly thought-through process which considers multiple factors in the life-course of a household, some of which are productive in nature (increased income) while others, in turn, are affective (care obligations). A large number of the women interviewed, and in particular those in the D&CS, reported being the breadwinner in their country of origin. Reasons for this varied between separation, widowhood or a range of social factors that meant men in the family did not contribute to the family budget. Despite traditional patriarchal gender roles, they spoke with pride about juggling productive, reproductive, and affective work. Migration was a deliberate strategy to improve their household's social mobility (Gutierrez-Rodriguez 2014; Ferguson and McNally 2015) while at the same time it challenged their perception of maternal duty of care.

This duty of care, shared by most participants, also extended to other relatives and even beyond, into their communities. Hossain, a 42-year-old chef from Bangladesh, had a successful career as a personal advisor to the mayor of his town and owned a small construction business employing several workers. But, being the eldest among his siblings, he felt an obligation to look after his extended family and make a visible contribution to the improvement of his village in order to improve his family's social standing. This pushed him to take a significant loan to pay €15,000 to an illegal recruiter in order to work in the kitchen of a restaurant.

When the work permit system was like a bad situation a couple of people they were selling the work permit...I heard one guy like if you pay the money then they give you the work permit and then you can go there you can get the passport....those people are taking chance from other people, they sell this work permit in lots of money. I paid my one £10,000 which was around €15,000 I bought the work permit so....

(Hossain, 42, Bangladeshi restaurant worker)

He argued that moving abroad, and to Europe, would afford him and his family a sense of prestige and upward social mobility that would be recognised in his community. In traditional sending countries, like the Philippines or Bangladesh, migration is embedded in the national psyche and is perceived as a gateway to social improvement. This

mindset instigates and facilitates more migration (Kaur 2010). Below, Lola gives her account:

I think with every Filipino living in the Philippines, getting out of the country and getting to work abroad would be the first sign of prosperity for us...It's very different for other people but for us it's so hard to get out of the country and even just going to a place in the Middle East would mean prosperity for that family.

(Lola, 53, Filipina care worker)

The downside to this perception is that migrants often feel an 'obligation to succeed'. This manifests in multiple ways, including reluctance to discuss problems with relatives, stretching monthly to meet remittance expectations or refusing to return home empty-handed for fear of being deemed a 'failure'. To understand how this obligation works, we can again take the example of Hossain. He describes how he postponed his return to Bangladesh for seven years in order to save enough money so that he could pay for major roadworks in his village. This is a clear example of how success is perceived collectively and how the expectation to benefit from migration goes far beyond the nuclear family and influences decision-making.

Family members are also instigators of migrants, with those living abroad often key facilitators in the migration process (Palloni et al. 2001). Among the participants, over half had family outside their country of origin and thirteen – more than one quarter – had family in Ireland who helped find jobs, assisted in the work permit process, funded travel, and generally eased the acclimatisation process when in Ireland. At times, this also led to disappointment, with some complaining that once in Ireland their relatives would not abide by the same family codes as in their country of origin. Often this was put down as 'becoming European'.

Not all migration is a collective decision; for many it represents a coming of age transition (Benson and O'Reilly 2009). For example, Caroline decided to stay in Ireland while on a trip to visit friends. She was 21 at the time and frames her decision to accept work in hospitality in Ireland as a reaction to her otherwise 'too settled' life. For her migrating was an adventurous choice:

All was okay, I was young. I had a baby and I got married and I was like "oh my god, what am I doing now. What's next?" And I decided to come over here and see what Ireland's like.

(Caroline, 37, South African hairdresser)

Joyce, a 38-year-old care worker from the Philippines, left her country of origin at the age of 17 to go to Malaysia and, years later, migrated onwards to Ireland. For her, migration was an opportunity to satisfy both family obligations and individual desires. She could live freely in what she described as a more open and tolerant culture, while providing financially for her household. Migration allowed her to feel both conveniently close and sufficiently removed from her family.

At my young age I want adventure, I want to go outside Philippines, experience life and what is Irish is all about, what is Ireland is all about, and secondly as well I hope to create a better future for my family like helping my nieces go to college because some of my brothers they are in the struggling middle class... so those children still want to go to college and get a nice education and it's kind of like I am single and I had the eagerness to help them finance the colleges.

(Joyce, 38, Filipina care worker)

These examples show how difficult it is to determine one sole driver of migration, or to categorise migrants with one single determinant. The emergence of studies of lifestyle migration and the experience of people moving across spaces of free mobility, like the EU, has helped enriched the discussion of determinants of migration beyond simple economic and protection. The words of Joyce describe a very common trend among participants who were single at the time of moving to Ireland. Unlike their siblings, who were married and had children, Filipino society often encouraged them to migrate to contribute to the care of elderly parents, younger siblings, or to look after nieces and nephews' needs. This complex process of sacrifice and retribution was made more complex as many potential migrants had themselves benefited from the financial efforts of a relative who lived abroad, such as an aunt or a sister. They were able to afford education, or their parents could set up a business thanks to these efforts, and now it was their turn to repay. These are clear examples of how individual migrations are negotiated as part of a collective process. Ellie's account of migration against her will illustrates how transnational networks of care (Baldassar 2007; Baldassar et al. 2014) go beyond simply providing basic needs such as food, housing and education and are also ways to allow for mobility, progression and opportunities.

I do not really want to go abroad at that time because I have a profession back in the Philippines... but then just because of my sister... you know encouraged me to come to replace her job because... she wants to go to London to find out, well to work in London, you know so that is why I am here... just to pay back, just because my sister support my college so just to help her, you know.

(Ellie, 45, Filipina domestic worker)

Recruitment

Several employment sectors, including the A&FS, experienced significant expansion during the years of economic boom and had difficulties recruiting and retaining staff. Efforts to activate groups outside of the labour market in the early years of the economic boom soon reached their perceived limits. Facing difficulty in sourcing the necessary staff in Ireland, employers turned to migrants to fill skills and labour shortages. International recruitment campaigns in places like Lithuania, Romania, or South Africa became common in the early 2000s:

They had already gone over to Lithuania and recruited, so a lot of the workforce was Lithuanian. So, they had a contact already. So, I remember when we got the third restaurant in Mullingar, we had a whole group of them, eight to ten Lithuanians at a time, and he'd have a house for them, rented a house.

(Evelyn, 40, South African fast food store manager)

A range of measures were put in place to incentivise migrants, including temporary accommodation or the coverage of airfare and immigration costs; however, such measures worked together with the migration regime to further limit the mobility of labour migrants. Costs like work permit fees and airfare were often deducted weekly or monthly from their paycheque, while providing accommodation worked as means of control – the migrants being always locally available to work additional hours or unplanned shifts. Interview participants noted how a perceived preference developed over time for immigrant workers who were seen as ‘hard workers’, more ‘disciplined’ than their Irish counterparts, and more willing to accept jobs Irish workers were not willing to do.

I think [staff shortages] it's purely because a lot of Irish people were not willing to do these jobs, so nobody really worked. I found really, really poor working standards when I arrived. Persistent lateness, calling next day that they were drinking and not coming to work. Going on holidays and never returned to work. I never, ever in my life experienced this level of slack.

(Horatiu, 40, Romanian fast-food manager)

While larger employers relied on the services of international recruitment agencies, such as Manpower or Grafton Recruitment, smaller businesses had to rely on more informal practices to find employees. Networks of family members, colleagues and acquaintances often introduced participants to their first job in Ireland. These informal mediators were already resident in Ireland, or planning to move, and were familiar with

the work permit process. Over half of those interviewed used this method: sixteen participants in the A&FS and nine in the D&CS. Most participants (seventeen in each employment sector) applied for an employment permit while outside of Ireland.¹¹ The remaining participants entered Ireland under a different visa category, usually as a tourist, and secured their employment while in the country. These informal practices of changing immigration status were common with nationals of countries where a visa is not required to visit Ireland, reflecting the relaxed and more flexible approach in the early years of the work permit before a policy change required applicants to be outside the State. Over the years this strict approach generated irregularity in the labour market, with workers fearful that if they left the state they would be unable to return or their application might be rejected, and consequently feeling they had no option but to stay undocumented in the state and unable to formalise their employment relation.

The exclusively employer-led nature of the work permit system played to the disadvantage of workers. Informal means of recruitment coupled with a lack of oversight helped illegal and irregular recruitment practices flourish. Even though until 2007 the payment of processing fees was the exclusive responsibility of the employer, fifteen participants paid fees ranging up to €15,000. Such illegal fees were either paid directly to the employers (in three cases) or to an ‘agency’, a loose term covering individuals who facilitate the process of connecting workers with employers, and other more structured business-type arrangements established in Ireland or abroad. For reference, the average cost of an ‘agency fee’ in the Philippines was the equivalent of €3,000, 1.5 times the annual salary of a mid-range professional in the Philippines at the time. The unregulated nature of these agencies was a common complaint among participants.

¹¹ Until 2007, the application process was entirely employer-led, meaning that only the employer could apply for an employment permit and engage with the appropriate government department in relation to the processing status of the permit.

There was an agency that was open and was hiring domestic workers or minders or whatever in Dabau [Philippines] and my close friend came here first because I told her that I have four children... You have to pay the agency before coming in Euro and it's so expensive, it's big money... I said to her 'you go first because you are single, and I have four children'. And that is big money that you – If that trip is not good and they are fake recruiters – I would have wasted my money and I don't want to do that.

(Nelly, 58, Filipina domestic worker)

Nelly's quote is reflective of the uncertainty embedded in the migration process when intermediaries are involved. The International Labour Organisation (2019: 20) states that “no recruitment fees or related costs should be charged to, or otherwise borne by, recruited workers and jobseekers”. Lewis et al. (2015:589) find that “*poverty and debt, pressures to support family, low expectations of treatment at work, lack of or low levels of education, low social position, mode of recruitment into employment and mode of entry into the destination country may render certain migrants more susceptible to exploitation in unfree labour at particular times*”. In the case of participants, having to bear these recruitment costs represented a financial burden that often spread over years. It reduced their mobility and conditioned them into accepting substandard employment to meet their debt repayments on time.

Such was the case for Nelly, who had no choice but to remain in exploitation on arrival:

Yeah I had to stay there even if I am not happy, for the sake of my children, and I spent big money already and when I go home, I really want to go home but if I resigned my job and I still owe money for my relatives...

The involvement and awareness of employers in this process of illegal fee collection ranged from ignorance to systematic ‘selling’ of work permits. In the latter cases, employers were effectively running business-like operations allowing migrants to secure a permit to come to Ireland. Such employers were also responsible for “recruitment scams” where, upon arrival to Ireland, migrants found out that the job they had secured and paid for was non-existent. Four participants fell victim to such practices. In two cases, it was part of a large operation where a Ukrainian agency was selling false work permits for non-existent jobs which affected hundreds of workers. Irish governments at the time failed to address such practices, and reparations were not made available to workers who were affected.

...my wife's friend said in Kiev, they have an agency which is doing recruitment for abroad. We went to see this agency, and everything looked so clear, real, and offices, secretaries, and we talking to the manager of the company. We paid together that time was about 4,000 dollars - that's including flight tickets and accommodation for first month, which is ok for us - cos they promised us you getting 1,000 euro per week. So 120, maybe 150 Ukrainians come to Ireland in 2002. And then we realise, it's actually spam because... when we went to immigration bureau, they told us actually nobody gonna find you, you have to be realistic: all your paperwork fake, employer not gonna find you, you have to start searching for your own job. And then when immigration start raising the alarm, they are stopping people from Ukraine in airport and sending them straight back.

(Vladislav, 43, Ukrainian maintenance worker)

As their permits were invalid, they were effectively drawn to irregular precarious employments for survival. In some instances, the Garda National Immigration Bureau failed to recognise the illegality of such documents and the holders were registered for a year, but unable to renew their permission thereafter. In other cases, migrants were left unregistered. In all cases, it took several years before they were afforded any means to regularise their legal status. Their experience is a clear example of the disengagement of the Irish state in relation to the migration process and the lack of commitment to the wellbeing of labour migrants

Adjusting to a New Life

As there was no requirement to provide a contract or a statement of employment conditions to secure a work permit, workers relied mostly on promises and verbal agreements. There was no formal mechanism to challenge any deviation from what was initially convened, and migrants had limited access to information regarding their legal entitlements. Discrepancies often involved breaches of employment law that left workers underpaid for additional hours or tasks they had accomplished, or with illegal deductions made on their wages. Many of these schemes also included false promises in relation to accommodation, food, or annual leave entitlements, which were used to incite participants to accept the offer of employment.

He drew a very good picture for us. He told us they would give us accommodation. Food free, we wouldn't have to pay any electricity, we don't need to worry about it, we would get the money. Only we would have to work an extra day for our accommodation and food [for free]. We thought okay one day is okay because we didn't know the rules in Ireland.

(Ahmet, 41, Turkish restaurant worker)

Participants' expectations of their future life in Ireland were informed by a mixture of promises and hopes – a combination of what was offered to them at recruitment, their stereotypes and perceptions of Ireland and Europe, and the information they received from friends, colleagues and networks. Some fell prey to deceitful recruitment as already described and found themselves in exploitative jobs significantly below their expectations and their needs. Manish had a career working in luxury hotels in Singapore and at home. In 2000, he paid €4,000 for recruitment via an unregulated agency and had expectations of working in high-level hotels in Ireland.

It's really built in your mind that there is a hotel in Europe, Europe everywhere is the best. They are the number one. So, Europe, Europe, Europe. We are Asians you know so talking about Europe. We look naively and don't think that Europe can be bad.

(Manish, 49, Malaysian restaurant worker)

Instead he was made to work thirteen hours a day in a B&B in County Clare as a kitchen porter for 150 Irish pounds a week. The accommodation he had been promised was together with eleven other workers in a two-bedroom house. Migrants tend to shy away from talking about the difficulties encountered through the process, often to project an image of success (Escandell and Tapias 2010). When asked if he shared his difficulties back home Manish replies “*No no we normally say we are in good health. My family they don't know. Just 'I am okay I am trying my best'*”

When discussing the process of moving and settling down in a new country it was evident that there were mixed feelings: fear, anxiety, loneliness, and sometimes regret. Many were torn between leaving their family behind and the hope that they were making the right choice. Many were very conscious that they were experiencing professional downgrading and deskilling. Rita, 67, a Filipina carer, worked as a financial controller employed by a big international accounting firm in Manila before moving to Ireland, citing obligations towards a family member. When asked if she ever became used to becoming a carer, she said no; she had a constant feeling of being undervalued and having lost her skills. Like many other domestic and care workers, she

rationalised this downward move by focusing on the financial improvements for her family and developing a sense of attachment to the people she cared for. Similarly, Jayson, who left a broadcasting job, mentioned his children as the be-all reason justifying the financial and emotional costs of moving countries and impossibility of returning:

I know it is a sacrifice [changing professions], I know it's a very very far downgrade. But I did it for my children. Because I remember working in the middle of the night, really getting tired, muscles aching from folding the sheets and all that. And encountering difficulties of course. I said 'no, I will not quit, I will do it for my children.'

(Jayson, 38, Filipino care worker)

Life outside of work also required adjustment for many participants. Those working and living in private homes had to accommodate the time constraints of the family they were working for as well as, sometimes, the accompanying geographical isolation. Low-paid jobs with long and demanding hours isolated them from life in the community, and limited income affected their ability to socialise. Ana, a 59-year-old domestic worker from the Philippines, mentioned that in her first employment, if she stayed home during her day off, she was made to do additional work. However, if she went to the city, she had to spend money, which her tight budget did not allow for. This created a sense of detachment from her new life in Ireland:

During my first days, I would stay out until 10 o'clock even though it is 10 o'clock. I would have nowhere to go. I would go to Burger King and sit down, and I would do something... I [would] have food, it's cheaper, and I could sit down. After that, you can't be sitting down all day there. I would walk in and out in the shops. That was my life there, if only I had a place to go, I would go but if I would be at home, even if it were my day off, I would have to work.

(Ana, 59, Filipina domestic worker)

Those who lived outside of Dublin, faced greater difficulties. Dublin was perceived as having a diverse and multicultural population, but in many other places, non-Irish people were perceived as a novelty. Participants based outside of Dublin described the mentality as “narrow” or “closed” and found it hard to connect and make friends with locals. Mina, 46, from South Africa, has been living in a border county for over a decade and tells how she experienced racism on a number of occasions, and found it difficult to find support from people in the community as she felt that “*everyone knows everyone, and you can't talk to someone here...*” Caroline, 37, also from South Africa, lived first in Dublin and now in Dundalk and says she enjoys the more relaxed work

culture outside of Dublin but she is already considering moving back to the city because she does not want her daughter growing up with a “closed-minded mentality” as she describes the town where she lives. Interestingly, Caroline was very clear about the fact that she was not at the receiving end of racism: she emphasised that when anyone made any comments in relation to her origins that she did not appreciate she “... *just had to put them right there, once I put them straight, they knew*”. She believed that any such remarks were a result of people “*not travelling abroad*”. Overall, participants had a great deal of resilience, which helped them overlook the precarity of their conditions and at the same time hope for improvement.

When you come here, in a few months, you don't want to let go. You want to see what you are going to do. Maybe this is the beginning, 'I do not know the place and maybe I have to go through these things.' It didn't look that bad because everyone was friendly, and you go home, and you stop thinking that they are using you...

(Esra, 38, Turkish restaurant worker)

Esra's quote is reflective of the internal turmoil many migrants go through in the process of adaptation. It is also reflective of the fear of failing, and their ability to interiorise bad treatment and exploitation. When Esra says ‘*maybe I have to go through these things*’ she is describing a rite of passage, ‘*maybe I need to feel some pain in order to deserve some gain*’. This process of relativization explains why it can take so long for many to seek to ‘voice’ their constraints or to ‘exit’ the situation.

Experiences of Precarity

Lack of Mobility

In their work on forced labour and the UK asylum system, Lewis and Waite (2015) discuss the role of immigration regimes in facilitating hyper-precarity, including forced labour. In Ireland, the rigidity of the work permit system and its intersection with immigration status was one of the key factors in creating vulnerability in participant's lives. They described their feelings as being “constrained” or “conditioned” by their work permits. This manifested in a number of different ways: their inability to leave an employer for fear of losing their right to stay, the feeling of having to put up with exploitation or bad treatment because they were tied to the work, or the inability to take

up different professional opportunities more commensurate with their skills and qualifications and with better conditions of employment. With the EU enlargement in 2004 and the corresponding policy change, participants found it increasingly difficult to find employers willing to support their applications. Lack of clarity and transparency in the process, long delays and the increasing rate of refusals discouraged employers from engaging with the system (MRCI 2015a).

They [employers] weren't prepared to get me a work permit. So, they asked – the first thing they asked you 'what is your status. How are you here?' And I'm like, 'on my husband's work permit, on my husband's working visa', and then suddenly you know they're not going to employ you because they would say that you need to have your status, your own.

(Mina, 46, South African former fast food worker)

Because the system was oriented towards employer demand and could only process requests from employers, it was essential for workers to find support to go along with the process. Unscrupulous employers took advantage of this and would regularly request 'fees' and use the application and renewal process to exercise control.

...one time I call the department to say, "I came by work permit and my work permit is not renewing what is the situation?" They said "I cannot talk with you, your employer he can talk with us" ... so that time [you know] you're blocked, you're in the prison. Your employer is everything so you cannot move, and your employer knows you cannot move. If you want to live here, you have to work with him, so you have a chance...

(Hossain, 42, Bangladeshi restaurant worker)

Hossain's palpable despair comes from a sudden realisation that he is no longer in control, that he has no support and that from now on his employer dictates the moves. Anderson and Rogaly (2005:8-9) discuss how immigration status (whether irregular or tied by a permit to an employer) contributes to vulnerability to abusive employment relations. Employment permit holders in Ireland looking for jobs had little to no bargaining power. Participants described how employers regularly delayed the renewal of work permits, leaving their employees always on the verge of irregularity.

But you always have this thing that you can't say anything back to them because they – they knew that you're working on a work permit, and I wasn't the only one. There was [sic] loads of others working on work permits. Their work permits were in renewal stage. So, you're always told that you need to pay them back because they did something for you.

(Mina, 46, South African fast food worker)

Mina's experience is consistent with McLaughlin and Hennebry's (2013) analysis of employers' tactics to keep workers on the edge and under control. The yearly process of renewal played in favour of employers who were able to maintain a subservient and docile workforce, aware that they could be reprimanded at any given time and have their renewal delayed or cancelled. The lack of mobility in the work permit system, coupled with migrants' lack of awareness about their rights, facilitated labour exploitation. Unsurprisingly, 24 out of 41 interviewees (60%) said they had experienced exploitation in their first employment in Ireland. Migrant workers with transnational care duties, and whose families depended on the income they earned abroad, were particularly constrained to accept these exploitative conditions.

It would be difficult for a mother who has children back home, even though she is exploited; she will think first, 'if I leave this job...what money am I going to send home, how about my family in the Philippines?' The typical mother is going to sacrifice herself and even how exploited it is just to gain the money to provide for the children back home especially if she is the only breadwinner for the family.

(Joyce, 38, Filipina childcare worker)

Irregularity

In their work on hyper-precarity, Lewis and Waite (2015: 54) talk about the “ever-present threat of destitution and homelessness” which constitutes the backdrop to the labour relations of the participants in their study. Similarly, interviewees in this study recounted how constant fear of falling outside of legality played a role in everyday life. The fear of becoming undocumented is well justified. Among the 42 participants, 19 spent periods of time undocumented in Ireland, ranging from a few months to over ten years, and the main reason given was the employer not renewing a work permit (either through lack of care or on purpose). In Ireland, immigration authorities do not keep active track of immigration status being renewed or lapsing, and the country lacks exit checks. In practice, this means that irregular status only becomes apparent when there are checks involved (Quinn and Kingston 2012). Compared to other European countries, Ireland conducts a limited amount of immigration raids and, while there is no duty to report, service providers may have internal policies requiring their staff to report to immigration authorities. Ireland practices limited enforcement of deportations – just over 100 irregular migrants were returned in 2018 (INIS 2019). Nonetheless, the fear of

being detected generally impacts on irregular migrants' daily lives, both personally and in employment.

I felt very, very unsafe. I had to have a lot of caution. I had my own goals. My own goal was to make money. I just do all my own... and then I don't...I don't share with anybody. But you are working and talking with fear. Sometimes when you say something to somebody, you are asking ten thousand questions to yourself. 'What happens if he knows', 'what happens if he knows', and things like that. You always smile with fear, talk with fear, deal with fear.

(Manish, 49, Malaysian restaurant worker)

Irregular migrants were vulnerable to all forms of threat and coercion, including from members of their own communities. They rarely disclosed their status for fear of being reported. Competition for better-paid employment and jealousy over each other's achievements resulted at times in threats of denunciation, further compounding irregular migrants' isolation, which was spatial, social and in the labour market all at the same time. Geographical isolation meant for example that they would change their daily walking routes to work in order to avoid any possibility of contact with the authorities. In the case of Felicia, 45, a Filipino domestic worker, she was repeatedly assaulted by her employer but decided she could not risk reporting it because of her irregular status and the chance it would make it more difficult to find an alternative employer in her community. Ana, 59, a Filipina domestic worker, said that other Filipinos, including those she considered friends, would target her and threaten her in exchange for goods or money:

They would say to me 'we will report you to the police that you don't have a work permit'. I was very down that time. Even friends I thought I could rely on they would say that to me. I don't know what I have done, and I was just praying I could have the work permit.

(Ana, 59, Filipina domestic worker)

Irregular employment was attractive to employers who wanted to avoid tax payments, and while 'cash in hand' work is not limited to undocumented migrants, they have no alternative but to accept such arrangements when offered. Certain sectors such as the ethnic food industry rely heavily on informal employment and the labour of undocumented workers in order to keep costs down. Agencies, subcontractors, and employers all benefited from the undocumented workers' need for anonymity. The casualisation of work rendered the employment relationship harder to determine and played to the benefit of employers who were never held responsible for employing

irregular migrants. Certain industries such as cleaning and catering relied heavily on agency workers. This, of course, rendered the already precarious situation of migrants in the labour market even more vulnerable, in particular when the work was carried out in public spaces.

When you are talking to a customer, you don't go to a state where you lose your calm and then you [are] caught in a complaint. Many customers were stealing, and I did not report this. I just took the loss. I did not make anything official. There was a lot of fights on the train that I pretended that I didn't see. I kept quiet. The guard will come and will ask me if I see anything and I will say 'no I didn't see'.

(Manish, 49, Malaysian restaurant worker)

Manish's employment pushed him to take constant risks. The risk of having his lack of status disclosed in case of interaction with the police, the risk of losing his job for failing to stop customers stealing, and the risk of having his income reduced if stock changes were not accounted for. As being undocumented was often perceived as a form of 'failure', as described in the previous chapter, participants kept it very private, even from family members. Because they were unable to leave the country and return, some missed important moments of family life, including the loss of close family members, and struggled to find support in Ireland for fear of it leading to status disclosure. Lola, 53, a Filipino care worker, explains how they built a support network among undocumented migrants to cope with similar situations and share experiences: "*there was already a group of Filipinos that were undocumented. So, we were able to talk so we just said, 'keep your heads low, keep working, make sure you don't fight with anybody so nobody will report you'*". This also reflects how the experience of irregularity helps form a group identity.

Looking for help was crucial to finding a pathway out of irregularity, but such workers had little access to support. Until 2014, there was no established legal process to become regularised (MRCI 2015a). Workers could submit applications that would be assessed on a case-by-case basis, but only at the risk of exposing themselves to the authorities and receiving a deportation order if the application was unsuccessful. Since this process was not formalised or made public, undocumented migrants needed assistance, usually from non-governmental organisations, to be made aware of the process and be offered support with an application. Many participants spent years in isolation without knowing if they were going to regain their status.

It was very, very hard. If you don't know a lot of people and things like that. If you do not have the proper paperwork and things like that, what do you do really? You either go home or look for help. And going home was not an option

(Caroline, 37, South African restaurant worker)

Goldring and Landolt (2011:336) argue that if *“the transition to secure legal status is not accompanied by improved labor market outcomes, ...once in a vulnerable labor market situation it is difficult to improve one's situation... precarious legal status becomes a source of vulnerability in the short run as well as a long-term trap because low-wage and precarious jobs become a 'sticky' web for people with precarious status”*.

As I have argued previously, Ireland's labour migration regime irregularises workers through the stratifications of status, the immobility characteristic of the system and the rigidity in responding to workers' needs. Even after having their status reinstated, migrants are provided a short three- to four-month window to secure a new work permit and re-enter the very same system that pushed them into irregularity in the first place. Prospective employers are aware from the outset of the dependency on them for regularising and maintaining the applicants' status. This creates the conditions for the same experiences of deceit, abuse and exploitation and creates long-term entrapment in precarity.

Experiences of Exploitation

Participants were also penalised for asserting their rights. Tina, 55, a Filipina domestic worker in a private home, was regularly made to work longer hours than those outlined in her contract. Based on external advice, she began keeping track of the hours she worked in her personal diary. One day, in violation of her privacy, the employer confronted her about her record-keeping and told her that as punishment she would be cutting her Saturday pay. On top of exploiting the very nature of the immigration system which rendered the workers dependent, some employers also used other methods of control such as withholding documents like passports and work permits from their employees. Anele, 39, a care worker from Zimbabwe, had her passport and work permit taken off her by her employer upon arrival in Ireland. When asked why she handed her personal documents to the employer, she said *“... [I] thought since I am working for her in her house, she had the authority to do that”*. Other documents related

to her employment, such as contracts, were also withheld. This meant that she had no way of proving the employment relationship, making any exit more difficult and making it harder to question terms and conditions. In order to ensure an obedient workforce, employers had to use control mechanisms to rein in those who were considered troublemakers. Usually, when they became assertive of their rights or contested the employment practices, employers would respond by imposing worse employment conditions.

Ahmet, 41, a former restaurant worker from Turkey working several years with the same restaurant since his arrival, became aware that his employers were not fulfilling obligations regarding overtime, Sunday pay and other industry standards. As he started confronting his employers regarding these breaches, they started reducing his hours to the minimum permitted by his contract: *“Yeah they were punishing me. I was going to the restaurant, I was working 2 hours and he says, ‘now go back [home]’ and I was travelling back”*. Ahmet knew that they wanted to force him out, as dismissal would cost them compensation. After several months enduring this treatment he filed a lawsuit against the restaurant and left. From that moment on they started targeting his spouse, who was also employed in the business, in the hope that Ahmet will drop the complaint.

Last couple of months were bad. They were cutting my hours as well, and at that time, I was getting 10 euros an hour and I was working 10-25 hours. ...Like small, small things, he tried to make me go... They tried to give me the pressure. All that time he accused me of stealing, he even sent me the letter from a solicitor.

(Esra, 38, Turkish restaurant worker)

Eventually Esra left, but without receiving any compensation. The stories of Ahmet and Esra are consistent with findings by Ruhs and Anderson (2010) and Waite and Lewis (2017). The control that the employers initially exercised through the lack of mobility in the employment permit system was compounded by their lack of awareness, and it continued through precarious employment arrangements which legally allowed the employer to exploit their financial dependency, taking advantage of their vulnerabilities in the hope they will forego their rights. The intersection of immobility and precarious migrant status facilitated their initial entrapment in an exploitative employment; thanks to the dynamics of precarious employment, the dependency created by low pay and limited access to the safety net provided by the welfare regime, this entrapment was allowed to continue when the migration regime was no longer an obstacle.

Until the establishment of the National Employment Rights Authority (NERA) in 2008, there was no dedicated agency to disseminate information about employment rights and to oversee labour relations complaints, leaving organisations supporting new communities to provide clarity on entitlements. Since the very beginning, NERA focused on addressing the exploitation of migrant workers through labour inspections, mediation services, and assistance in filing complaints (Ruhs and Quinn 2009). The lack of information about rights and entitlements is a leading factor in the exploitation of migrants (MRCI 2015b). As a result, several participants found themselves in exploitative situations with nowhere to seek assistance. Among the organisations created to bridge the gap in information and representation was the MRCI, established in 2001¹², from which many participants received information, assistance, and representation, and later continued to engage with its social justice work. A useful way to interpret participants' engagement with organisations such as MRCI is through Hirschman's (1970) framework of "exit, voice and loyalty", first introduced in **Chapter 1**.

This framework can be applied to understand workers' reactions to deteriorating conditions of employment. If unhappy with the conditions, workers will seek to "exit", i.e. find alternative employment or they will "voice" their dissatisfaction through engagement with collective bargaining and other forms of representation. "Loyalty", in this case, relates to the mechanisms used by an employer to minimise the possibility of employees opting for either "exit" or "voice" strategies. Because of "loyalty", the employer can rely on staff who are devoted, whether by choice or not, to the success of the company. In the case of precarious migrants, the "exit" capabilities are very limited because changing employers may not be an option or could result in a worker losing their immigration status. Similarly, collective bargaining or other forms of representation may be limited in sectors affected by precarious employment or may not be available to migrant workers at all. In this case, both their "exit" and "voice" capabilities are suppressed, and any expression of dissatisfaction may result in the imposition of worse conditions than before. As Zou (2015) outlines, when a person has lost both "exit" and "voice" capabilities, they find themselves in situations characterised by *hyper-dependent precarity* or *hyper-precarious dependence*. Participants in the work

¹² Migrant Rights Centre Ireland is a national organisation working to promote justice, empowerment and equality for migrants and their families. Since 2001, MRCI has taken a stand with migrants to tackle the root causes of inequality using a community work approach with a focus on participation, leadership and empowerment, and have a strong track record in securing policy changes. MRCI operates a Resource Centre and has a national remit.

permit system had both their “exit” and “voice” capabilities suppressed as they could not avail of any support from the State or trade unions. The MRCI was aware of this and aimed to represent the interests of the emerging migrant population.

I became a victim of the wrong information that was given to me. I did not know what to do. So MRCI, while they are dealing with my case, they also educate me. It was as if the floodgate opened... I told myself ‘you know what I do not need to hide’. Why should I hide? While I can see that along the way, the system is not right... I felt normal you know. Just because the system is so bad, that is why I became a victim.

(Manish, 49, Malaysian restaurant worker)

Participants described their engagement with the MRCI as allowing them more than just access to information. It also gave them the courage to stand up against injustice and to claim their rights, a clear example of “voice”. For example, Dolores, a 47-year-old Filipina care worker, was often asked to babysit for no extra payment, but felt she was unable to confront her employer about this. Once she learned from the MRCI that she was entitled to take a case and that they would support her, she gained the courage to tell them she would no longer babysit for free. Being associated with the MRCI was akin to membership of a trade union. In fact, it acted to fill the lack of interest shown by the trade union movement in representing migrants in low-paid occupations (Hyland 2015). Being ‘linked’ to the MRCI offered participants a sense of belonging and the feeling that someone would protect them if anything went wrong. This feeling helped build their confidence around the use of “voice” and “exit” capabilities.

Employers also recognized this process of collectivisation, knew workers were being organised, and knew their actions were being scrutinised. According to participants like Joyce, this has helped raise awareness and standards in vulnerable sectors, such as the A&FS and D&CS, which were traditionally outside of public scrutiny

Most employers are more considerate because they know that domestic work has a voice now [and] they know that if I[sic] employ domestic workers, I [sic] will have a certain responsibility and if I don't I [sic] will get caught.

(Joyce, 38, Filipina childcare worker)

The structure of the organisation meant that participants could come together as part of support groups, could campaign for changes in policies that were relevant to them, or simply receive information and support while encouraging others to participate. MRCI encouraged the politicisation and activism of migrants when other avenues were

restricted to them, filling a very important gap in migrants' public participation in society.

I am always outspoken. I am not afraid. You see what happened was when I got undocumented, I started reading to know my rights. That's why I joined MRCI and because usually I did that when I was in college, I called myself radical, we always tried to march into the street if we want to voice out something, so I am very outspoken. I always tried to improve my life. Then when I found out about MRCI, I tried to help other people who were in the same predicament as me in Ireland.

(Lola, 53, Filipino care worker)

On the negative side, being associated with MRCI could sometimes be a deterrent to employers, particularly in subsectors such as the 'ethnic' industry where employers are closely knit and where word of mouth is crucial to securing employment.

...because we came to Migrant Rights Centre, everybody's scared with Govinder. Not scared of him but they would think you, you are planning something against them... it's just we are doing our procedure; they think that if they don't do Govinder's permit, he goes against them to a solicitor.

(Rashmi, 34, dependant)

Income Poverty

The economic exclusion fostered by precarious employment intersects with wider aspects of social exclusion experienced by migrant communities in Ireland. Migrants' experiences of low pay and uncertainty were amplified by their roles as head of household. As previously discussed, their obligations were transnational in nature, and monthly remittances helped pay for day-to-day expenses in their countries of origin, such as housing, health and education costs for family members. Over three-quarters had nuclear family dependants (children and spouses) they were financially responsible for in Ireland or abroad. Thirty-one participants declared that their households were entirely reliant on one income. Recurrent issues discussed were the inability to save money, the efforts required to meet all obligations and the lack of recognition from family members abroad of sacrifices made.

For me in Ireland it is kind of hard also, so I rent a house here. I have bills, transportation and my food and I am paying bills also in the Philippines. I pay my house there; I pay my son's bills, electricity and their food too. So, kind of spending here and there...

(Dolores, 47, Filipino care worker)

Dolores found it hard to build a safety net which would permit her to weather unexpected changes in her life or pay for unbudgeted costs, like re-education. Working as much as possible was necessary in order to meet financial requirements both in the Philippines and here. Participants also faced restrictions when compared to Irish workers. For example, in-work social welfare payments were not available until they had secured residency and their remittances were not considered as household expenditures which meant they were unaccounted for. In certain cases, confusion and complexity resulted in workers not accessing their entitlements. This was the case for Caroline, from South Africa who was refused maternity benefit because of registration gaps in her immigration history. In her employment she was not entitled to any maternity payment and as such she had to return to work as early as possible.

Having a baby here, like what do you do if they don't want to help you with money or anything. How do you live, how do people live? Like I don't understand, do they just expect you to sleep on the street? That was tough, that was really really tough.

(Caroline, 37, South African hairdresser)

Caroline had been residing in Ireland for almost fourteen years when she gave birth to her daughter; during those years she worked and paid taxes, even when she was undocumented. Despite being regularised at the time of birth, in the eyes of the State she did not qualify for a basic payment for her wellbeing and that of her daughter, an Irish citizen. Being a precarious worker, her employer did not afford her any further support than the law obliged them to. In Caroline's case the conditionality imposed by the immigration status deprived her of one of the basic safety nets of the welfare regime, because at some point she had been irregularised by the system. Tyson's quote below describes the fear that migrants had in accessing welfare payments for fear that this could affect the renewal of their immigration status or jeopardise a future citizenship application. This fear was justified, as until policy changes in 2011, citizenship applications were being refused for welfare recipients and proof of employment was required in order to renew some residency categories (INIS 2011).

After redundancy, I searched for...I took my redundancy, then because we were being told 'if you, you claim social, that means you are not going to get your paper, Irish paper' and all this stuff. So people were being bamboozled with this kind of information, to say, 'OK, you shouldn't be claiming social'. But, you have been paying your taxes, that's the first thing.

(Tyson, 50, former South African restaurant worker)

Interestingly, migrants' reluctance to access their entitlements contrasted with the racist views of their dependence on welfare or unwillingness to work which populated public discourse (Corrigan 2010). Precisely because of the limited options available to avoid destitution, migrants were quick to accept the first available employment, regardless of conditions. The limited safety net available to them is one of the main reasons for entrapment because a change in trajectory is not only harder but costlier. Instead of alleviating the effects of precarity, the welfare regime further aggravates them. The income poverty experienced by migrant households, and particularly those led by migrant women alone, share many of the same vulnerabilities as those affecting lone parents in Ireland, as described in Chapter 3. This intersection of financial obligations, low income, precarity, and high costs of living means that migrant households grow isolated from the communities they live in. Even after years of living in Ireland, many households struggle to afford opportunities to socialise with the wider community. The pressure to meet the needs of family in Ireland and abroad with the income of low-paid employment acts as an invisible barrier where any other expenditure is seen as frivolous and wasteful. Lola, a Filipina care worker who became homeless when she lost her first job, acknowledges that as a coping mechanism and in order not to feel destitute again, she overworked herself:

I will be frank with you, from 2003 to 2008 I think; I did not buy anything for myself. I did not go to McDonalds. I only bought things I really need. I did not go out I just work... Monday to Sunday... I just work like there is no tomorrow. Just work.

Discrimination

In most cases, participants tended to shy away from naming experiences of racism as such. While many described experiences of mistreatment and discrimination, they often relativized the meaning behind such attacks. Class was often an element in discussing how and when these experiences took place, they often put it down to 'low class' people or people from 'bad neighbourhood'. 'Race' was nonetheless present across their

narratives; identification and categorisation according to racial groups were common, and many took pride in their identity as 'Asian'. Experiences of discrimination as a common feature in both work and their daily lives. In employment, some participants felt they were not treated with the same respect as others and that their views were not taken seriously by the management, which was described as "white European" or "exclusively Irish". They also felt that when they raised experiences of discrimination, they were frequently disregarded. Ahmed, a 41-year-old Moroccan carer, told how he once reported the physical abuse of patients to the management, but his report was ignored, and he was subsequently singled out and harassed by colleagues: *"It was really bad. You just feel you are not from here, 'just get out of here'. It was that type of bullying."*

Experiences of discrimination, racism and verbal and physical assault were more prevalent among racialised minorities. Manish, a Malaysian hotel worker, was told not to do room service in his place of work: *"We are very coloured and visible in our appearance... They said some rooms they don't want us to go, to not do room services and they want the white guys to go"*. Dolores, a Filipino care worker in a nursing home, told how the management one day gathered all Filipino workers and told them to stop eating rice as the cockroach infestation on the premises was due to *'them Asians eating their rice all the time'*. Sadly, most participants internalised and rationalised these experiences as being exceptional rather than structural or dismissed them as something without much importance. Deepak from India, currently working as a taxi driver, had his house vandalised and the windows of his house broken. He, nonetheless, refuses to see this as a manifestation of racism and believe the perpetrators were *"just some troublemakers"*. When asked if he had reported the incident, he said he wanted *"to avoid trouble"* and just *"had to move to a better neighbourhood."* Two participants, including Deepak, had moved to the taxi industry in order to gain autonomy in employment. They both mentioned recurrent incidents such as being spat at, having their windows broken, fares not being paid, and being verbally assaulted by white taxi drivers.

Issues related to discrimination and identity were perceived differently by dependants who moved to the country as children and grew up in Ireland. They were more conscious of how their migrant status and their racialised identities intersected to create experiences of exclusion through the education process. For example, Gianni, a young man who moved to Ireland from the Philippines over ten years ago when he was still a

teenager explained that despite being naturalised, he only has one friend that regards him as Irish. Experiences of fetishisation and ‘othering’ are everyday realities for migrants in Ireland, regardless of how long they have lived in the country and whether they have settled or been naturalised. Hector, a young man who moved to Ireland from South Africa as a child elaborates how he feels perceived by teachers and fellow students:

It's like, 'ok, so you're a person of colour, tell me about yourself' [laughs], you know. Or... it's sort of like the most, if not the only topic that recurs, over and over again, about immigrants or migration or... or stuff like that.

(Hector, 21, Irish and South African student)

While many will be tempted to classify such experiences as examples of ‘curiosity’, they act as powerful barriers that separate ‘ethnic Irish’ from first- and second-generation immigrants and generate multiple incidences of disadvantage (McGinnity et al. 2017). Participants felt that a racialised glass ceiling limited their opportunities to progress into management roles, as was the case for Ahmed. Many spoke of how they felt they were treated as stupid or less educated. Rita, an experienced financial controller in the Philippines, says that people often doubted her qualifications or even her ability to speak English because of her appearance:

We are often offended if we are being asked, where did you learn your English. You know that is very offending, so I must tell them, we were taught English from the day of our birth because English is our second language in the Philippines.

(Rita, 67, Filipina domestic worker)

This disregard for migrants’ educational and professional backgrounds is perpetuated by an immigration system that entraps people in low-paid and low-skilled jobs. It does not offer opportunities for previous experience to be recognised and limits progression in the labour market, while contributing to the construction of migrants as unskilled labourers (Wickramaesekara 2008). This creates the perception of migrants as temporary workers, without roots and anchorage in Irish society. Precariousness further compounds their isolation and limits their interaction with broader society, further reinforcing a sense of living liminal lives in the margins.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined how the participants' experience of migration to Ireland was embedded in processes of hyper-precarisation. The experiences of deceitful and irregular recruitment are testament to a system which disadvantages workers from the outset; those who fell prey to these practices moved on to irregularity and exploitation. Those who avoided them were still subject to employers' control through the imbalances in the migration regime (immobility, tying of immigration status), lack of information regarding their rights and entitlements, and financial dependence. The outcomes of these control mechanisms embedded in the system and in the employers' practices were exploitation, income poverty and discrimination. Yet, the narratives from participants have shown that, when possible, they exercised agency to minimise these experiences of precarity. Using Hirschman's (1970) framework of 'exit, voice and loyalty' I demonstrated how migrants have agency and respond to awareness raising and support from communities and NGOs to develop 'voice' and 'exit' capabilities and how such strategies act as powerful counter-actors to precarity. I have linked my findings to the literature on temporariness in migration and processes of irregularisation and liminality, features of hyper-precarity. In the next chapter I will focus on how precarity experienced in employment and the labour market spills into other aspects of life, such as housing and family decisions. These experiences, which I describe in the next chapter, demonstrate that labour migrants' experience is best categorised as hyper-precarity and hyper-dependence. I have also shown how this intrinsic connection between mobility, exploitation, and irregularity results in precarious employment, precarious migrant status, and precarious liminal lives.

Chapter 8 – Strategies to Manage Hyper-precarity in Work and Family Life

*“I am minding other children...
but my own child, I can't mind my own child...
and this is the hardest part of my life...”*

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss some of the coping strategies participants applied to respond to the spill-over of hyper-precarity into their personal lives. I start by analysing how housing arrangements relate to precarity and the notion of home. The nature of the wider Irish welfare regime, an insecure unaffordable private rental market and limited access to social housing means poor housing is often a consequence of hyper-precarity. Yet we also see how, by exercising agency and decision-making in their housing choices, participants were able to minimise precarity in certain aspects of their lives. I also outline income mechanisms used by participants to maximise their income. I then discuss how family arrangements are organised among participants, and the role family obligations play in their decision making in regard to employment and to everyday life. I analyse the migration process and related trajectories as a household venture and consider family-related decision making as being key to the different stages leading to mobility or immobility. I outline the different categories of family arrangements prior to migration and after settling in Ireland and describe the problems with the family reunification system, a process which is income-led rather than rights-based. Resulting from the inability or choice not to reunify, households explore multiple transnational care strategies which affect how they engage in the labour market in both host and home country contexts. Gendered negotiations related to caring roles and responsibilities are not only applicable to transnational families or those who have secured reunification but also to households formed in Ireland.

Housing and Home

The cost of housing in Ireland has soared over the past years and it is widely accepted that the country is experiencing a housing crisis (Healy and Goldrick-Kelly 2018). Rents are at an all-time high with the latest report (O'Toole et al. 2019) indicating that the average rent is now €300 higher than its previous peak in 2008, prior to the economic recession. It is estimated that 27% of households are now in the private rental market and, as discussed in Chapter 3, migrant households are over-represented (Duffy 2007; Long et al. 2019). Access to social housing in Ireland is governed by a set of criteria often associated with household income and family composition. For migrants, additional criteria include length of residence and type of residence status. They must meet these requirements in order to register with their local authorities. Access to housing assistance payments is also conditioned by the type of immigration status the applicant holds and, as with any other form of social protection assistance, is assessed negatively towards any test of self-sufficiency that may be applied. This can include renewal of status, family reunification applications or citizenship applications, the rationale of the authorities being that migrants accessing public funds represent a burden on the State (Duffy 2007; McVerry et al. 2017; Watson and Corrigan 2019).

Issues related to housing represented a common thread throughout participants' labour market trajectories. For many, the provision of housing by employers was part of the attraction of the recruitment process. For those working in the D&CS, so-called 'live-in arrangements' were common in the early days of the work permit system, meaning that their place of employment was also their home - with all the complications that such blurred lines bring about. Housing had not only an implication on where they could call 'home' but also an impact on how they engaged in the labour market. In order to have access to labour market opportunities, certain participants sacrificed quality of housing, and at times this also impacted on where they and their families could call 'home', sometimes living in overcrowded accommodation with strangers. In the case of other participants, in order to afford the cost of housing or to improve the quality of their arrangements they moved further away from centres where employment opportunities were located and suffered consequently because of limited choice. Most of those living outside of Dublin cited housing costs, and the lack of housing support, as the main obstacle to availing of opportunities in the capital which could represent career progression in their lives. And finally, for the purpose of quality of housing, income

saving and employment opportunities, some sacrificed the idea of 'home' and returned to 'live-in arrangements' even if they had moved out of such employments in the past.

Live-In Arrangements

Domestic work under live-in arrangements was a common practice in the early years of the work permit system. Sixteen participants in the D&CS were issued a work permit to work and live in the same house. Under such arrangements, employees are offered accommodation and full board. In exchange, employers can make salary deductions of €54.13 per week or €7.73 per day. Domestic work is not the only sector in which the employer provides accommodation. In Ireland, hotels, restaurants, and agricultural sites also use similar practices, albeit to a much lesser extent. For instance, of the A&FS participants, twelve were offered a housing arrangement with their first employment. These involved deductions of different values and not always in conformity with the law in relation to the amount or the standard of the accommodation.

As previously discussed, the provision of housing is a method used by employers to exert control over workers. This effectively adds an additional layer of vulnerability. Migrant workers are dependent on their employer not only for income but also for housing and, in the case of work permit holders, for the renewal of their immigration status. This spiral of dependency means that quitting an employer can render a migrant homeless, undocumented, destitute and with no access to safety. For a domestic worker with a live-in arrangement, their place of residence is also their place of work. Until 2011, no labour inspections could be carried out in private homes, and since then only in very exceptional circumstances. Workers therefore struggle to assert their employment rights in spaces hidden from public scrutiny. Many domestic workers talk about the lack of privacy they experience in live-in arrangements, and for many it required significant adaptability:

It's tough being like a domestic worker, it's kind of not easy especially for me it's the first time I experienced living with a strange family for kind of like you know, it's difficult, you are living with a family. They are good people; they are nice people but living in a place that you do not own it is different. You are limited with your mobility, limited using facilities like television, like phone everything. Even...even...even like getting your food you feel not so confident because you know yourself that you didn't buy that so it's very tough.

(Joyce, 38, Filipina childcare worker)

There are also additional difficulties in marking boundaries between work time and personal time. This is particularly important because many complained of extra hours of work for which they were not remunerated. This also applied to workers in the A&FS who were always just ‘a door away’, but it was particularly relevant for domestic workers, who for example were always asked to babysit without extra pay and sometimes with no previous notice. It is harder for a domestic worker to argue unavailability when they are in the room above. Food was also used to delineate authority. In restaurants, the intake of food was tightly controlled and at times workers were cautioned for taking food home, even when it was being deducted from their weekly pay. Many domestic workers did not feel welcome to eat food in the house or were told outright what they could or could not eat in the house. Participants felt left out for not being able to share the same food and meals as the families. In some cases, driven by hunger, they had to sneak food into their rooms as they were afraid to be seen eating by their employers. In one case, an employer installed a camera in the premises to control the movements of her employee while she was travelling. This illegal practice made the domestic worker feel constantly watched and without the freedom to decide her movements even after work. Being under the same roof also meant that employers could dictate when and with whom they could engage outside of working hours:

I did not have my freedom. If I was to talk to my friends, I had to hide myself because if she heard the conversation she would start to say, ‘oh you know many people. Don’t even tell them the way you are living here’... I was afraid because she always says to me, ‘you do not have to tell people that you do not have [pay] rise because in this country we have to keep quiet. So, she always tell me that... If you tell people, you are going to be deported...

(Anele, 39, Zimbabwean care worker)

However, not everyone regarded live-in arrangements as exploitative or negative, and for some live-in arrangements were a strategy to address the low-paid nature of the employment they were in. For low-paid workers earning on average €10 per hour, a room in a shared house represented between a third and a half of their income. They knew they could make savings by availing of food and accommodation and used this as a strategy to circumvent the rising costs of living in Ireland and maximise remittances. Over time, employment under live-in arrangements has become less common: the economic recession affected many households’ ability to pay for full-time care services, while workers moved to more autonomous employment arrangements, such as self-employment or agency work, once they had secured residency status.

Ultimately, it is the employer who determines whether an employment is live-in or live-out. For example, Delia, 55, a Filipina childcare worker, was asked to move out of the house when the children grew up and the family needed the room, but she was not offered an increase in salary to compensate for the cost of renting. Marcia, by contrast, asked to live out so that her husband could join her and help her look after their newborn baby:

I applied for my husband to come here two years ago. I mean, four years ago I have my little one, my youngest one. And he's here, so I told them that I have to live out, because my husband is coming. So, I said yeah, but then they asked me to sign an agreement, that they will give me only a year to live out. Then, in any circumstances, I have to go back after a year.

(Marcia, 42, Filipina childcare worker)

After a year, it had become unaffordable for Marcia's family and her husband returned to the Philippines with their two children. It is nonetheless telling of the level of control that Marcia's employer exerts over her. After twelve years of service they would not grant her the opportunity of living with her own children. Still, when asked if she could see herself leaving, she said no because she feels attached to the children she cares for. When asked whether she feels attached to the family she works with, she responded no, just the children, "even though they say, 'oh you are part of the family now.' But no, you don't feel that way, no."

House Sharing and Other Strategies

An alternative housing arrangement for families with children, for whom live-in was not an option, was to share a house with co-nationals. The cost of a two-bedroom apartment regularly exceeds the income of a household, so sharing with other members of their communities allowed people not only to save costs but also to circumvent other problems, such as the cost of childcare, and to avoid growing discrimination in the rental market. These arrangements are far from ideal for the development of children. While there is no legislation preventing families from sharing a bedroom or children from living with non-relatives, it has an impact on privacy:

Two families [live here]. One other lady, but still like she has so many problems, divorce, husband not giving it, [access to] the child he has. She even like, her husband leaves her back in India you know so, like, we want to live separate, but it is for the money you know. Rent is very high, I do not think separate is you know, possible, so, it is not good now.

(Deepak, 36, Indian taxi driver)

Families that lived alone were often pushed out of urban centres. Hossain, a Bangladeshi restaurant worker and the only income earner in a family of four, had to move from Dublin city centre to a faraway suburb due to rising rents. However, in order not to disrupt his daughter's schooling, which took place near their previous address, he or his wife travelled to the school in central Dublin every day, affecting in turn their availability for work. In Dublin, where most participants lived, the farther you move from the centre, the more limited services become and the longer the commuting time is for work, school, or childcare arrangements. Vladislav and Iryna, both from Ukraine, are expecting their second child and currently live in a one-bedroom apartment in central Dublin. Despite the limited space they have as a family, they still describe themselves as having "a good quality of life". They say: "it's two minutes to work, two minutes for her to school or to everywhere, to doctors". However, this may all change. Now that the family is growing, they must urgently find alternative accommodation, and to date their search has been unsuccessful.

He is looking for a new place maybe last seven months, eight months, nearly every day opening sites, but first of all it's expensive and second it's you know when you go there the queue, I don't know how many people. They prefer two working people renting than one. With his income we can manage, but the rent is too high you know. If it is increasing, it is going to be impossible to manage. It's just hard.

(Iryna, 41, Ukrainian former cleaner)

Very few cost-saving exercises were available to participants to limit the growing share of housing costs in their budgets, even though this represented one of their main expenditures. In a few cases, carers were able to retain their previous live-in accommodation in exchange for a few hours of cleaning, or similar arrangements were made with 'friends' or members of the community where they worked.

See right now I am staying with this elderly man also. I used to do moonlighting [a second job] with them when the wife was still alive... Before passing away, she told me to go and do something for the husband like look after him... I was living in Templeogue but then when that house was sold, he said come stay with me... it is kind of a symbiotic relationship. I get the benefits of having a free house, free accommodation and I am his company. So, I will be with him during the night and then the whole morning I might be anywhere, and I would be working, and he doesn't mind at all.

(Rita, 67, Filipina care worker)

These blurred arrangements, which were informal in nature, and often described as part of ‘friendships’, enabled them to save money and enjoy a quality of housing which they could not have otherwise availed of, in exchange for some light housework or limited caring duties.

Coping Strategies

Much has been written about how precarious workers reconcile work, income, and personal life. One strand of this broad literature addresses the mechanisms used by those living in the margins to get by (Bloch, Sigona and Zetter 2011; Alberti 2014), and examines the coping strategies used by migrants. This study focuses on how migrants use their agency at an individual and household level to navigate and overcome constraints associated with their position in the labour market as well as restrictions posed by their immigration status. We saw in the previous chapter how participants used a range of strategies to mobilise social capital, starting with how they organise their travel and continuing well after their arrival to Ireland. In this chapter it is evident participants use specific strategies to overcome challenges linked to precarity in employment, housing, access to social protection, and family life. The strategies and tactics described below, while not exhaustive, nonetheless help shed light on how migrants avoid falling completely into powerless situations of precarity and are able to work to improve their lives in hostile environments (Datta et al. 2007).

Working Multiple Jobs

Among the participants, ten described supplementing their current income from their main employment by working additional jobs. This practice was common in the sample throughout their employment history and was certainly more common among those in

the D&CS. Employers use one-off or regular services from migrants, such as child-minding, caring for the elderly, house cleaning, and office cleaning. These casual employment arrangements were usually on a cash-in-hand basis and benefited both employers who wanted to avoid entering into contractual arrangements and workers who could increase their income without paying taxes. For low-paid workers, both in restaurants and in the care industry, opportunities for pay increases and wage negotiations were very limited and, as such, the only way to supplement their pay was by finding additional sources of income.

The nature of work in the private home, compared to the restaurant and catering industry, meant that it was hard to secure paid overtime hours. This was particularly the case for live-in workers, so preference was given to casual employment during their personal free time. For workers in the A&FS, opportunities for secondary jobs were more limited due to their working schedules. This meant they often relied on overtime and additional shifts as a means of earning additional income. Until they secured residency, these work arrangements breached their residence conditions because the employment permit does not allow workers to have multiple jobs or to work in excess of a legally established number of hours per week. If caught, workers risked having their status revoked and facing deportation procedures. If discovered at a later stage in their immigration history, breaking the rules could affect citizenship applications. However, this rarely deterred participants, as is reflected in the response of Dolores, a 47-year-old Filipina care worker, when I asked her if she felt insecure doing additional jobs.

No because at that time it was only part-time, only one day. Yeah but I had the work permit, and it's a part-time thing but it's not in their names. I am kind of okay because there is no tax that would get into my account at the time because, I am only cash in hand at the time

Unlike when in situations of irregularity, where participants described the fear of being caught in irregular employment, they often felt some form of security if they held a valid work permit in the country and did not see themselves as targets of possible inspections. Most participants were aware that the law did not permit them to work multiple jobs, but they felt that the extra jobs they took were sufficiently inconspicuous to guarantee some level of discretion. There was a general perception among participants that working undeclared, as opposed to irregularly, did not present a high risk. The overall sense from participants was that the cost of living and the cost of

remittance justified taking these risks and circumventing the law, as opportunities to move to better-paid jobs were limited, leaving them with little choice. In addition, participants often felt that by working these casual jobs they could also expand their networks, resulting in increased social capital that could be useful when planning a future move, if they became unemployed, or simply to help other members of their community.

Because I do not want to have the free time... When I work six days, I make €400 and when I work seven days, I get some more money. After I pay for everything, I send the money to my daughter. Now I am looking for a cleaning job more, because I want to be busy all the time because I have a loan and I do not want any free time. Now I am taking [a] job a few hours a day, then finished, and come back for more work.

(Tran, 41, Vietnamese restaurant worker)

For Tran, taking up additional working hours was the only way he could make additional income to send home to his daughter. There was, nonetheless, a price to pay. Labourers tended to be over-worked, enjoyed very limited social interaction outside their places of employment and networks, and faced poor or stagnating employment conditions. But this was often put down as a choice rather than something they were constrained to do, often reinforcing racialised self-perception of certain migrant groups as ‘hard workers’:

Oh my God [laughs] Filipinos are not happy [having free time]you see people would be calling each other and they would say ‘so you have any part-time work’. They would say ‘why?’, and they would say ‘because I am only working 80 hours this week’, 80 hours. We are happy if we work 100- 150 hours a week.

(Lola, 53-year-old Filipina care worker)

Upskilling and Reskilling

It is not possible to discuss upskilling and reskilling without first acknowledging that participants were often recruited to work in jobs far below their qualifications and past employment experiences. Aside from the restrictions put in place by the employment permit system in moving jobs and sectors, participants also had to deal with the lack of procedures in place for the recognition of qualifications and the validation of previous employment experience. In 2012, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) was established and made responsible for benchmarking foreign qualifications. In recent

years, QQI has introduced the National Recognition of International Qualifications (NARIC) – a database that produces comparability statements between foreign qualifications and their equivalents in the Irish higher education system. It is solely a reference tool and does not provide official recognition, nor does it oblige employers or education providers to take account of their advice. Regulated professions, such as nursing or accountancy, have their own regulatory bodies that assess the validity of foreign credentials and, if necessary, outline pathways to full recognition. While over 60% of participants had a third-level qualification before migrating to Ireland, to date none of the participants in the study has attempted to secure recognition of their previous qualification or managed to work in the sector for which they had a qualification; instead preference was given to acquiring skills in Ireland.

As mentioned briefly in Chapter 6, for those who were able to upskill or reskill there was a small beneficial effect on their position in the labour market. Such processes often enabled them to secure more stable and better-paid employment or get more flexibility as required in their lives. Unfortunately, for many, the structural barriers were too high, and they found the lack of targeted measures makes it difficult for them to progress in the labour market.

I tried [to change jobs], you know. It is very hard when you are in employment and you cannot get social welfare while you are preparing for another. You have to be fired or resign. If you resign, you suffer financially. You will not be paid for about six weeks before you go to the dole.

(Ahmed, 41, Moroccan care worker)

Working outside of their previous field was not always interpreted negatively. For many, their decision was part of a broader strategy linked to maximising income and improving family conditions. Nonetheless, there were cases where the transition to a career in a low-paid industry was resented. Rita is a prime example. She transitioned from being a financial controller in the Philippines to working as a carer:

I regret it, I regret it. You know when I went home in 2016 I was able to see my colleagues and they are all well off...They are all well off and when I was still there, they were just my staff and I told them what I have been doing here in Ireland and they couldn't believe it. It's a different fate... I was thinking about that, but yes, I do regret it, I almost cry.

(Rita, 67, Filipina care worker)

The opportunity to receive tuition fee support from employers was exceptional in the study. Most participants who wished to pursue any form of study had to pay for

themselves without State or employer support. In the care industry, many took advantage of the introduction of industry standards and regulations in the mid-2000s to enrol in FETAC Level 5 courses covering early childcare or elderly care which later became standard in the sector. The cost of these courses averaged €1,500 and, in some cases, workers were able to get assistance from employers, support organisations, or through welfare support. These courses took place in the evenings and weekends, and required the completion of several placement hours, often unpaid. For those working in the A&FS, existing upskilling options were very limited. The sector offers very little opportunity for those in employment to undergo further training, and the changing shifts of work make it very hard for restaurant workers to find courses compatible with their schedule. Workers in the sector face similar problems regarding reskilling. Given the low-paid nature of their jobs, their reliance on overtime and side jobs, and the over-representation of one-income households, participants found it very difficult to save enough to cover the costs associated with studying, or were unable to take the time off required to complete such courses:

That is the first thing. Because you work in a different field, you are studying [in a] different field, which is not supportive, it is very, a very different area. In the job that you are doing as chef, we say high-pressure job, high-pressure job. You come home, and then you have to unwind from that kind of... unwind from that pressure to go into your own zone. We know there are a lot of people now... what we have discovered is that they are stuck in that kind of industry just for survival. Because their wages are not moving anywhere. So, if I am to break the circle, it means that I have to be upskilled and do something else and focus on that. But it's hard.

(Tyson, 50, South African restaurant worker)

The Education and Training Boards are funded by the Department of Education and Skills to fund English language courses, which can be free, or offered at reduced rates. While a number of participants engaged in such courses, the overall feedback was that they are not tailored for labour market participation: participants noted that courses do not separate long-term migrants from new arrivals, location and hours often clash with employment commitments or childcare obligations, and the quality of courses varies.

Family Life

Categorising family arrangements and how they evolve over time is necessary to understand the strategies used by participants and their households to balance their needs in respect of work and family and how these impact on decision making in their trajectories. The following categorisation enables me to isolate how the participants in my study relate to family and wider household decision units.

- **Migration as a family unit:** Like most Temporary Migration Regimes, the work permit did not initially confer rights to family reunification. As such, families and households seeking to migrate at the same time had to find individual paths to reach Ireland. Three couples were recruited for the same employment (in the A&FS). They migrated together but registered individually and remained independent of each other for immigration status.
- **Migration to join a family unit:** Unlike the work permit, in a clear example of the dual system that Ireland sought to implement, working visa/work authorisation holders could migrate with their dependants or bring them to Ireland at any time. Three participants had joined their respective spouses who were all work visa holders in Information and Communication Technology and nursing.
- **Migrants with dependants in home country:** While eighteen participants had nuclear family dependants before moving to Ireland, the restriction on family reunification meant that they migrated alone. The one exception was Evelyn who could emigrate from South Africa with her 5-year-old daughter because South Africans do not require a visa to enter Ireland and children under the age of 16 are not required to register with immigration authorities. While this anomaly benefited people from the limited number of countries whose nationals can visit Ireland visa-free, the children remained uncounted until they turned sixteen and were suddenly required to obtain their own permission to reside.
- **Migrants without dependants:** Thirteen participants had no nuclear family dependants at the time of migrating, yet as Aguilar Jr (2013) finds, family and kinship are understood differently across countries and many had emotional and

financial obligations towards extended family members, which played a role in their decision-making processes and future choices.

Securing Family Reunification

The state categorises and decides upon people's right to family life based on a combination of citizenship, immigration status, length of residence and income. As such the family reunification process contributes to the processes of racialisation and precarisation of migrant communities in Ireland by creating different mechanisms and threshold of earnings required for European nationals, Irish citizens and non-EU migrants to be together with their loved ones (Joyce 2012). The time required to meet such income requirements may delay the process of bringing families together, and in certain cases this may no longer be possible if children become adults before they secure family reunification. Such is the story of Tyson, who after multiple attempts was unsuccessful in bringing his son from his first marriage to live with him and his second wife:

For five years I tried, and all this stuff. It was just complicated, because one department does something. You go to another department; they do something else. Then, every time you are just like thrown around, and you end up somewhere. We had plans to say, look OK, because my son was supposed to be here, I had a son back home. I said, he has to come here for college, so he can go up and – I couldn't even manage to say, look I can't even bring him over to do this course, and so... It's just something that it just frustrates you – you might have good plans, but then they fell apart just because, things are not coherent

(Tyson, 50, South African restaurant worker)

In the past, families were able to circumvent barriers to be together by employing other migration paths - for example, adult dependants would secure their own employment permits. It is the case for Mercy, a 69-year-old retired care worker who moved to Ireland in 2000. She told me she left her job as a teacher in the Philippines to instigate and facilitate her adult children's move to Ireland as she felt their income was not enough to raise her grandchildren properly. Through the help of an 'agent' she was able to secure employment for three of her children and their spouses in a range of hotel, catering and caring roles. Mercy still has three children in the Philippines; she tried to secure permits for them in childminding, but as a result of the 2003 policy change, they were refused. Despite being a true catalyst for the improvement of her family's

wellbeing, she is still upset that her family is divided between two continents and that she sees no route to being together permanently.

Nine participants applied for their spouses to join them through the family reunification route. For many, this process required cooperation from employers to provide the required documentation.

They refuse me because my salary was not enough for supporting my wife, something like this, for house accommodations, something like this...so then my ex-boss makes a nice letter and told me that he will increase my salary so that will be helpful.

(Abdel, 38, Bangladeshi restaurant worker)

Abdel's salary increase was on paper only; he never received a salary increase, but his employer's letter secured him family reunification. In other cases, applicants used false payslips or had tax documents outlining a higher hourly rate in order to meet the required threshold. These 'favours' were not altruistic; they placed workers in a position of subservience towards their employers, further deepening hyper-dependent employment relationships (Zou 2015). For hyper-precarious workers seeking to apply for family reunification, being on good terms with their employers is essential, as a dip in their weekly hours will result in their application being refused. Those working in businesses with poor tax recordkeeping or who insisted on paying 'cash-in-hand' were also disadvantaged. For care workers in private homes, support from employers was required in order to testify of their residence in the country and to guarantee that their employment would continue if reunification was granted. The choice of reunification was a delicate one for care workers in the private home, as it implicitly meant moving out of the house and changing work arrangements. Many employers were not supportive of such changes and might refuse to continue the employment, jeopardising the applicant's chances. This may help explain why the rates of family reunification are lower among D&CS workers - only three availed of it, and when they did it was much later in their careers.

Many dependants joined family members as visitors and later changed their status. Such practices were more common among nationals of countries that do not require a visa to enter Ireland. The stringent conditions required to reunify successfully with family members limited the choices that migrants could make. For example, choosing to leave an exploitative employer could result in unemployment or even irregular status, which would result in an application being refused. Similarly, in order to meet the required

financial thresholds, participants often worked additional hours, limiting the possibility of career change, upskilling or reskilling. Such additional hours also affected their ability to socialise.

Life as Dependants

The development of Family Reunification Policy and the rights of dependants, as well as issues related to access to the labour market for dependants and how this is conditioned by the nationality of the sponsor, are dealt with at length in Chapter 2. Currently, the application of financial thresholds to determine rights to family reunification may result in families opting to reunify in steps, meaning that the spouse may join first and children later, for example. Such strategy is based on the availability of care at home (like grandparents) and on the assumption that the spouse will be able to source employment on arrival so the household income can meet the threshold required for bringing the children over. This is a risky strategy, however, as children may ‘age-out’ (turn 18 and lose eligibility for family reunification) while the parents are applying for reunification. Another strategy to circumvent the income thresholds is to wait until the applicant secures Irish citizenship, as the income level is lower in that case.

The right to work was not established for dependants of work permit holders until after 2005. Over the years this policy has changed multiple times with the creation of a specific spousal/dependant work permit with different degrees of concessions in relation to fees, hours of employment required, labour market tests needed and minimum remuneration. Even though the spousal permit still represented an obstacle for the employment of dependants, mainly women, its removal in 2014 represented a policy setback. The fact that now dependants cannot work unless they secure their own work permit under the same conditions as any other applicant acts as a means to discourage family reunification of migrants deemed undesirable; solidifies the racialisation of the Irish immigration process and the Irish labour market; and, ultimately, conditions this category of workers to live in one-income households. Rashmi moved to Ireland as an international student and had worked in multiple jobs all throughout her residence in Ireland. Since marrying Govinder, an Indian restaurant worker, her status has changed to that of dependant and she no longer has the right to work. This means she is now reliant on Govinder for income but also that he must wait until he secures Irish citizenship to change her status and be able to return to employment.

Because I am still on Stamp 3, nobody can employ me. But over all these years, I met so many people that even will employ me cash in hand. Because you are Stamp 3, then you need to tell please, and do a permit. Everybody says yes, but then...no. It is just the one thing. I am tired of this process.

(Rashmi, 34, Mauritian student)

Due to the restrictiveness of the dependent status, many find it difficult to engage meaningfully with the outside world. They are not allowed to access education or follow any course which will prepare them to join the labour market once their status changes. Ahmed, 41, a healthcare worker from Morocco, explains how his relationship deteriorated following their reunification due to his spouse not being able to work or study and feeling she 'had to stay home'

It was a problem for a while, like her being dependent, like we didn't have the baby straight away. She wanted to go to school and it was very expensive and because of her stamp and all and that was really hard on all and ultimately for me because it caused some trouble in our life.

(Ahmed, 41, Moroccan healthcare worker)

Most dependants I interviewed were educated to a third-level degree and had been employed in professional positions before moving to Ireland. For these women, moving to Ireland represented a transition into labour market inactivity and redefining their lives around family roles. While only two dependent spouses moved to Ireland with children, in five cases families grew shortly after being reunited. The delaying effects that migration has on family planning and formation can explain the timing of such decisions (Clark, Glick and Bures 2009) but the barriers to employability must also be considered as an enticing factor. The main barriers faced by migrant dependants wishing to participate in the labour market were lack of English skills and the high cost of childcare.

As previously discussed in Chapter 4, until the government introduced the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme in September 2016, there was no state support for pre-primary education, and the cost of day-care facilities averaged €1,000 per child at the time of interviews. These high costs represent a large portion of a low-paid worker's monthly wage. This frequently encouraged one parent, often the woman, to stay at home. This was also reflected in the households that I interviewed. With the introduction of the ECCE scheme parents were entitled to three hours of daily care for free, provided the child was between three and a half years and five and half years old. While the uptake of the scheme was high among participants, it had little to no impact

on the employability of dependants, as the number of hours and the schedule of day-care facilities were judged by interviewees to be too restrictive to enable them to access work or training in any meaningful way. An additional 30 minutes of day care would cost 450 euros per month, hard to justify in a low-income budget. The schedule of care arrangements also influenced access to other services, such as English classes. Many hoped that when children were in full-time primary education, they would be able to join the labour market or enter formal education, but they were also aware that by then they would have been out of employment for six or more years.

Childbirth also affected households where the women had been working for many years. Different households tried different arrangements to continue working. Vladislav and Iryna, Ukrainian maintenance and cleaning workers, were full-time employees for many years and despite being in low-paid employment described their lives as comfortable. But after they had their first child, Iryna had to stay at home and they both agree their living conditions deteriorated. Now they are expecting their second child and they are concerned about how to manage the increased housing and living costs associated.

After three years of age, he is getting, I'm not sure, part-time preschool. And then [for her to return to work] we have to get somebody who can manage baby. Trying to organise all these stamps or visas for my mum or her mum so they can support [the visa application]. So, you have, you see, it's one link with other. Because at the moment we are in one-bedroom apartment. To get our mum with us, we have to move to get something bigger, to get something bigger we have to get more income. Cos it is a difficulty to make sure we manage to pay for everything.

(Vladislav, 43, Ukrainian former restaurant worker)

The different examples in this section show how Ireland's family reunification policy and childcare regime disadvantage labour migrants and may act as catalysts for further precarity. Data from interviews show that the intersection of high childcare costs, labour market inactivity and rising housing costs act as entrapment for dependants and further isolates them from society and the labour market. Delaying a decision to form a family is equally difficult and alienating, particularly in communities where childrearing holds great importance. Govinder and Rashmi, who met in Ireland, cited difficulties associated with their precarious migrant status and the continuous uncertainty around the regularisation and upkeep of their status as key obstacles in their family life. Rashmi felt that despite being in a long-term relationship this uncertainty prevented them from

having children. In turn, they felt isolated from their communities, for whom childrearing was the cornerstone of a marriage, Rashmi felt that the meaningfulness of their relationship was constantly questioned. She also felt she had to hide details of their relationship from her family so as not to alert them to Govinder's irregular status.

I will be very honest. This is the main topic: why we do not have children. We are the only person for eight years in Dublin who doesn't have children in Govinder's circle. And we are the only odd one [both laugh]. So, we are like, and I'm really, I'm very bad, because it's like, they would think I give priority to everything, except children. But then, it's, that's why it's a huge impact on having a family. Huge, huge. If we don't have children, it's just because all these problems, because I don't feel secure.

(Rashmi, 34, Mauritian student)

These restrictions on dependant employment also have the effect of creating income poverty and welfare dependency, when access to welfare is possible. Several participants for example received the in-work benefit Family Income Supplement, now called Working Family Payment (WFP). This is a tax-free payment available to workers with children in Ireland whose household earnings fall under the determined threshold, which is dependent on the number of children living with them. For reference, the income threshold for a household with one child is €511, for two children it is €612, and for three children it is €713. The reliance of some participants on such payments is an indicator of the effect of low pay on the wellbeing of migrant families across Ireland (Millar et al. 2018; Rooney and Gray 2019).

Accessing welfare was not always a straightforward process or decision. In the case of Abdel, a 38-year-old Bangladeshi restaurant worker, his family stopped receiving the WFP as a result of an increase of €0.50 in his hourly wage. Therefore, they were also no longer entitled to a medical card, and his wife was no longer entitled to certain courses provided by the welfare office which were limited to medical card holders. Similarly, Mina, a 46-year-old South African former restaurant worker and lone parent, described her difficulties trying to access welfare support for two years:

But it was also long...because they investigate that, it can take almost a year, two years while they investigate before they approve that you are actually a lone parent, and you're not having you know relationships and stuff like that. So that was, there was a time that I couldn't really cope so much, so the St Vincent's used to help me, if I couldn't cope they would come out to the house, and say ok, they would give me hampers and stuff like that... and they would sometimes give me vouchers, to go to Dunnes or Tesco's...

Individuals and couples residing in Ireland without children do not qualify for such payments, and there are no alternative in-work payments for them. This presented a disadvantage to families who did not reunify but were nonetheless reliant on remittances from family members working in Ireland. Much like the employment permit system, the family reunification process is responsible for pushing households into precarity and creating income poverty, and it must be deconstructed and analysed as a process of hierarchisation and racialisation in Irish society and its labour market.

Transnational Caring

As described in theories about the global care chain (Kofman and Raghuram 2012; Yeates 2012), for many women to work abroad, other family members (generally women) must step in to provide care for the children and other family members left behind, often in exchange of a share of the remittances sent back home. Of the participants, thirteen had immediate nuclear family members, including children, back in their country of origin. These children were under the care of grandparents, brothers and sisters, and to a lesser extent the father. Living apart from their children was a great sacrifice and that was often described as necessary in order to be able to provide them with the means to live a successful life. The cost of education, particularly third level fees, was often given as one of the reasons they were working in Ireland. Being able to facilitate third level education, which was perceived as key to upward mobility, was a source of pride. Participants with family members abroad often told of the prosperity their work brought to their families and how their remittances gave them the ability to facilitate important decisions in the lives of family members. It also allowed them to remain connected to the household. The narratives were punctuated by a mixture of regret, guilt, pride and sacrifice.

You feel really...guilty. It is kind of sometimes in your mind, it is like, what's the point of you working here, you are earning; but then, your children are growing up. And you didn't even, it's like, you support them financially, but in their mind, it's like you're not there, you can't see when they are growing, something like this. You feel guilty. You cannot remove that feeling, so it is always going to be there.

(Rita, 67, Filipina care worker)

Rita's quote exemplifies the struggle associated with transnational caring. Many of the issues raised by participants included how to continue to feel like parents from a

distance and the guilt associated with not being with their children. As mentioned in multiple chapters, the wellbeing of children and other family members was a central factor in the organisation of migration, indicating that migration was a strategy to improve the wellbeing of the household. Migration was perceived as an opportunity for financial improvement which was carefully planned around both the needs and the ages of children, and the financial conditions of the household. Rita, quoted below, explains that if she waited until a later stage in her life to accept an opportunity to migrate it is because she wanted to be immediately present in the lives of her children during their teenage years.

My principle is that I work for my children so if whatever happened to them, I don't think it would be worth while working abroad, you know. If ever something happened, you know negative happened to them.

(Rita, 67, Filipina care worker)

Paying for college, providing for basic needs, building a house and buying nice gifts were all means participants used in order to feel like providers and to exercise power in these transnational spaces. The distance has been bridged somewhat with the advent of technology, and participants highlighted that they went from writing letters to spending all their pocket money buying calling cards to being able to talk to home often and free of charge thanks to the internet. However, participants acknowledged that technology cannot replace human contact. No matter what they do, they miss key milestones in their family lives. Baumeister et al. (1994) identified three broad functions of guilt as relationship-enhancing; a tool for exerting influence over others; and a mechanism for alleviating inequities in relationships. In her work, Baldassar (2015) adapts this framework to discuss how feelings of guilt act as a catalyst for return among Italian migrants. In my study I have also found a sense of guilt among those with children abroad. Marcia, 42, a Filipina childcare worker, explained how hard it was for her to care for other people's children while separated from her own.

Yes, you feel really...guilty. It's kind of- sometimes, in your mind, it's like, what's the point of- you're working here, you're earning; but then, your children are growing up. And you didn't even- it's like you support them financially, but in their mind, it's like, you're not there, you can't see when they are growing, something like this. You feel guilty. You can't remove that feeling, so it's always going to be there.

Nonetheless, participants approached and rationalised this in different ways, as can be seen by the response of Nelly to the question about regret and leaving her children behind.

No. Not at all. Because I am happy. I was able to bring my younger three children to college. At the same time, if I was just teaching [in the Philippines], maybe one at a time!

(Nelly, 58, Filipina care worker)

Contributing to the costs mentioned above required sacrifices to be made; one participant spoke of how she has not returned home for more than three years to be able to afford tuition fees for one of her children. Such sacrifices went beyond physical and emotional separation, but also entailed working hard, often under poor conditions, to afford remittances. For example, even while Anele, a Zimbabwean domestic worker, was being exploited to the point of receiving just €200 per month, she still made a point to send €180 or €190 to her family in Zimbabwe because she knew they were reliant solely on her income. And in order not to alarm them, she did not reveal her employment conditions. Participants rarely spoke about the difficulties they experienced in work or outside of work, and there was a general feeling that the sacrifices they made were unacknowledged by family members.

They did not think about that [difficulties], they think there is some good money here in Europe, and because we are here and we keep on sending stuff to the Philippines like nice bags, nice shoes so they think our life is easy, you know.

(Nelly, 58, Filipina care worker)

The story of transnational care in the sample is overall a story of resilience. The improvement in the life of family members, the college education of children and their social mobility was achieved against a backdrop of precarity and sacrifice. Exploitation, irregularity and long hours of hard physical work were the price to pay in order to keep the household going. Pride and the duty of care were always present in their narratives, and sadness, melancholy and guilt to a lesser extent. Rita's quote reminds us that even though much is written about transnational care, not enough attention is given to how feelings of guilt and loss impact on migrants' sense of belonging and settlement.

It is the most difficult thing. That is why I was not happy at all, you know. And when I look back, my daughter will be 30 years old this month and I was thinking how much time in her transition period, from being a girl to a young lady to an adult. You know I missed those... You know maybe when we finish

talking on Skype, they will do their own thing so I can never be a part of them, I would be 1/3 of their lives.

(Rita, 67, Filipina care worker)

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that even in the constrained space shaped by hyper-precarity, migrants use their agency and decision making to improve their conditions. Nowhere is this more evident than in their housing choices. Migrants, just like other sections of society, are vulnerable to precarious housing in the private rental market and often lack access to the safety net of the welfare regime. Yet, they use ingenious strategies to adapt to this housing reality. This chapter has also discussed the impact that family-related considerations have on the choices made by migrant households; from the decision to leave the family, to the ability and choice to reunify or not. These decisions are constrained by many factors, including the legal and policy framework, but also by their experiences in the labour market. Experience of precarity affect the process of family reunification and family formation, as evidenced by the links between income thresholds and criteria for successful applications. Similarly, experiences of precarity and exclusion shape how individuals and households perceive, perform, and act out their caring roles.

These legal and socio-economic barriers constitute the backdrop to the choices made by household members. They also influence how they engage transnationally with those who remain in the country of origin and between immediate and enlarged families. The ability of family members to adapt to life as dependants in Ireland is another key strand of the coping strategies used by immigrant households. These tactics and strategies are tightly linked to household compositions and the financial obligations of the family. They represent a means to minimise experiences of exclusion and to establish belongingness and resilience. Finally, it is important to consider that the experiences of precarity and exclusion that this study has shown may result in households delaying or foregoing family decisions, such as the choice to have children or not. In the next chapter, I discuss the implications and contributions of this study to the academic literature and I advance policy recommendations based on the findings.

Chapter 9 - Conclusion

Introduction

This conclusion has three primary objectives:

1. To consider in full the findings of this research
2. To identify specific policy measures to contribute to policymaking and activism on immigration in Ireland
3. To outline how the thesis contributes to academic literature

Overall Findings

More than two decades have passed since 1996 when Ireland first became a net recipient of immigration. There followed significant economic and political changes, including EU expansion in 2004, and movement from boom to bust to recovery. From 2015 onwards Ireland is again experiencing positive net migration. However, we know little about the work and life experiences of those migrants who made Ireland home in the period prior to 2004. This research aimed to fill key knowledge gaps relating to how migrants have experienced labour market progression in Ireland. A core argument in this thesis is that Ireland can be categorised as a Temporary Migration Regime (TMR). While changes have been made to improve the original work permit system used by participants in this study, there are still relevant lessons for contemporary policy. We can clearly see how the earlier and subsequent TMRs interact with care, welfare, labour market and housing regimes to entrap migrants in hyper-precarious work and how this precarity bleeds into family life and limits their capacity for belongingness.

The core puzzle of this thesis was the relationship between Ireland's two-tier labour migration regime and migrants' employment and life experience in Ireland. The research sought to fill a clear gap in the literature, which lacked any qualitative assessment of the causes and consequences of migrants' experience of low-paid employment in Ireland. In asking whether and how the temporary employer-based work permit system – and related family reunification policy – created a particular

employment and life experience, it was also necessary to contextualise how the labour migration regime intersects with Ireland's wider welfare regime. Attention therefore focused on Ireland's relatively weak employment protection system and its poor enforcement, limited access to social security and labour market supports, and a record of under-investment in public services, particularly housing and childcare. In particular, the research sought to assess whether and how labour migrants experience precarity traps in Ireland and the degree to which Irish government policy has been responsible for and responsive to their experience of precarity. It also seeks to discern the impacts of precarity on migrants' agency and decision-making, as well as on family life and belongingness.

Qualitative data from over 49 semi-structured interviews of labour migrants and family members, including men and women from 15 countries, was used to build a picture of migrants who first entered Ireland on work permits in the period 1999 to 2004. Participants who first worked in the Accommodation and Food sector or the Domestic and Care sector were selected through an analysis of the case files of the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland - a leading NGO working with immigrants in the country. Various theoretical and conceptual frameworks offered potential ways to open an analysis of low-paid migrants' experiences of Ireland's work permit system, including many that relate to and enable deeper interrogation of Ireland as a TMR. As well as the overall concept of hyper-precarity (Lewis et al. 2014, 2015), other concepts including temporariness and liminality, agency, voluntariness, social capital and social networks, intersectionality, racism, gender, mobility and labour market trajectories, as well as family strategies, were used to analyse the rich data set generated through the qualitative research.

Through adopting and expanding Liversage's migrant labour market trajectory, we find considerable entrapment but also different experiences of mobility for some migrants who entered Ireland between 1999 and 2004 on a temporary employer-tied work permit. In Chapter 6 I adapted and expanded use of Liversage's (2009) typology to enable a more comprehensive interpretation of the different trajectories of this study's research participants. In particular, deepening the typology to incorporate participants' self-perception of success and the meaning of work means we can better assess degrees of occupational attainment in their new lives (Roberman 2013). Effectively, this means analysing what determines participants' perception of progress and in so doing, the thesis contributes to the theorisation of labour market typologies. When we attempt to

understand how decision-making takes place, and what constitutes improvement according to migrants' self-perception, a different, more ambiguous and complicated story emerges, through which we can better discern the implication of Ireland's regimes. We find definitive evidence of entrapment in precarity but also of agency. Both interpretations are not exclusive but rather complementary. A story of success often means a lot more than simple expectations of salary attainment. Success can mean gaining labour market autonomy, being free from exploitative conditions, or removing the fear of irregularity. The pursuit of these seemingly modest ambitions tells us a lot about the courage and efforts of labour migrants. Overall, however, we find that the rigidity of the work permit system was a key factor in creating vulnerability in participants' lives. They described their feelings of being "constrained" or "conditioned" by their work permits. This manifested in a number of different ways: the inability to leave an employer for fear of losing their right to stay, the feeling of having to put up with exploitation or bad treatment because they were tied to the work, or the inability to take up different professional opportunities, more commensurate with their skills and qualifications, which offered better conditions of employment. In the lead-up to EU enlargement in 2004 and the change in labour migration policy, participants found it increasingly difficult to find employers willing to support their applications. Lack of clarity and transparency in the process, long delays and the increasing rate of refusals discouraged employers from engaging with the system (MRCI 2015a).

In Chapter 7 the concept of hyper-precariety (Lewis et al. 2014, 2015) and hyper-precious dependence (Zou 2015) is used to interrogate the labour market trajectories and experiences of participants. We find overall that the TMR combined with Ireland's underdeveloped welfare regime to cause an experience of hyper-precariety for low-paid migrant workers in Ireland. Participants regularly referred to entrapment in their professional lives, but this sense of entrapment, which started in work, often moved beyond and developed into stagnation or a sense of being generally 'stuck' in their lives. An analysis of different barriers and forms of entrapment isolates two key factors contributing to marginalisation: experiences of exploitation and experiences of irregularity. The longer a person is subjected to either of these experiences, the longer it will take for them to reverse their downward trajectory. A key factor in building resilience against exploitation and irregularity is securing labour market mobility, but lack of mobility in the employment permit system delays this process and thence the acquisition of citizenship or long-term residency. Acquiring a more secure status is not in itself a guarantee of avoiding exploitation or exiting labour market stagnation, as the

experiences of many participants have demonstrated. Access to re-training or re-education facilitates progression by allowing immigrants to circumvent, to some extent, the barriers associated with skills validation and recognition of foreign professional experience. However, these opportunities are limited and depend on the ability of households to bear the associated costs. Overall, the findings reveal that migrants under the work permit system experience considerable entrapment, precarious employment, and in some cases hyper-precarity, both during and after their time in the system. The findings also show the complex decision-making processes migrants must undergo and the considerable agency they need to demonstrate in order to overcome the structural conditions that entrap them in such precarity.

The chosen methodology offers a long-time span of participants' experiences and narratives of migration to Ireland; this helps us to situate their trajectories in broader processes and life-cycle stages. Work schedule, age and family circumstances shape the ability of migrants to make key decisions. Throughout, both race and gender lenses illuminated experiences which added to entrapment and, in some instances, promoted forms of agency. Many among those workers are migrant women with qualifications for different skilled sectors; they had not previously envisaged work in the care industry but were driven towards it as a result of various factors. These include the restrictive intersection of the migration regime (such as the dependent work permit system and the family reunification process), the cultural and gendered expectations of providing affective labour, and the racialised and gendered nature of the Irish labour market which pushes women of colour to the margins where they are disregarded and perceived as unobtrusive. Equally, however, from a gender perspective, some female participants describe their migration to Ireland as a way of subverting gender roles. Within this study, all but four of were racialised persons of colour. While the process of racialisation is not limited to perceptions of 'race', it is undeniable that it plays a considerable role in how it intersects with nationality, migrant status and other forms of stereotyping to create expectations regarding labour market positioning, and was a clear presence in instances of discrimination and exploitation. Gender and race also intersected, particularly for many institutional care workers.

Crucially, however, this is not only a story of discrimination and exploitation inherent in labour hyper-precarity. In Chapter 8, concepts related to integration and theories of transnational family strategies enabled an analysis of how hyper-precarity in employment bleeds over into immediate and wider family life. Recognising the

importance of transnational family care strategies, the research identifies strategies households use to improve their labour market position and the extent to which precarity in employment bleeds into precarity in their daily lives, including their ability to make household decisions. The study also finds agency, and creative, proactive use of networks to acquire location-specific knowledge and skills to enable migrants in TMR to maximise their decision-making opportunities within the constrained choices informed by the migration regime (mobility) and employment regime (labour market segmentation, racialisation and prevalence of precarious condition across sectors). We also find factors, particularly social relations, family ties and transnational obligations, which allow certain participants and disable others to exercise agency. Decision making in relation to employment and career trajectories often takes into consideration factors which are outside of the labour market and which may be transnational in nature. This deepens our understanding that labour market trajectories do not rely only on human capital and do not exist in isolation to other life considerations such as security, stability, values, family formation or household wellbeing. This approach is particularly useful to understand how migration works as a family strategy and how these strategies are transnational in nature.

This thesis is effectively an argument against temporary work regimes. This data, and the methodology chosen – an analysis of the 20-year trajectory of migrants who entered low skilled employment on employer-tied temporary work permits – shows that such migration is not temporary. These migrants’ stories are testament to the degree to which, despite entering Ireland on a temporary basis and experiencing multiple forms of entrapment, exploitation and discrimination, migrant workers stay. Labour migration policy must reflect this reality. Ireland, presently experiencing full employment with labour and skill shortages, remains likely to be a positive net recipient of migration. The findings of this thesis are timely and the learning feeds into the thesis conclusions in the form of recommendations for policy changes to prevent intergenerational transmission of disadvantage in migrant households, an all-too-common feature in European neighbours.

This thesis was undertaken as part of an Irish Research Council employment-based PhD scholarship. The sponsoring employer, the Migrants Rights Centre Ireland, is particularly interested in how the thesis findings can inform contemporary policy. In the following section I develop policy recommendations that emerge from my findings and use the learnings identified by participants to make specific recommendations in five

broad areas: mobility, irregularity, labour market access for migrant dependants, labour market integration and the reform of labour migration policy. These recommendations aim to improve the experiences of newcomers to Ireland, as well as those already residing in the country. It is important to use the experiences of migrants as evidence to support integrated policy development, especially at a time when there is increased demand for foreign labour and an already identified need for Ireland's migration framework to be reformed.

Policy Recommendations

Over the past two decades, successive Irish governments have implemented a series of changes related to the management of migration, including legislative changes and amendments to the employment permits regime. These changes have addressed some of the issues that have been raised in my study. The impact of these changes may mean that the experience of new immigrants varies significantly from that of the cohort that I studied. Yet the core structure of the immigration system remains the same: the work permit system remains demand-driven, does not guarantee mobility, and is temporary in nature. The lack of comprehensive immigration legislation continues to limit immigrants' entitlements and leaves them with a sense of insecurity. The Irish Government recently published *Future Jobs Ireland 2019*, which outlines how "we must ensure that our economic migration systems are fair, effective and efficient so that we can attract skilled workers from abroad" (Government of Ireland 2019: 56). However as yet they have not outlined a plan to introduce any additional employment rights, and consequently it fails to recognise labour shortages and the need to fill them. The post-Brexit context will make Ireland the larger of the only two English-speaking EU countries, which is likely to have an impact on inward migration. As the country enters another turning point in its migration journey, with specific labour and skills shortages in low-paid occupations, full employment of the population, and yearly increases in the positive net migration rate, based on the results of my study I propose the following recommendations, which I believe can provide solutions to the shortcomings of the system.

Mobility

Reforms of the employment permit system in Ireland have introduced various degrees of mobility for work permit holders, but the fundamental principle of the system remains: it serves the purpose of recruiting one non-EEA worker for one specified job vacancy after employers have demonstrated they cannot find a suitable candidate within the EEA. The system currently allows applicants to submit a ‘change-of-employer’ application, but only after the person has spent 12 months in the country. While this welcomed change reduces the dependency of the worker on the employer to a certain extent, it does little to address the entrapment of workers in low-paid sectors, and still does not allow workers to move into a different sector of employment. Applying for an employment permit remains costly and unappealing to employers. There is also no guarantee that an application for a new permit will be accepted, even if the applicant is already residing in the State. The ban on changing sectors makes it very difficult for workers to move across the labour market and into employment for which they are qualified and experienced. This results in a significant loss of productivity and benefit to the Irish economy. Instead, the employment permit system continues to act as a dual system. On the one hand, it aims to attract highly skilled migrants, and on the other it wants to source low-paid hyper-flexible workers. I identify two options to improve mobility in the employment permit system:

- **Full Mobility**

It would be preferable to allow for full mobility across the labour market for the duration of an employment permit. However, this is at odds with the current thinking of bureaucrats in charge of Ireland’s labour migration policy. Since the emphasis remains on matching identified shortages and gaps in the labour market with prospective applicants, a more palatable alternative would be to propose sector-based permits. These permits would allow for full mobility within the specific sectors for which the permits are granted. These permits would address employer-employee dependency and contribute to the improvement of conditions by facilitating wage increases, thanks to the increased ability of workers to demand higher wages. Yet this solution does not address the needs of those who look to change employment sectors, to return to their old profession or to start a new one.

- **Gradual Mobility**

Another approach to the mobility problem is to introduce gradual mobility in the labour market. This is already in place for holders of critical skills permits and enables them to enjoy full mobility after their first 24 months in the country. Such an option would meet the immediate needs of the labour market by filling in the gaps, improving conditions in low-paid sectors, and eventually allowing for long-term labour market progression of migrants based on their skills and experience. I propose a three-step process, whereby for the first 12 months workers remain ‘tied’ to the employer for which the initial application was made, gain sector-mobility thereafter for two years, and finally acquire the right to move across the labour market in its entirety.

Addressing Processes of Irregularisation

In 2009, the Government introduced the Undocumented Workers Scheme – a regularisation process lasting three months through which individuals who had previously held an employment permit in the State, and who became irregular due to exploitation or redundancy, could regain legal status by submitting a new application for an employment permit. Limited as it was, the scheme recognised that the employment permit system could generate irregularity despite the compliance of workers. The legislative amendment passed in 2014, permanently inserted the above mechanism into the Employment Permits Act, providing a regulatory avenue for those who become undocumented in a similar manner. The State also introduced a six-month period during which a person can maintain their immigration status following the loss or termination of employment. These changes represent significant efforts to prevent the immediate irregularisation of labour migrants. However, the immigration status granted to workers remains unlegislated for, as successive governments have failed to pass the *Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill* in any of its different iterations, deciding instead to segment the protection elements of the proposed bill and pursue separate legislation, a highly criticised move. In practice, this means that the status of labour migrants continues to be precarious and determined by the principle of ministerial discretion. On this basis, one’s legal status can be revoked at any time and any decision related to variation, prolongation, or revocation cannot be challenged in a court of law. While it is important to recognise the progress that has been made in preventing issues of irregularity for labour migrants, it is crucial to stress the need for more

comprehensive immigration legislation to afford security to workers moving to Ireland, and to provide clear guidance on their entitlement to family reunification and access to permanent residency in the State.

Furthermore, the fact that employers are aware of the presence of undocumented migrants and migrants with precarious status (such as international students) with limited bargaining power makes it harder for those migrants to demand better employment conditions in the low-paid sectors where they tend to cluster (MRCI 2015a). The continuous availability of workers with limited power to demand better conditions of employment limits progression in employment sectors such as restaurants and the care industry. The government introduced a regularisation scheme in October 2018 for those who previously held status as international students between the years of 2005 and 2011. Such measures are positive indications that they intend to find pragmatic solutions to the issue of irregularity in the immigration system and that they recognise that the employment permit system has been unable to meet all the demands and shortages in the Irish labour market. However, more structural reforms are needed to ensure a smoother transition from temporary status to secure immigration status, to stop migrants falling out of the system in a cyclical manner, and to ensure this does not provide an opportunity for exploitative employers to take advantage. These reforms include introducing avenues for migrants with temporary status, like international students, to change their residence conditions and remain in the labour market in a manner that allows them to exercise fully their rights and entitlements. Similarly, the implementation of regularisation schemes based on labour market attachment will help diminish the attractiveness of irregular employment and limit the room for manoeuvre of rogue and exploitative employers.

Reforming Access to the Labour Market for Spouses and Dependants

Currently, spouses and dependants of employment permit holders who are given permission to reside in the State do not have the right to enter employment. If they wish to do so, they must apply for permission as an individual, and meet all the criteria needed to obtain a new employment permit. The current restrictions on low-paid occupations and the unwillingness of employers to sponsor such applications can lead to several households relying involuntarily on one income. Such barriers to entering the labour market affect women disproportionately, making it difficult for them to gain their

first professional experience in Ireland. This phenomenon must be understood in conjunction with the impact of the limited availability of affordable childcare options in Ireland and how this affects migrant women with dependent status. In recent years, successive governments introduced reforms to the provision and funding of early education and childcare. These reforms include schemes such as the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme and the After-School Child Care Scheme. Among the dependent migrant women I interviewed, many availed of those schemes. However, the schemes did not remove barriers to entering employment, as many were not able to afford the cost of supplementary childcare that would enable them to hold down even part-time employment.

Due to the difficulties dependants face in entering the labour market, migrant women with a dependent status tend to focus on childcare duties. This, in turn, adds an additional layer of difficulty to eventually finding financially gainful employment, even after childcare duties are reduced. There are currently no targeted activation programmes for this category of migrant women. Many among them expressed concerns that language classes and other vocational training were not adapted to their realities. Most courses were delivered with a one-model-fits-all approach. The lack of coordination between access to the labour market, entitlement to childcare assistance, and access to activation measures will have an impact on migrant women for years to come. The longer they are distanced from the labour market, the harder it will be to reverse the process of deskilling and difficulties in language acquisition. In turn, when families become reliant on just one income, often from a low-paid job, they are at higher risk of poverty and have fewer opportunities to integrate. Reform is necessary, not just to curb down on labour market isolation for this group, or address intergenerational disadvantage, but also because over time limitations on the employment of migrant women negatively impact Ireland's ability to source foreign labour. Many countries have more advantageous systems for spouses and dependants than Ireland. I recommend that Ireland grant dependents their own legal status, which will allow them the same level of access to the labour market as the main residence holder for the duration of their permission to remain. As well as facilitating entry to the labour market, this will also address other issues that may arise from tying the right to reside of all members to the main residence holder. Not least, it offers security in case of family separation.

The Specific Needs of Migrant Workers to Achieve Labour Market Integration

Currently, only migrants who have obtained long-term residency status or who have become naturalised can access employment support programs. These can include language support, vocational training, employment and entrepreneurial schemes. In Ireland, these supports are constructed as pathways out of unemployment under the government activation strategy Pathways to Work 2016-2020 (DEASP 2016). This rarely takes the form of in-work support or as part of lifelong career advancement. As I have shown in my study, migrants in Ireland are often under-employed and working below their level of qualification. Despite their willingness to upskill, they have trouble achieving upward mobility. As discussed, lack of mobility between sectors contributes to the process of deskilling, as it is hard for them to re-enter the job sectors for which they are qualified once they have secured residency. Limitations associated with their legal status and the financial realities of precarious households mean that they cannot avail of employment supports for extended periods of time, making it hard to access different career paths which could be better adapted to previous experience, qualification, or motivation. Unlike in several other countries, language supports are not systematically provided to migrants in Ireland. Local education and training boards may provide English lessons, but these are often targeted at those with very basic levels of understanding, and access is dependent on immigration status. Participants who took part in these courses complained of the little vocational input into the programmes, meaning they were of limited use for the everyday realities of their lives and jobs.

Because Ireland perceives labour migrants as inherently transient and temporary, the State fails to invest in maximising their skills potential. After years of residence, when migrants finally reach a more secure status and can be mobile in the labour market, they continue to face barriers to improving their position and remain affected by low pay and precarity. This is a result of years of stagnation or inactivity. Once labour migrants qualify for employment support, they are faced with the problem that such support is not tailored to their specific reality. Yet again, this one-system-fits-all approach ignores the difficulties that lead to the entrapment of migrant workers, be they linguistic, cultural, or socio-economic. Migrants often lack the social capital to which local workers have access and are confronted by structural discrimination and racism (Cederberg 2012).

If programmes remain blind to the specific needs of migrants and do not consider their trajectories, they will continue failing in their efforts to improve the labour market

positions of migrants. In this regard, I recommend learning from the measures in place in Canada. Newly arrived migrants benefit from a skills assessment which helps the State understand where their experience and qualifications can be best used and provides a path towards recognition of qualifications and options for any additional training needed to practice their profession in Canada (Iredale 2001). Additionally, each person has a career plan that helps him or her identify the different types of support required and the extent to which the State may support them to reach their desired place in the labour market, be it in a new profession or by returning to their previous one. Unlike in Ireland, these supports are not designed solely as a transition back to the labour market. Instead, they are available to most workers and complement to their current employment. This means they can develop a plan for the acquisition of new skills to ensure that they will remain upwardly mobile.

Applying a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Policy

The Labour Force Survey (CSO 2019) estimates there are 380,000 migrants in employment in Ireland, of which 97,700 are from outside the EU. However, the number of employment permits in the country stands at just over 11,000. Several different categories of migrants contribute to the labour market in Ireland, yet the country's official labour migration policy remains stubbornly limited to the process of identifying skills shortages and places emphasis on recruiting highly skilled migrants through the employment permit system. Among the workers from outside the EU who do not hold a work permit, there are a variety of legal statuses, categories of residence, and entitlements to work. After the enlargement of the EU the need to source workers for low-skilled employment did not evaporate, but the employment permit system was nonetheless restricted in a manner that could no longer be used to fill gaps in low-paid employment. As a result, other categories of migrants with precarious status, including irregular migrants, increased their presence in the Irish labour market (O'Connell 2019) to take up employment in sectors traditionally associated with the employment permit system. However, unlike labour migrants, these precarious workers – such as students, asylum seekers or undocumented migrants – cannot expect to obtain a secure or long-term status after some years of residence. The growth in the number of international students is a case in point. In 2017, there were more than 30,000 registered in Ireland, and the ability to work part-time is one of the deciding factors in their choice to move to Ireland (Gilmartin et al. 2016). While these students can work without the need for a

permit, they are limited to 20 hours per week and cannot reside in Ireland for longer than three years unless they move on to study for university-level qualifications. Since they cannot become permanent residents, they are less inclined to demand better conditions of pay and employment, or to look for opportunities to progress. Instead, they often prefer to avoid conflict and maintain the employment they have already found.

Because government policy does not recognise that international students are filling staff shortages in sectors such as services, restaurants and cleaning, these labour market shortages continue to remain outside any long-term policy planning and such jobs remain out of reach to new entrants to the employment permit system. Given the large turnover of international students (it is, in fact, a government strategy to increase their numbers (DES 2016)), employers do not have any incentive to improve conditions in the low-paid sectors where they cluster. Other long-term employees, such as the ones I have interviewed, suffer the consequences as such short-sighted planning limits their progression pathways.

I conclude by reiterating my contribution to the literature both theoretically and by creating new empirical knowledge about the lives of low-income migrants in Ireland.

Contribution

Research and academic analysis on migration in Ireland has to date largely been informed by human capital theories of migration and by quantitative methodologies, leaving significant gaps in our knowledge of the causes and consequences of low-paid migration in the Irish labour market. This thesis now fills a specific gap in the literature, offering a comprehensive assessment, based on 49 qualitative interviews, of the reality of the TMR and low-paid migrants' lives in Ireland. The research outlines the story of hyper-precarity in a distinctive Irish labour migration regime. This form of precarity is constructed in, and must be understood in, the context of an Irish political culture and political economy. This creates a regime and context which is different to that of the UK as unfolded by Lewis et al. (2014, 2015). Distinctive historical and contemporary features of this Irish regime include, from a political economy perspective: the speed and scale of sudden increases in migrant labour; being one of only three EU Member

States that opened up the labour market in 2004; and the development of a two-tier migration policy to feed the skills and labour shortages of a two-tier economy which, despite significant economic growth and high levels of foreign direct investment-fuelled high-skilled employment, also has one of the highest levels of low pay in the OECD. The political and cultural perspectives include a highly gendered society with care deficits and gendered labour market participation and outcome gaps; the impact of high levels of historic and recent emigration and understandings of migration as temporary; an absence of integration policy and a vulnerability to racism; and a tendency towards policy implementation deficits or avoidance (in the case of deportation). All of the above lends itself to a two-tier migration story. A good migration and integration story is that of post-accession and employment visa migrants who are largely white and easily integrated with other medium- to high-paid, middle-class, high-skilled (often technology or medical) workers. On the other hand, the migration regime largely constructs poorly paid racialised migrants in temporary, low-quality jobs in specific sectors such as A&F or D&C. This contribution to a more even analysis of the Irish case study is itself a significant domestic and international contribution to the literature.

Overall, my study contributes to a growing literature on migrant precarity (Woolfson, Fudge and Thornqvist 2013; Schierup and Jorgensen 2016; Platt et al. 2017; Parrenas et al. 2018) and in particular the literature on migrant precarity in the Irish labour market, which shares many similarities with that of the United Kingdom (Anderson 2010; Lewis et al. 2015), yet is also a distinctive case. Studies related to migrant precarity in the Republic of Ireland have been limited, but there is a growing literature on precarious employment and precarious lives (Murphy 2017; Nugent 2017; Bobek et al. 2018, Gray et al. 2017) to which I have contributed by shedding light on the migrant experience in Ireland. Furthermore, my study provides a sectoral analysis and contributes to a better understanding of the dynamics associated with the use of migrant labour in the restaurant, hotel and care sectors in Ireland – an area of literature that has gained interest in recent years (Murphy and Loftus 2015; Cullen and Murphy 2017). It shows how employers use both the migration regime and the employment regime to create a docile and disciplined workforce (Abdullah 2005; Basok and Belanger 2016). Finally, it also contributes to the global literature on migrant domestic work and global care chains (Yeates 2012; Parrenas 2015; Lutz 2016; Triandafyllidou 2016) by offering a unique perspective on the role of migrants in the provision of care at home in Ireland and its link to the care industry.

The study also makes theoretical contributions. I have made conceptual and methodological contributions by introducing a typology of care provided by migrants in Ireland and by providing a framework to analyse their labour market trajectories according to different pathways. In Chapter 6 an adapted and expanded use of Liversage's (2009) typology has enabled a richer interpretation of the different trajectories of this study's research participants. My deepening of the typology to incorporate participants' self-perception of success and the meaning of work means we can better assess degrees of occupational attainment in their new lives (Roberman 2013). Effectively, this means analysing what determines participants' perception of progress and in so doing, the thesis contributes to the theorisation of labour market typologies. The research used the lens of hyper-precarity to understand how policy enables and sustains precarity for low-paid migrants in Ireland. The analysis shows how difficult it is to separate precarity in employment from precarity in everyday life, and here I contribute to the growing literature on precarious lives and hyper-precarity (Lewis and Waite 2015; Lewis et al. 2015; Bobek et al. 2018) and have shown why migrants on employment permits are vulnerable to hierarchies of precarity (Lorey 2015). I also contribute to the hyper-precarity literature by introducing a more comprehensive assessment of agency within the context of entrapment. The literature has shown how a progressive erosion of the rights associated with residency status (Walsh 2014; Wright, Groutsis and Van den Broek 2017) accompanies temporariness in migration schemes. I have added to this literature by discussing how this is reflected in labour migration schemes; the ease with which labour migrants could find themselves in a situation of irregularity is clear evidence that the system creates liminal legality (Menjívar 2006; Chacon 2015) – often described by participants as a feeling of living on the edge or living in fear. I have also contributed to the literature on the development of dual systems of labour migration (Dauvergnes and Marsden 2014; Vosko 2018). I have shown how a two-tiered system provides ease of access to mobility, permanent residency, and family reunification for highly skilled workers while low-skilled migrants are entrapped in temporariness, limited rights and security, irregularity, and exploitation.

Based on the findings of this study I have made concrete and implementable recommendations to improve the labour migration system in Ireland. I have made specific recommendations about how to improve the employment permit system, but also recommended changes required in the broader immigration framework of Ireland. The need for greater legal security of residence, increased labour market mobility, and

more recognition of the contribution of labour migrants to the Irish society and its economy is not limited to the cohort I have studied – it can be extended to more recent arrivals and those who are yet to come. Similarly, many of their needs and these related recommendations are transposable to other categories of migrants, particularly those who experience precarity in one shape or another. It is important that the Irish State recognise the role its policies have in creating vulnerabilities for migrant groups, in order to ensure that the responses it implements are effective in addressing and reversing these vulnerabilities.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Common Basic Principles for Migrant Integration

COMMON BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION POLICY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION
1. Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States.
2. Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union.
3. Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contributions immigrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible.
4. Basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration.
5. Efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society.
6. Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration.
7. Frequent interaction between immigrants and Member State citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, inter-cultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens.
8. The practice of diverse cultures and religions is guaranteed under the Charter of Fundamental Rights and must be safeguarded, unless practices conflict with other inviolable European rights or with national law.
9. The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration.
10. Mainstreaming integration policies and measures in all relevant policy portfolios and levels of government and public services is an important consideration in public policy formation and implementation.
11. Developing clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms are necessary to adjust policy, evaluate progress on integration and to make the exchange of information more effective.

Source: Gilmartin and Dagg (2018)

Appendix 2 – The Zaragoza Indicators

List of Zaragoza indicators and additional indicators to be considered

	Employment	Education	Social Inclusion	Active Citizenship	Welcoming Society
Zaragoza indicators	Employment rate	Highest educational attainment	At-risk-of-poverty (and social exclusion)	Naturalisation rate	Perceived experience of discrimination (survey)*
	Unemployment rate	Tertiary attainment	Income	Share of long-term residence	Trust in public institutions (survey)*
	Activity rate	Early school leaving	Self-reported health status (controlling for age)	Share of elected representatives (research)*	Sense of belonging (survey)*
	Self-employment	Low-achievers (PISA)	Property ownership	Voter turnout (research)*	
	Over-qualification	Language skills of non-native speakers (LFS module)**			
Proposed New Indicators	Public sector employment	Participation in early childhood education (SILC/PISA)**	Child poverty (SILC)	Participation in voluntary organisations (survey)*	Public perception of racial/ethnic discrimination (Eurobarometer)
	Temporary employment	Participation in life-long learning (LFS, AES)	Self-reported unmet need for medical care (SILC)	Membership in trade unions (survey)*	Public attitudes to political leader with ethnic minority background (Eurobarometer)
	Part-time employment	Not in education, employment or training (LFS)	Life expectancy (SILC)	Membership in political parties (survey)*	
	Long-term unemployment	Resilient students (PISA)**	Healthy life years (SILC)	Political activity (survey)*	
	Share of foreign-diplomas recognised (survey)**	Concentration in low-performing schools (PISA)**	Housing cost overburden (SILC)**		
	Retention of international students (research)*		Overcrowding (SILC)**		
			In-work poverty-risk (SILC)		
			Persistent poverty-risk (SILC)		

Source: Gilmartin and Dagg (2018)

Appendix 3 – Categories of action in relation to migrant integration in Ireland

Action	Government departments	OPMI	Local authorities	NGOs	Other
General actions	✓	✓			
Access to citizenship/long term residency	✓				
Access to public services and social inclusion	✓	✓	✓		
Education	✓				SOLAS, Training providers
Employment and Pathways to Work	✓				SOLAS, ETBs, QQI, Enterprise Ireland, Local Enterprise Offices
Health					HSE
Integration in the Community	✓	✓	✓		
Political participation	✓		✓	✓	Political parties
Promoting intercultural awareness & combating racism and xenophobia	✓	✓	✓		An Garda Síochána
Volunteering	✓				
Sport		✓			Sport Ireland
Implementation and Follow-Up	✓	✓			

Source: Gilmartin and Dagg (2018)

Appendix 4 – Funding streams for migrant integration

Scheme	Funder	Focus
Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)	European Union	Refugee resettlement; EU relocation; Integration
European Social Fund – Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL)	European Union	Migrant Integration; Migrant Employment
National Funding Programme	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration	Migrant Integration
Communities Integration Fund	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration	Community projects
Dormant Accounts Funds	Dormant Accounts Funds, administered by Pobal	Labour market integration of female refugees and female family members of refugees

Source: Gilmartin and Dagg (2018)

Appendix 5 – Information Sheet

Dear

I am writing to you to follow up on our recent phone conversation. First of all, thank you for allowing me to contact you to invite you to take part in this research study. Please allow me to provide you with more information.

The study

I have been working with the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) for over 5 years, conducting casework and advocacy, and am now as the Policy & Research Officer. I have responsibility over the policy portfolio of the organisation, and I conduct research on behalf of MRCI.

I have recently been awarded a scholarship to conduct research jointly with the MRCI in the field of labour migration policy.

I am interested in finding out the employment and integration experiences of migrants who came to Ireland with a work permit to work in sectors such as Restaurant & Catering and Domestic & Care work, as well as that of their adult family members.

How can you help me?

I would like to find out more about your experience in Ireland relating to your employment, your career progression, how has your family's income and quality of life changed since you arrived.

I would like to interview you; this will also be tape-recorded. These interviews will help me get a better understanding of your individual circumstances and particularly of your employment trajectory in Ireland. It will also help me understand how labour market policies impact in your family and household.

Confidentiality

All information will be kept confidential and constantly protected in my computer and from external access.

Any information I collect will be anonymized so that your identity and any sensitive information will be protected. No information that can be used to recognize you will be used.

I will destroy all data that has not been anonymized six months after the research has been finished.

Results

The results will be published as part of a doctoral thesis. If you wish, I will forward you a briefing with a summary of the research findings six months after the end of the research study (March 2018). Parts of my research might be published in journals or books, after or during the life of my research project.

If you agree, after my study is complete, I will donate your anonymized data to the Irish Qualitative Data Archive. Your identity will not be recognizable in that data, but it might help future research in this field.

If you agree to participate

Your participation in the study is voluntary and you can withdraw or renegotiate your participation and consent at any stage.

If you choose not to take part this will not affect any interaction you might have with the MRCI in the future.

If during the study, you experience difficulties I will link you with the Advocacy and Referral service of the MRCI that will help you find a solution to those problems.

If you agree to participate, I will appreciate it if you can complete the consent form that is attached and I shall provide you with a copy of it for your records. I will be available at any point throughout the research to clarify your doubts.

Thank you.

Pablo Rojas Coppari

If you agree to take part in the study, please sign the consent form overleaf.

Appendix 6 – Consent Form

Consent Form to participate in a Qualitative Interview

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in writing.

I am participating voluntarily.

I give permission for my interview with Pablo Rojas Coppari to be tape-recorded.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without consequences, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating.

I understand that if I withdraw my permission any data related to me will be destroyed.

I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising my identity.

I understand that disguised and anonymised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications.

I agree to participate in the joint research study conducted by Pablo Rojas Coppari and MRCI.

I agree to my anonymized data gathered in this interview being donated to the Irish Qualitative Data Archive. I understand that my identity will be completely unrecognizable.

I wish to receive a briefing with a summary of the research findings after the study is complete.

Signed.....

Date.....

Appendix 7 – Contact Details

Contact Details

This study has been reviewed by the NUIM Ethics Committee but please note that if during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the Secretary of the National University of Ireland Maynooth Ethics Committee at research.ethics@nuim.ie or +353 (0)1 708 6019.

Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

If you have any concerns or complaints, please contact:

Researcher

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Co. Kildare

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Appendix 8 – Pre-Interview Questionnaire

Pre-Interview Questionnaire

1. Name –
2. Country of Origin
3. Current Age
4. Education prior to Migration –
5. Year of Migration –
6. Age at Migration –
7. Family Circumstances at Migration –
8. Current Family Circumstances:
9. Describe Employment Prior to Migration
 - a. Occupation –
 - b. Salary –
 - c. Self-Perceived attainment – Identify scale.

Describe First Employment

Occupation –

Salary -

Self-perception

10. Describe Current Employment
 - a. Occupation
 - b. Salary
 - c. Self-Perceive Attainment
11. Re-Education

Appendix 9 – Calculation for Minimum Wage and Low-Paid Threshold

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
Minimum Wage	5.6	6	6.35	6.65	7	7.65	8.3	8.65	8.65	8.65	8.65	8.65	8.65	8.65	8.65	8.65	8.65	8.65	9.25
Standard Weekly Wage	218.4	234	247.65	259.35	273	298.35	323.7	337.35	337.35	337.35	337.35	337.35	337.35	337.35	337.35	337.35	337.35	337.35	360.75
After deduction in B&L	164.27	179.87	193.52	205.22	218.87	244.22	269.57	283.22	283.22	283.22	283.22	283.22	283.22	283.22	283.22	283.22	283.22	283.22	306.62
Low Pay Threshold	5.7	5.7	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	11.1	11.1	11.1	11.1	12.2	12.2	12.2	12.2	12.2	12.2	12.2	12.2	13.3
Low Pay Weekly Wage	228	228	372	372	372	372	444	444	444	444	488	488	488	488	488	488	488	488	532
Low Pay After Deduction	173.87	173.87	317.87	317.87	317.87	317.87	389.87	389.87	389.87	389.87	433.87	433.87	433.87	433.87	433.87	433.87	433.87	433.87	477.87

Appendix 10 – Interview Schedule

The purpose of this interview schedule is to facilitate the interviews with participants. The structure described below will be useful in describing the process to participants and to provide guidance to the interviewer during the interview and at a later stage during the process of coding.

The interview schedule is flexible and adaptable, this means that the order of themes and questions will vary depending on the participants and the context. Similarly, the relevance of questions will depend on the circumstances of each participant. It is expected that there will be movement back and forth between sections and reference to the key topics, time and again.

Introduction

I am interested in learning and understanding from your experience of migration to Ireland. In particular, I am interested in hearing about your experiences of employment in Ireland and the extent to which these were impacted or influenced by governmental policies and measures (such as visas, work permit conditions, family reunification process, citizenship, social welfare entitlements, etc). I am also interested in hearing relevant information about your life outside of work, including your experiences of integration, family life and discrimination.

I will broadly structure our conversation around four sections

- 1. Your life prior to moving to Ireland**
- 2. The process of recruitment into your first employment in Ireland**
- 3. Your employment trajectory and your experiences of work in Ireland**
- 4. Your life outside of work.**

During our conversation I may ask you to develop further on certain key topics, which include:

- a) Employment conditions**
- b) Mobility in the labour market**
- c) The work permit system**
- d) Experiences of irregularity**

I would like to emphasize that while I will use these sections and topics to guide our conversation, please feel free to deviate, return to a previous topic or experience or to skip a point you do not feel comfortable discussing.

First Section – Life Prior to Ireland

In this first section, I seek to find out more about the participants' life at home, factors which influenced the decision to migrate. As well as previous migration experiences and the role these may have played in the migration process

- How would you describe your life conditions at home? How would you compare your household to other?
- Can you tell me about your work experience prior to Ireland?

- Have you had a previous migration experience?
- Do you have family members or close contacts who were living abroad at the time?
- Have you ever thought of migrating before? What are some of the reasons which helped you consider it?

Second Section – Recruitment

In this second section, I seek to find out more about the recruitment process. The role of agents and other actors could have had. If there are experienced of coercive recruitment or indebtedness. The role of networks. I am also interested in learning what the participants expectation were prior to moving to Ireland and to see whether these expectations were met.

- How did you hear about your first employment in Ireland? Can you tell me about the recruitment process?
- Did you know people living or working in Ireland? Were they involved in this process?
- Can you tell me what was your understanding of the job and the conditions you were being recruited to?
- Were there any financial conditions associated with the recruitment (Agency fees, costs of documentation, etc)? What did these costs represent in your budget?
- After arrival to Ireland, did you owe money to someone? Did you have a repayment agreement or schedule for repayment?

Third Section – Employment

The third section is the broadest. I am interested in finding out about conditions of work in the different participants employment. I will let participants describe their timeline of employment. Aside from conditions in each employment am also interested to find out what pushed them to change (exploitation, redundancy, progression...) I am also interested in their perception of the different employments but as well as their career opportunities (ability to progress, to change jobs). The topics mentioned before: mobility, exploitation, the work permit system and irregularity will be key in understanding their labour market trajectories.

Work Conditions (Repeat this process for each employment)

- Tell me about your conditions of employment (Hours worked, Salary...)
- How satisfied were you with this job? Can you elaborate on this, on some of the issues?
- Did you feel you were treated well in this employment?
- Can you tell me how this job was terminated?

Exploitation

- Did you feel exploited/Did you feel mistreated/Did you feel you were not getting your rights in this employment?
- Could you elaborate further?
- What made you stay/prevented you from leaving the job?

Mobility

- Do you feel that you have progressed in your career since you arrived in Ireland? How so?
- Have you had opportunities to move on to higher-paid jobs? Have you had the opportunity to move to supervisory roles?
- Can you tell me why you accepted or turned down these offers?
- Were there factors preventing you from moving to better jobs (i.e. the work permit system...)?
- How did you find about other jobs prior to changing?

Irregularity

- Did you spend period without a valid immigration status?
- How did this happen? Did it impact on your employment? And in your life outside of work?
- Can you tell me about your experience, how you felt while undocumented?
- Can you tell me about the process of regularising your status?

The Work Permit System

- Can you tell me about the process of renewing your work permit?
- How about the costs? Did you have to pay? Did that represent a high cost?
- Were you anxious/apprehensive about the renewal of your permit?
- Do you feel like there were opportunities you couldn't avail of because of the work permit (certain jobs)? Could you elaborate, please
- Was your employer facilitating the renewal on time?

Fourth Section – Life outside of work

This section relates to elements of participant's life outside of work. Some of these elements may be directly or indirectly impacted by their work experiences. Here I seek to understand more about how they perceive their life in Ireland, including their life conditions (housing, precarity, vulnerabilities). I also seek to learn about family arrangements (including how these are impacted by government policies such as family reunification) including those which are transnational. I also seek to understand perceptions of identity, future plans (both professional and personal) and broader experiences of racism and discrimination.

Family Life

- Can you tell me more about your family life?
- If you reunified with your family members, can you tell me about the process.
- If you formed a family in Ireland can you tell me more about it?
- Can you tell me more about how you maintain ties with your family abroad?
- Does this involve remittances?

Life Conditions

- How would you describe your life conditions in Ireland?
- Do you feel that you struggle at times? Have you felt like you struggled at times? Can you tell me a bit more?
- Are you accessing or have you accessed social welfare in Ireland? If yes, what was your experience? If not, why not? Have you been refused, or have you thought you would be refused?
- Have you experienced discrimination insider and outside of work? Could you elaborate on these experiences?
- What are your future plans in Ireland? (Moving sectors, studies, changing jobs) Do some of your future plans involve another country? (Moving countries, returning to home country, spending time between Ireland and abroad)
- Have you obtained/considered Irish citizenship? Can you tell me why you have applied? Can you tell me why you have not applied?
- How does it make you feel?
- How would you define your identity? How do you think others describe your identity?