

Immigration and education – the case of Ireland

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Outline of presentation



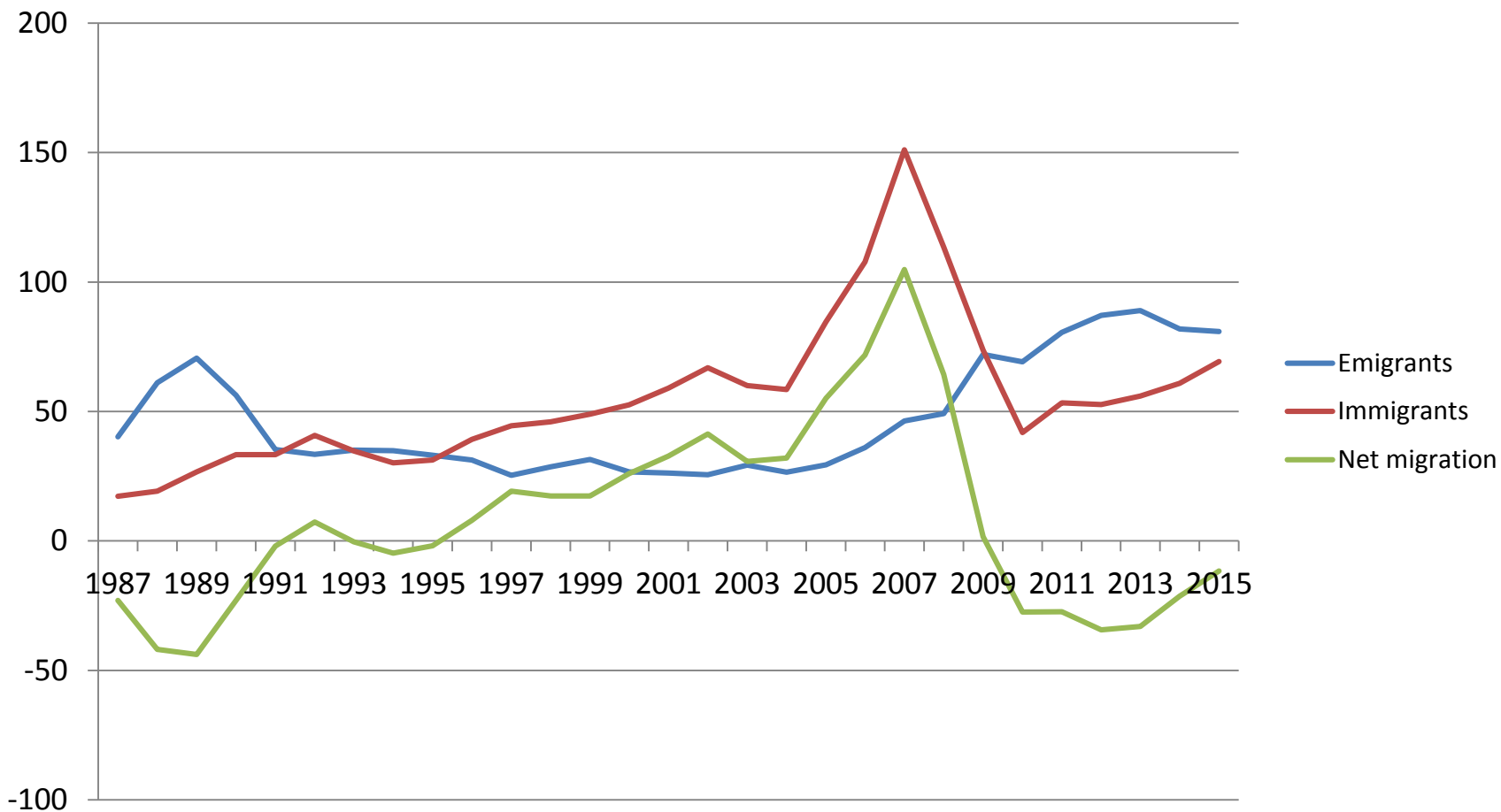
- Nature of immigration to Ireland
- What are the implications of this for schools and for research on immigrant children?
- How do the children of immigrants fare in the Irish education system? (some evidence to date)
- Some policy issues
- Gaps and challenges for the future
- Concluding comments

Immigration to Ireland - Key Features



1. Rapid immigration during the economic boom, following decades of emigration
 - So no long tradition of foreign-born 'established' national/ethnic minorities, or experience of Irish society, and institutions with foreign-born minorities
 - high proportion of first generation immigrants in Ireland: in 2015, 17% of population was foreign-born - one of the highest in the EU (Eurostat).
2. Around 2/3rds of migrants European; 1/3 non-EU
 - Initially immigrant flows were Irish, then UK/other EU15, Non-EU; after accession (2004) peak of East Europeans.
 - Different rights and responsibilities of EU and non-EU
 - Predominantly labour migrants, though some asylum seekers and students (an increasing proportion of Non-EU migrants)

Immigration, Emigration and Net Migration, Ireland, 1987-2015 (000s)



Source: CSO Population and Migration Estimates, various releases. Year to April of ref. year

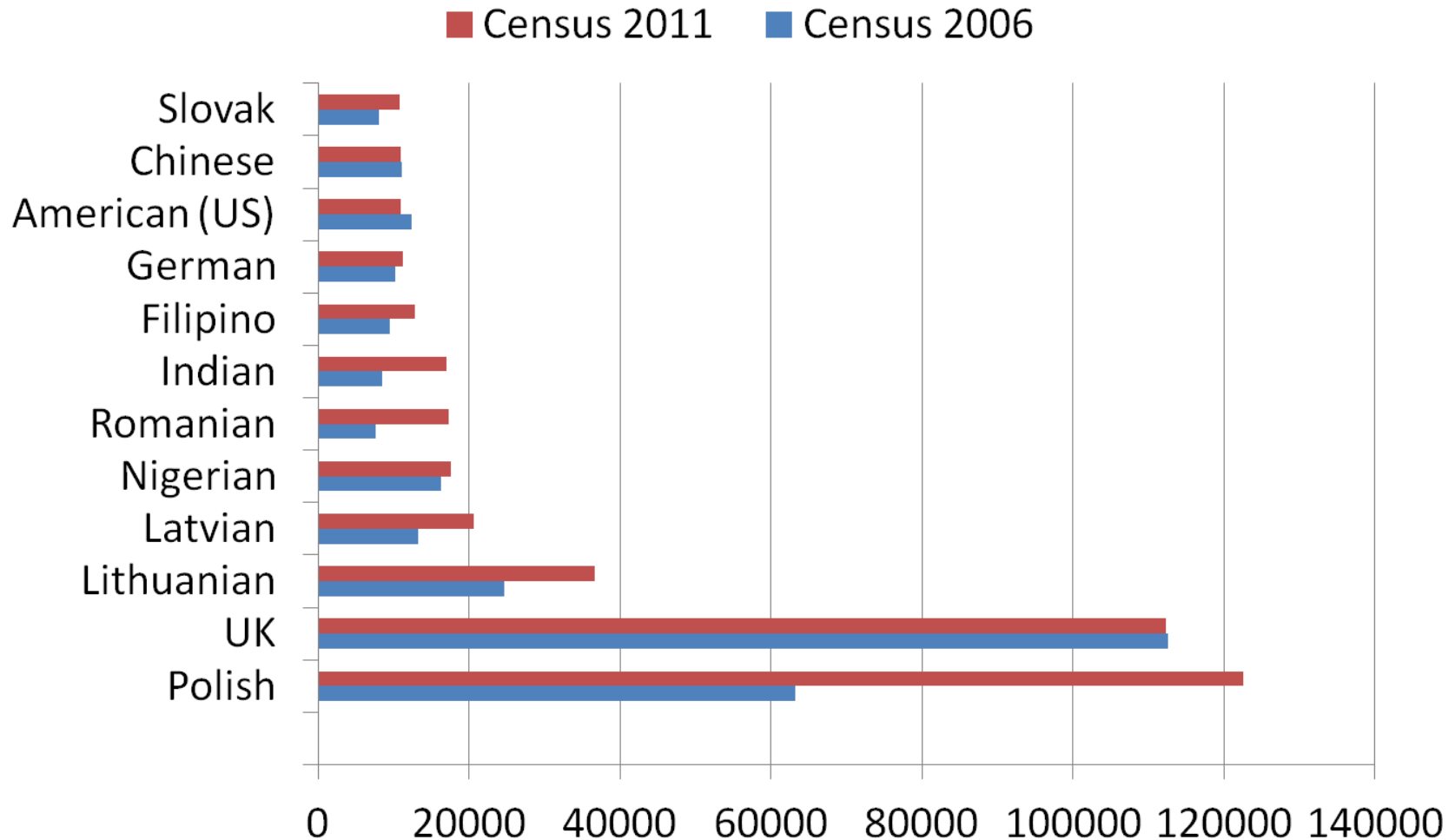
Immigration to Ireland - Key



Features 2

2. Culturally and linguistically very diverse: over 200 different nationalities (CSO, 2016) and 182 languages (CSO 2012).
3. Predominantly White (Of non-Irish - 66% White; 9% Black, 14% Asian, 10 % Other in 2016 Census)
4. Quite highly educated, esp non-EU migrants, partly due to immigration policy (in 2015 almost half working age non-Irish had 3rd level quals v 35% of Irish)

Persons usually resident by nationality for selected countries 2006-2011



Nature of immigration - challenges for schools...



- ◆ Initially schools used to catering to a White, Catholic Irish population so needed to adapt
- ◆ Most children first generation immigrants, they (and their parents) may have poor English language skills and knowledge of 'system'
- ◆ Children come throughout the year, school (and DES) schedules may not be not equipped for this
- ◆ Some groups particularly vulnerable – unaccompanied minors, Roma children

Nature of immigration - challenges for researchers...



- Lack of consistent definitions of migrant children in data sources – place of birth or ethnicity? parents or children born abroad? how many parents born abroad?
- Many students from different backgrounds, often need to be combined as numbers very small
- Lack of administrative systems developed to monitor their outcomes

How are the children of immigrants distributed in schools?



- Newcomers study in 2007/2008 found ‘newcomer children’ made up 10 per cent of primary school population and 6 per cent of secondary population (Smyth et al 2009)
- Distribution patterns very different at primary and secondary
- However, immigrant students are overrepresented in larger schools, schools located in urban areas and those with a socio-economically disadvantaged intake (Byrne et al 2010)
- Admission criteria such as ‘dates of application’ and ‘primary school attended’ likely to disadvantage newcomers (Smyth et al 2009)
- A recent newspaper article, based on school census returns for 2013/2014, highlights school segregation at primary level, though similar patterns to those in 2007/2008.

How are immigrant children faring in Irish schools?



- What should we expect from international evidence?
- What is the educational profile of immigrant parents?
- What are their expectations for their children?
- How do immigrant children fare academically? Do their outcomes differ by country of origin?
- How do immigrant children fare in terms of school engagement and well-being – at 9 and 13?

Immigrant-native gap – international evidence



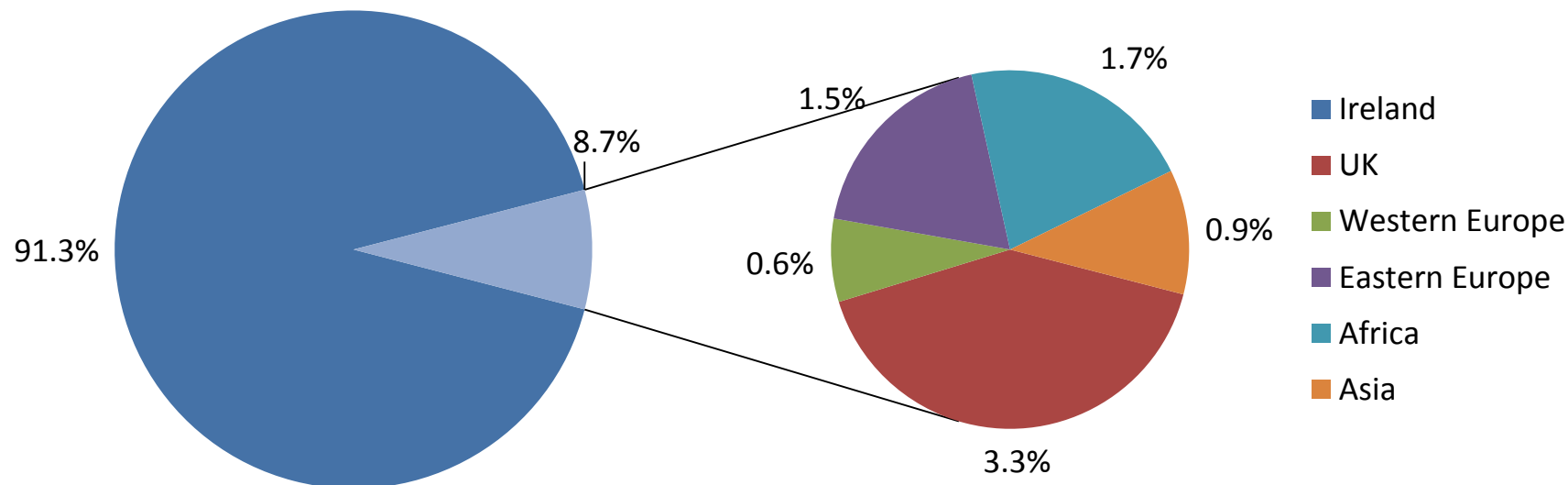
- Typically large differentials are observed between students from an immigrant background and those who do not come from this background in most advanced economies (see e.g. Brinbaum and Heath 2007; Dronkers, 2010)
- Some group/country variation but typically immigrant children have poorer primary and secondary school grades, are less likely to complete secondary school, attend shorter and less demanding school careers (Heath, Rothon and Kilpi 2008).

Immigrant-native gap – proposed explanations



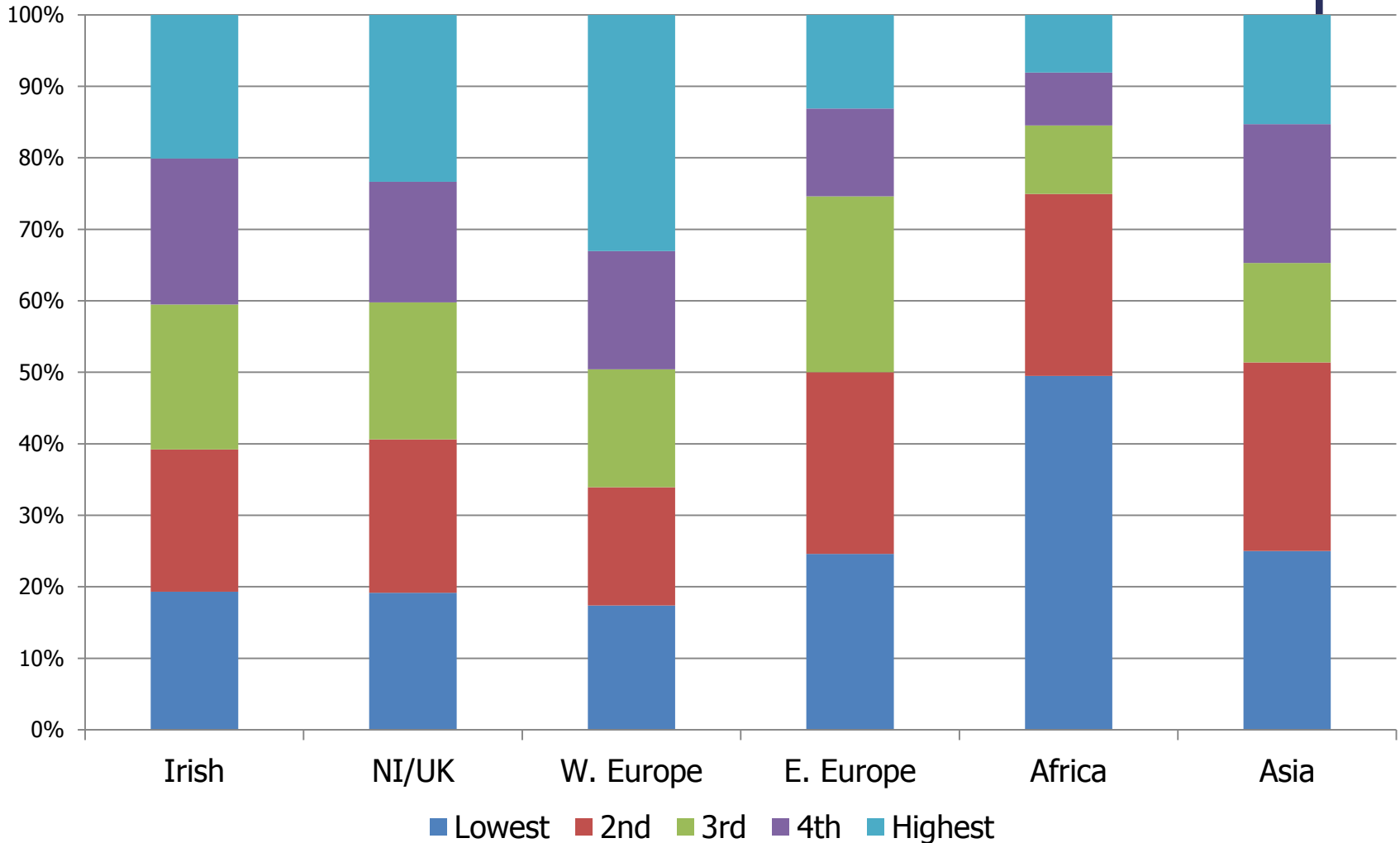
- ◆ **Assimilation** (Chiswick), but ‘progress’ may differ across groups (Portes, **segmented assimilation**)
- ◆ **Socio-economic disadvantage** may account for much of the gap (Heath et al 2008)
 - ◆ In addition to individual disadvantage, immigrants may also live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, go to disadvantaged schools (**segregation**) (Kirsten, 2008)
- ◆ **Cultural reproduction theory** – Bourdieu 1998– immigrants may have lower cultural and social capital – and/or their capital may not ‘translate’ well into host country – they don’t know the ‘rules of the game’

Defining migrants in Ireland: Mothers' ethnicity and her place of birth (9 yr olds)



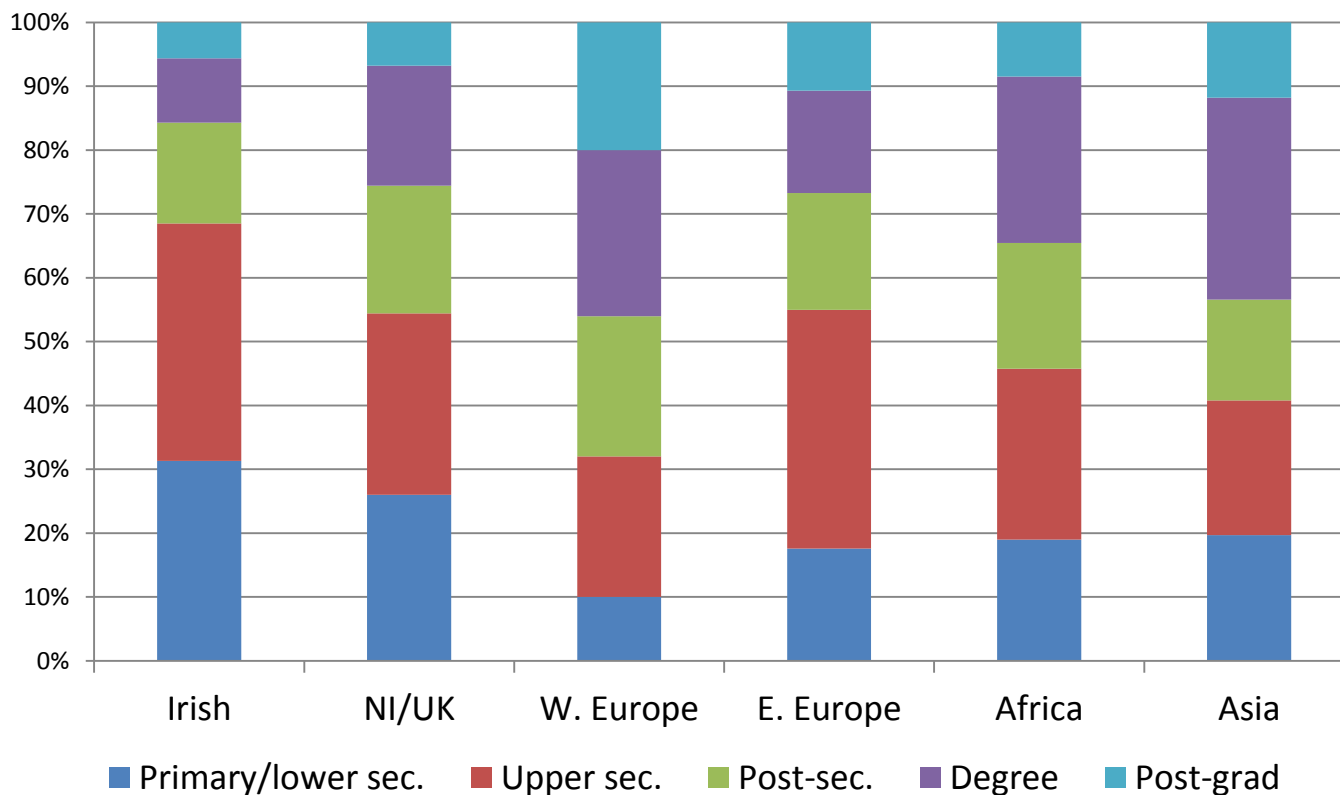
Source: Growing Up in Ireland, child cohort at age 9, 2007/2008.

Income quintile of 9 year olds



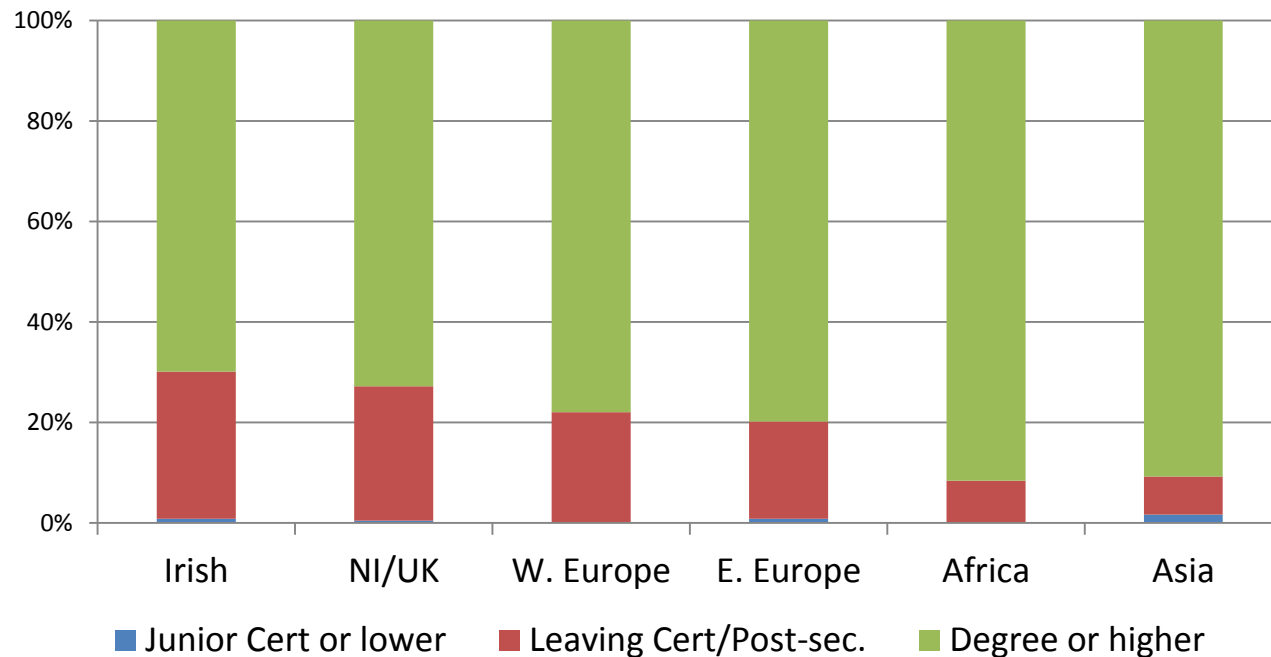
Source: Darmody et al., 2016. Household equivalised income.

Education of mothers of 9 year olds (Ireland, GUI data)



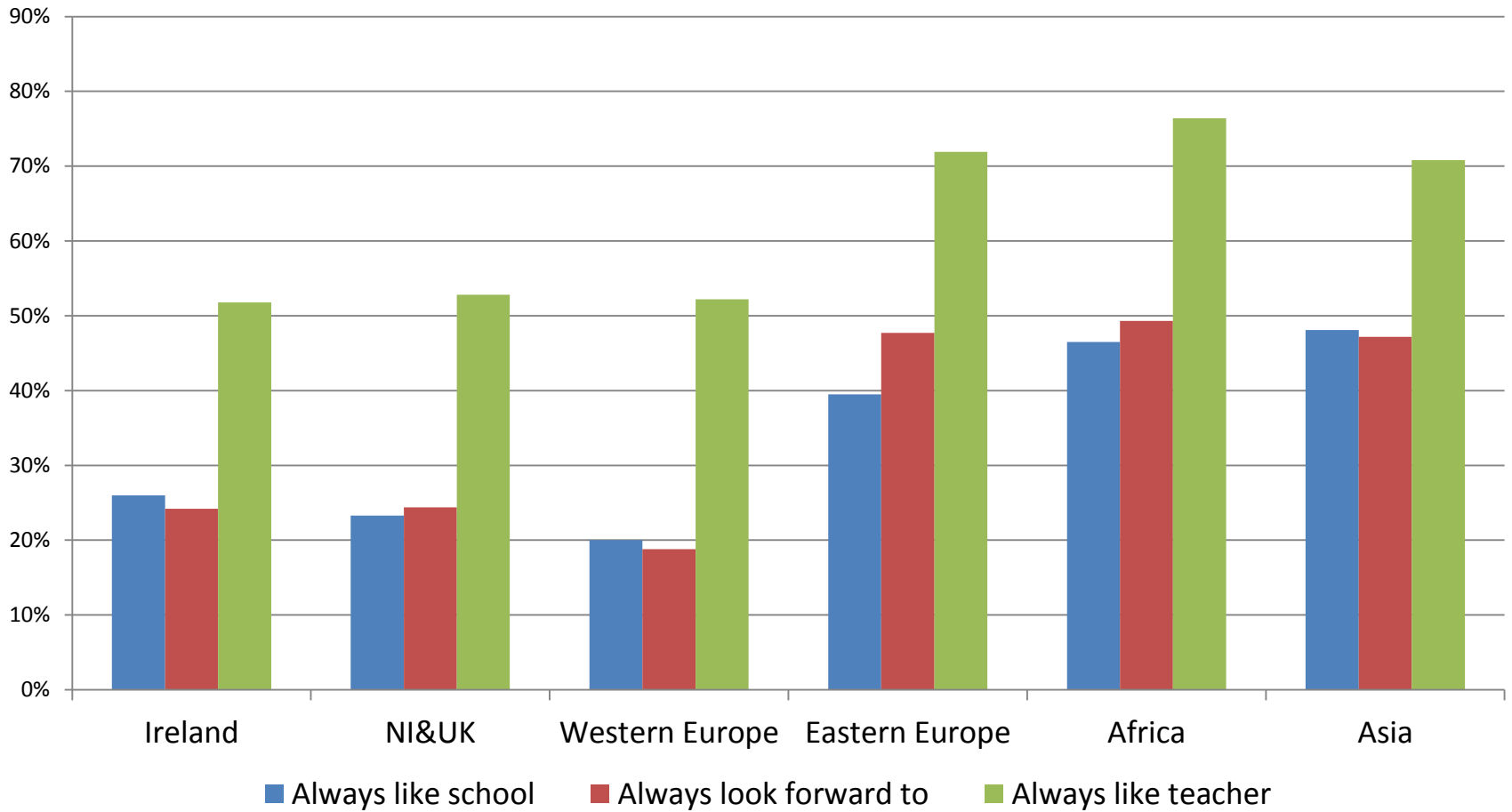
Source: McGinnity et al 2015

Educational expectations of immigrant parents v Irish (age 9, GUI)



Source: Darmody et al., 2016

Child's attitudes to school (at age 9)



Source: McGinnity et al., 2011

Differences in academic outcomes at 9, reading and mathematics (GUI data)



- Test scores in English reading at 9 vary between national groups, though the differences are not large.
- Reading test scores are significantly lower among those from Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa, with the largest gap for Eastern Europeans.
- To what extent is this due to socio-economic background, school, cultural and social capital differences?
- Background and school attended explains part of this gap, greater role in played by cultural capital, esp language: gap in reading scores remains for children of East Europeans

Differences in academic outcomes at 9, reading and mathematics (GUI)

- For mathematics, there is no penalty for the children of Eastern European, Western European and Asian mothers, even before controls.
- There is an initial modest difference between the children of African mothers and Irish children but this disappears once background characteristics, including financial hardship, are taken into account.

In sum, the evidence on mean differences suggests some differences between Irish and migrant children in English reading and mathematics at age 9, particularly for Eastern Europeans in reading and Africans in mathematics.

Achievement: Evidence from National Assessments (primary) and PISA (age 15)

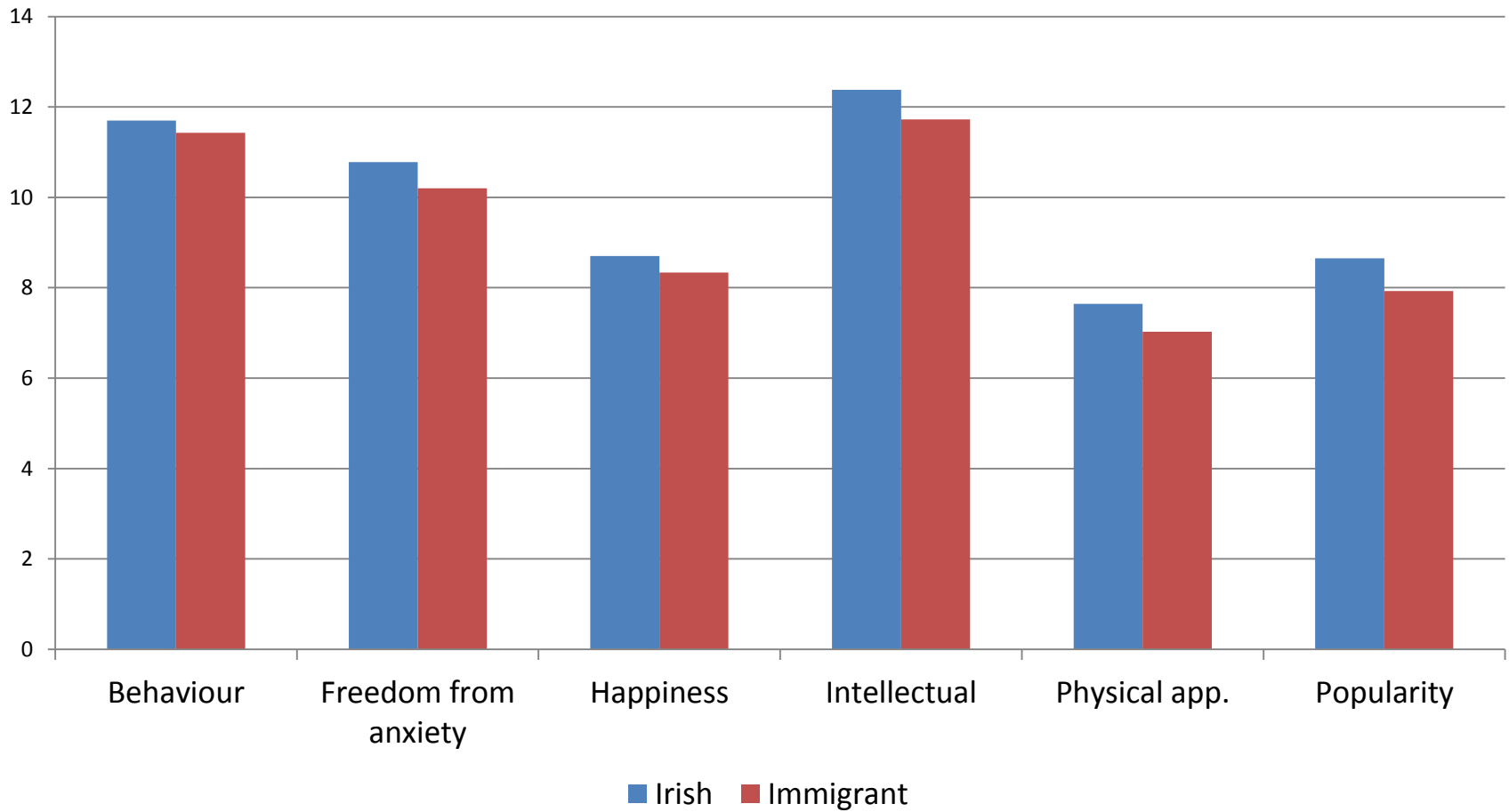
- At primary level, use national assessments in 2nd and 6th class (close to primary school curriculum)
- In 2014, immigrant students in 6th class had lower scores in English reading than Irish peers, esp students from non-English speaking backgrounds (Kavanagh et al 2016)
- The immigrant-Irish gap tend to be greater in 2nd class (reading and maths)
- PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) 2015 – ‘literacy’ in reading, mathematics and esp science
- No significant difference between immigrant students and Irish students in science or mathematics but
- Immigrant students from non-English speaking backgrounds have lower scores in English reading at 15

Well-being and school experiences among 9 and 13 year olds



- Smyth (2016) uses GUI child cohort to look at well-being among the same children at 9 (primary school) to 13 (second-level) in Ireland
- At both time-points, children were asked to complete the Piers-Harris questionnaire, an internationally validated scale, which taps into six aspects of how children perceive themselves: behaviour, academic self-image, anxiety, popularity, body image and happiness.
- **AT AGE 9**, children from immigrant families see themselves as less popular, are less happy and more anxious, report poorer behaviour, and are more self-critical of their academic abilities and their body image.
- **BUT BY 13** children from immigrant families do not differ from their Irish peers in any of these measures of well-being.

Well-being and school experience at 9



Source: Smyth, 2016, using GUI child cohort at age 9.

Immigrant children and education policy 1



- All children in Ireland have access to first and second-level education, (almost) free of charge
- At third level, EU citizens pay EU fees: since 2014, some non-EU students who have been to school in Ireland for at least five years qualify for free fees (e.g. those who have acquired Irish citizenship, refugees, permission to remain). High non-EU fees still an issue for those who do not qualify.
- School patronage relevant to migrants, as many are non-Catholic, given Catholic dominance in education, esp at primary level. A forum was set up in 2011, and report pointed to potential for divestment of patronage (Coolahan et al., 2012)
- Some changes though progress has been slow (10 schools divested), progress to be accelerated (DES Jan 2017)

Immigrant children and education policy 2



- Admission: Smyth et al (2009) found evidence on how school admission policies may exclude migrants – waiting lists, parental attendance, though July 2016 (Admission to Schools) Bill was introduced to change enrolment process
- Intercultural education strategy 2010-2015 was launched Sept 2010, with English language tuition a large part of financial resources - but lack of monitoring of strategy and its effectiveness since.
- The Integration Unit in DES was disbanded, and assignment of teachers for special needs and English language merged under a general allocation model (GAM), based on number of students
- Thus no longer possible to monitor spending on English language tuition in schools.

Gaps and future research challenges



- Know relatively little about transition to third level by the children of immigrants in Ireland
- Useful to know distribution of immigrants in schools, both primary and secondary, on a regular basis
- Useful to have disaggregated statistics on performance in state exams

Summary



- More recent migration history, diversity of immigrants and relatively high qualifications of immigrant parents in Ireland mean experience differs from some other EU countries
- Immigrant children (at 9) have positive attitudes to school and their parents have high aspirations
- However there is a gap in English reading scores between immigrants and Irish peers, esp for East Europeans. No overall gap in mathematics at 9, though African scores slightly lower.
- Monitoring policy effort on migrant children, student outcomes and school segregation crucial to avoid problems in the future – and there is more work still to be done here

- Thanks for your attention!
- See www.esri.ie and <http://www.esri.ie/growing-up-in-ireland/> for more info

Some further reading



Smyth (2016) Well-being and school experiences among 9 and 13 year olds: Insights from the Growing Up in Ireland Study. Dublin: ESRI.

Darmody, M., McGinnity, F. And Kingston, G. (2016), The experiences of migrant children in Ireland; Chapter 9 in Williams et al. 'Cherishing all children equally?' Dublin: Oak Tree Press.

McGinnity, F., Darmody, M. and Murray, A. (2015), Academic achievement among immigrant children in Irish primary schools, ESRI WP No. 512.

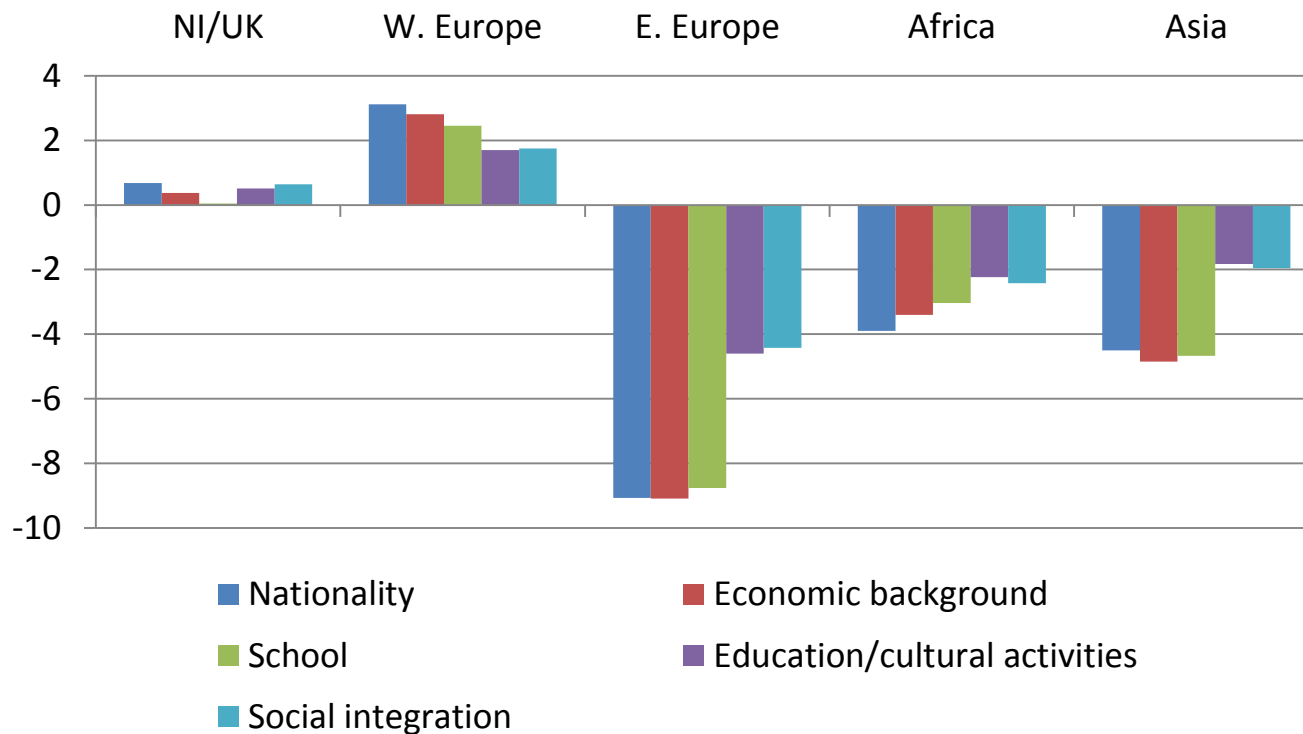
McGinnity, F. Quinn, E., Kingston, G. and O'Connell, P.J. (2012) *Annual Monitoring Report on Integration 2011* Dublin: ESRI/Integration Centre.

Darmody, M., Smyth, E., Byrne, D. and McGinnity, F. (2011b), "New school, new system: the experiences of immigrant students in Irish schools" in Z. Bekerman & T. Geisen, (eds.), *International Handbook of Migration, Minorities and Education*, Springer.

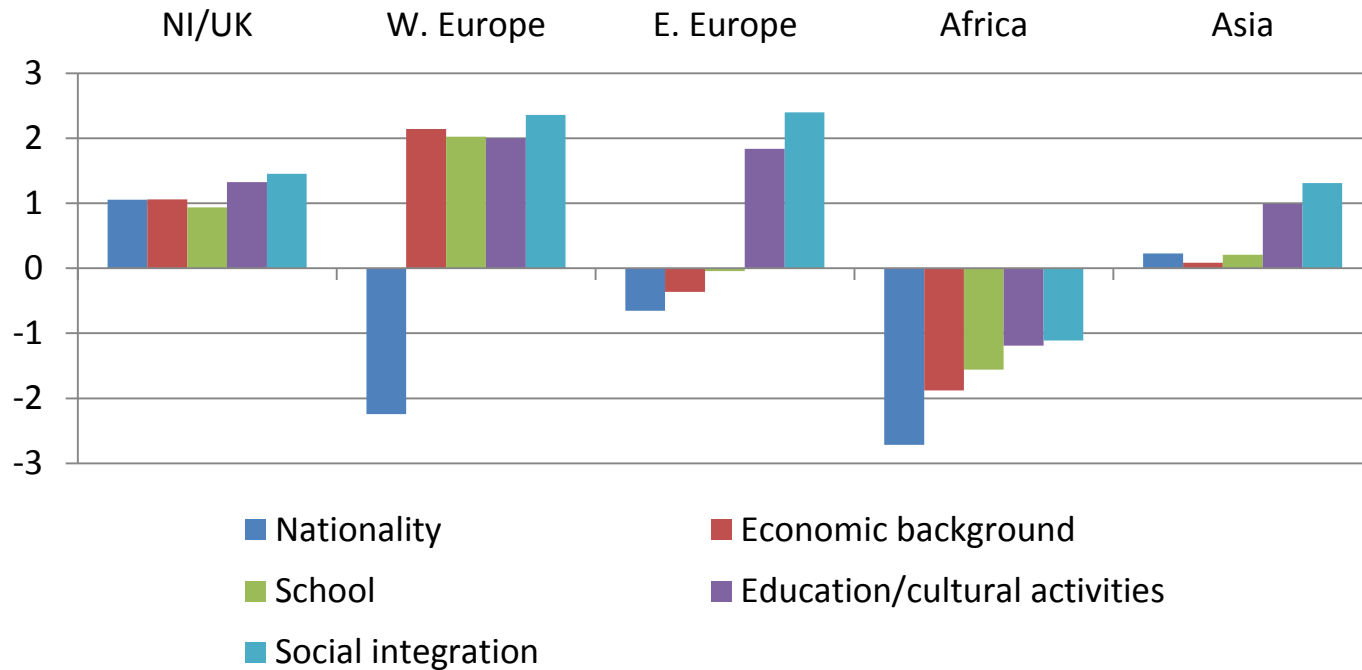
Byrne, D., McGinnity, F., Smyth, E., Darmody, M., (2010) 'Immigration and School Composition in Ireland' *Irish Educational Studies*, Vol 29 No. 3, pp.271-288.

Smyth, E., Darmody, M., McGinnity, F., & Byrne, D. (2009). *Adapting to Diversity: Irish Schools and Newcomer Students*. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute.

Differences in Reading Test Scores between Irish and Migrant Children, by National Group, Controlling for a Range of Other Factors

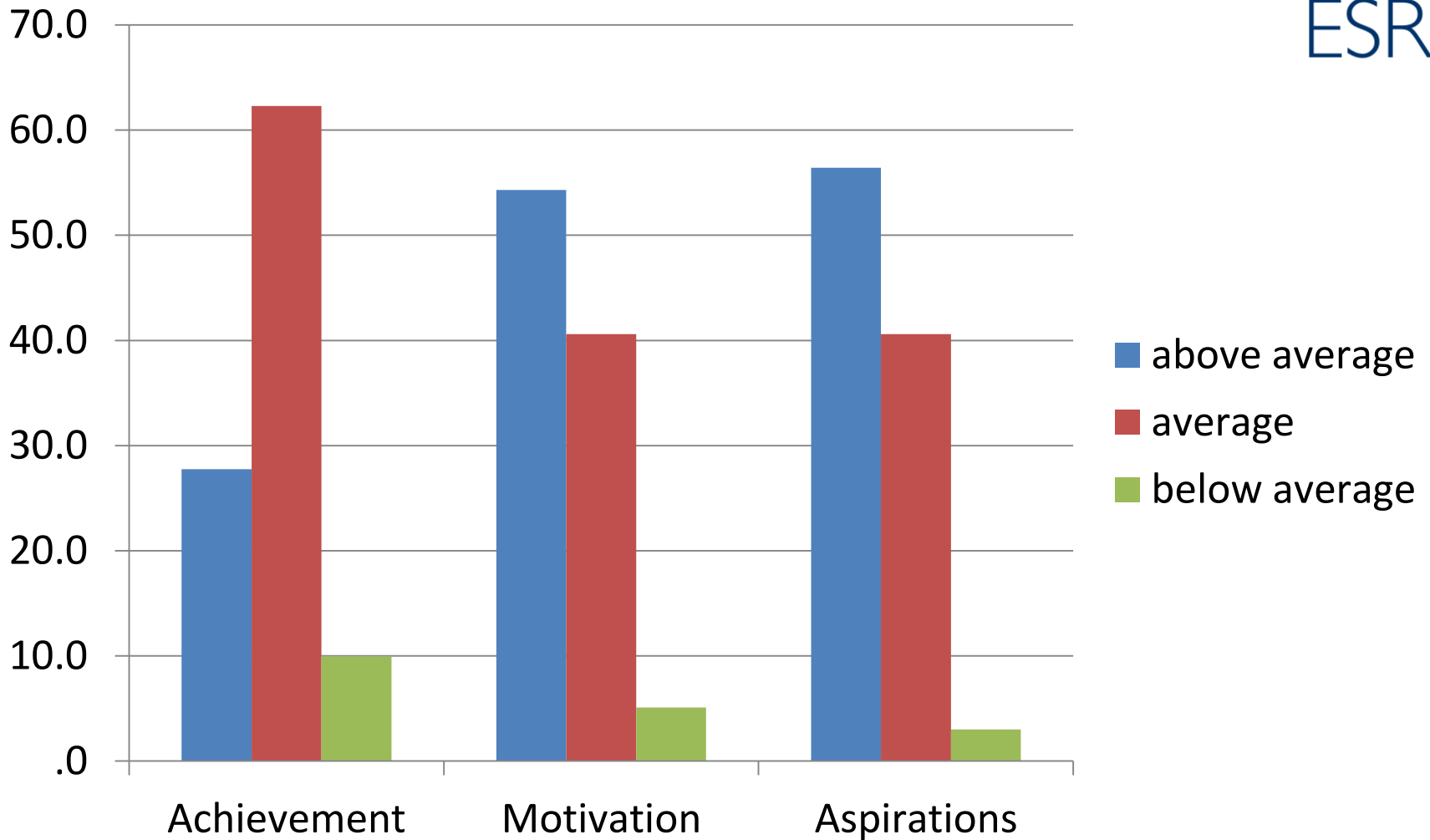


Differences in Math Test Scores between Irish and Migrant Children, by National Group, Controlling for a Range of Other Factors



Academic integration in schools

(Adapting to Diversity Study)



Percentage of immigrant children attending DEIS (Urban, Band 1) GUI, Age 9, 2007-2008

