

No Time To Waste:

Rethinking labour market policies as a strategy for the socio-economic integration of migrant families in Ireland

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Ireland is at a crucial juncture in its experience of inward migration and still has the capacity to prevent the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage in migrant families: a common feature in European neighbours.

Within the extensive academic and policy literature there are clear research gaps. We know little about the experience of labour market progression amongst migrants in Ireland, the sectorial and gender differences in labour market experience or how migrants experience the focus on activation.

Nor do we know enough about how restrictive labour market policy and practice impact on mobility of spouses and intergenerational mobility of migrant families

The research is structured around three central questions:

1. Whether and how immigrants experience labour market progression and the degree to which labour market experience is gendered
2. Barriers to progression and effectiveness of activation policy in fostering Labour Market integration, and possibilities of alternative rights-based approaches as integration strategies.
3. Relationship between labour market experiences of immigrants and experiences of mobility for spouses and intergenerational mobility of migrant family children.

I will use a multi-method approach including case file analysis (selected from approximately 2000 files), 4 focus groups and 30 qualitative interviews. I will apply a range of filters to these case files, which will enable me to extract information related to two sectors of employment (Restaurant and Care & Domestic work).

Prior to analysing the case files I will develop a theoretical framework based on life-cycle models and labour market theories; this will enable me to apply a gender dimension to the research.

The data will also provide a longitudinal dimension to the research through analysing data captured over the last ten years and by using repeated case files.

This research will reflect the lived-experience of immigrants in low-paid, unregulated and genders sectors of employment. It is innovative because it focuses on the labour market as a vehicle for the integration of migrants; rather than interpreting their progression in the labour market as an indicator of their integration.

The exclusive access to the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland's database will allow an analysis of more than ten years of data providing a unique longitudinal study of immigrants' experiences in the Irish Labour Market

It will also introduce the research on the intergenerational mobility of migrants in Ireland. Lessons derived will be applicable to the development of public policy, labour market integration and transposable to other marginalised communities.

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Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad

Pablo Rojas Coppari
PABLO.ROJASCOPPARI.2014@nuim.ie
Department of Sociology

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