Diversity in Political Parties' Programmes, Organisation and Representation

Migrants and Irish Political Parties

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Introduction

The report is an overview of political participation of migrants in Ireland in recent years, with a clear focus on their engagement with and participation in political parties. The report is the outcome of the research completed through the European project "Diversity in Political Parties' Programmes, Organisation and Representation, funded by the European Integration Fund, in seven European countries. Due to the funding criteria the project focused on migrants from outside the EU but parts of the fieldwork may use reference to the wider migrant population. The first part of the report presents the summary of findings in a manner as was agreed between partners for the completion of the European Report. The second part introduces key facts on the profile of the non-EU population in Ireland and on the political structures within which political participation take places. The third and most extensive chapter analyses the field work complemented with key findings from other relevant studies and research. The following section summarises the main positive and negative factors affecting party political participation in Ireland. In the last part there are tables detailing list of migrant candidates in 2009 and 2014 and information on voter registration among large groups.

1. Executive summary

Access/ Entry to Political Parties and Political Life in Parties

In Ireland anyone can join a political party and vote in elections. It has been found that political parties are in general open to new members including those of migrant backgrounds. It is difficult to quantify the number of migrant members due to lack of data but all parties have migrant members. Migrants are likely to be under-represented in parties although some parties seem to have more migrant members.

Important aspects of the political system are the strong role played by local party organisations, so-called branches, as well as the frequent canvassing, visiting people in their homes, and operating information service, known as clinics, for local residents. Accordingly, there are a number of access points for newcomers who wish to engage with Irish political parties. Before making a stronger commitment, involvement in campaigns and canvassing also offers a "trial period" for anyone in a political party. In 2009 large parties did make a concerted effort to target particularly the Polish but also some other migrant communities; however the perception was that the return was poor in light of resources deployed (full-time integration officer, information material).

While local branches were described by most as friendly and welcoming informally, there was no systematic orientation measure to help new members understand the party structure, party issues or policies. It was argued that only by being involved in party activities that new members gain skills and knowledge necessary for progressing: *"Each step on the political ladder teacher you something that is essential for the next rung."* Nevertheless there are proactive steps that party have taken and can take to ease the orientation process.

In terms of positions within parties, it appears that several migrant members gained positions within parties, primarily at local level, but it is unlikely that they have advanced further than that. The argument is that migrants are too few and too new within parties to affect representation among party officials and post-holders.

Dealing with Legislative Restrictions for Third-Country Nationals in Political Parties

In Ireland anyone who has been resident in Ireland for six months can vote and run in local election – including non-EU citizens – and can join any political parties. That affords migrants and particularly non-EU nationals with an excellent opportunity to engage with political activities and join parties. However, there are some factors that may slow down involvement of non-EU nationals.

Local authorities have limited power in Ireland; for instance, they have no role in education or health services and, of course, they do not have influence over immigration matters. Many non-EU nationals do not have a secure status and this can also discourage them from active political involvement. It was suggested that a considerable number of non-EU nationals may postpone political involvement until such a time that they receive citizenship that provides them with a secure status and the right to vote in national election. In this context however it is important to acknowledge that more than 80,000 non-EU nationals received citizenship between 2005 and 2013.

Career Paths and Roles of Politicians with "immigrant background"

Most migrants were active in the community before deciding upon joining a party and contest election. Non-EU nationals were members of both ethnic-led and community organisations and showed a progression from working with their own community to engaging with the wider local community. Practically all migrant candidates in 2009 and 2014 have focused in their campaigns on improving the local environment where they live, understanding that in Irish political context it is essential that candidates are seen as local community representatives. But the strong local focus also offers an opportunity to draw attention to their local identity and lessen focus on their ethnicity.

Both Irish and migrant candidates have agreed that party involvement – attending meetings, campaigns, canvassing for someone else in previous elections – were very useful experiences that benefited them. There were remaining challenges. In terms of nomination, incumbents within the same parties may see newcomers (regardless of their background) as competitors particularly in urban area. In this context it is important to highlight that nominations are decided by local branches and constituency organisations, over which the headquarters have little influence, therefore newcomers need to convince local members on their electoral potential. While this creates difficulty for every new candidate, the perception was that is harder for migrants to mount a serious nomination bid. In recession party members may also feel that there is a greater risk of running a migrant candidate. Parties also cite the less than desirable results of migrant candidates in 2009, when most parties did try to seek out and ran migrant candidates. In 2014 the main parties run only few (or none) migrant candidates. Importantly, the number of local authority seats is also reduced by 500. The closing down of town councils, where migrants were elected in 2009, removes more winnable seats.

"The party supported me as well, to a certain extent, but it was harder to build this support maybe because they didn't see from the beginning my real potential as a candidate to succeed." (Migrant candidate)

The electoral campaign in Ireland does not lend itself to intervention by parties. Candidates need to finance their campaign and develop their strategies. The party's assistance revolves around the production of information materials (design and subsidised printing) and some general advice. Migrants tend to have less developed networks and this creates difficulty in securing volunteers and donors for their campaign. Candidates learn about how to run an electoral campaign through informal networks and being involved in campaigns.

Diversity inside Political Parties and Discourses on Diversity

In term of discourse, since the recession the previous celebratory mood in relation to diversity has disappeared and also discussion shifted to economic issues. An important exception is the citizenship process which the current government prioritised through speeding up the application process and introducing citizenship ceremonies that received great publicity. In general, however, parties took cautious approach as *"they did not want to be dragged into a debate that might become divisive and ugly"* whereas a small but significant number of local residents began to raise concerns as to migrants' accessing to social services. Racist incidents in the form of verbal threat and damage to property were reported mainly in urban disadvantaged areas. To their credit, several politicians made an attempt to constructively engage with those views and they too have organised collective action to address incidents. Nevertheless some local politicians also made anti-immigrant statements.

Two parties have an equality officer in place whose task is, among other groups, to support engagement with migrant communities, although much of the work is focused on women. The officer also leads outreach efforts in collaboration with a special sub-committee in the party. The sub-committee primarily offers a space for formulating relevant policy proposals and communication.

The Opening Power to Diversity, a targeted scheme has placed migrants (non-EU nationals) to work as interns with national politicians for six months since 2011. Both parties and migrant interns praised the initiative. Such targeted internship increases confidence in and familiarity with Irish politics among migrants while politicians also developed relationship with members of migrant communities. On the other hand, the scheme has not led to any new initiatives within parties and collaboration with migrant interns did not continue beyond the placements.

Networks between Political Parties and Immigrant Communities and their Associations

Initial engagement between political representatives and migrant communities is significant. Assistance by politicians through so-called information clinics created interest among some migrant clients in getting involved in political parties. In term of groups, a number of politicians visited places associated by migrant communities and helped migrant groups with their initiatives. Most parties could make a more structural attempt to engage with migrant organisations notwithstanding great efforts of *"integration champions"* within parties. Migrant organisations, that often play a neutral

lobbying role, should also put more emphasis on encouraging engagement between parties and migrant groups and promoting voting.

"If new communities all decided to vote, the parties would give them a whole lot more attention."
(Irish politicians)

Several parties were unsure if there is enough interest among migrants to lead a registration and voting campaign although some did produce resources. It can be pointed out however that targeted drives (with migrant party members' taking lead) can bring reasonable success. The State also needs to promote voter registration using such public events as the citizenship ceremony and introduce an online registration system that is more accessible and helps monitoring of voter registration levels of groups.

Recommendations for Political Parties

❖ *Political parties could employ more long-term strategy in their outreach: using statistical data and other source of information to map out migrant population, target selected areas and ensure that local branches are aware of the need for reaching out to migrant communities. They should engage on a regular basis with local groups and integration forums, invite migrant organisations and groups to present at meetings and visit their places. They may target non-EU groups that are most likely to receive citizenship.*

❖ *Organising welcoming events or social events, with consideration of inclusivity (e.g. food choice), attached to a party meeting could help orientation and thus retention of new members including migrants. Added to that, membership packs should be made available more widely. Parties could also hold thematic meetings that could bring together new and older members in larger geographic areas (as opposed to local branches).*

❖ *In every branch or constituency one officer (e.g. equality officer) should be responsible for reaching out to and welcoming new migrant members.*

❖ *Drawing on the positive experience of the Opening Power to Diversity Scheme, parties should explore recruitment of migrant volunteers at selected local areas. Furthermore, the interns of the OPD programme by parties should be approached with a view to helping organising outreach sessions.*

❖ *Parties should consider monitoring measures such as introducing a question on birthplace within their membership database system. Alternatively, anonym diversity surveys asking question on birthplace as well as other demographic information could be conducted within political parties.*

❖ *Parties should explore talent spotting measures to identify migrant candidates. They should organise workshops to migrant and other new candidates and offer mentoring in a more structured format. Given their less extensive network, parties could also try to find ways to help fundraising of migrant and other new candidates that encounter difficulties in funding their campaigns.*

❖ *A more conclusive disciplinary system and positive statements at leadership level would send out a strong message to condemn anti-immigrant statements by party members. Willingness and preparation for challenging anti-immigrant statements made by constituency members would be beneficial.*

❖ *Parties' efforts should be led by an official (not necessarily his/her only responsibility) and helped by a working group or committee. It is essential that party's executive is aware of and support such group's activities.*

2. Overview of context

Profile of the non-EU population

Size and composition of the non-EU population

In Ireland the group of foreign born has increased to 17% in 2011 from 14% in 2006 and 10% from 2002.[1] The share of those who were born in a non-EU country was 5% in 2011. There is a relatively even distribution among those born in the UK[2], EU and non-EU countries.[3] Importantly, a large number from the UK born population are Irish citizens. Among those born outside the EU, in 2011 those representing the Asian continent are the most populous group followed by those born in Africa, Americas and Europe.

Non-Irish nationals represented 12% of the total population in 2011, up from 10% in 2006 and 6% in 2002. In 2011 Non-EU nationals accounted for approximately a quarter of the non-Irish population; accordingly, 3.5% of the total population hold nationality of countries outside the EU. In 2002 the non-EU population was three times as big as the EU population excluding UK nationals (UK nationals made up half of the non-Irish population) but this has dramatically changed by 2011 for the same reason as cited above with regard to birthplace. The biggest non-EU groups are Asians, followed by Africans, Americans and non-EU Europeans.

Immigration flows in Ireland, 2000-2013[4]

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[1] Foreign-born include the majority of non-Irish nationals (95.3%) as well as Irish nationals born abroad who have attained citizenship through birth to Irish parents or naturalisation.
[2] Due to historical reasons and large intra-migration between Ireland and UK, in migration statistics UK is often presented as one of the broad groups examined.
[3] In 2002 there were almost four times as many non-EU born citizens as EU born (excluding the large group of UK born people) but since then the Accession of ten countries to the EU in 2004 and unrestricted access to the Irish labour market led to a dramatic increase in the number of EU born citizens grew significantly in Ireland.
[4] Annual Integration Monitor 2013, based on Central Statistics Figures
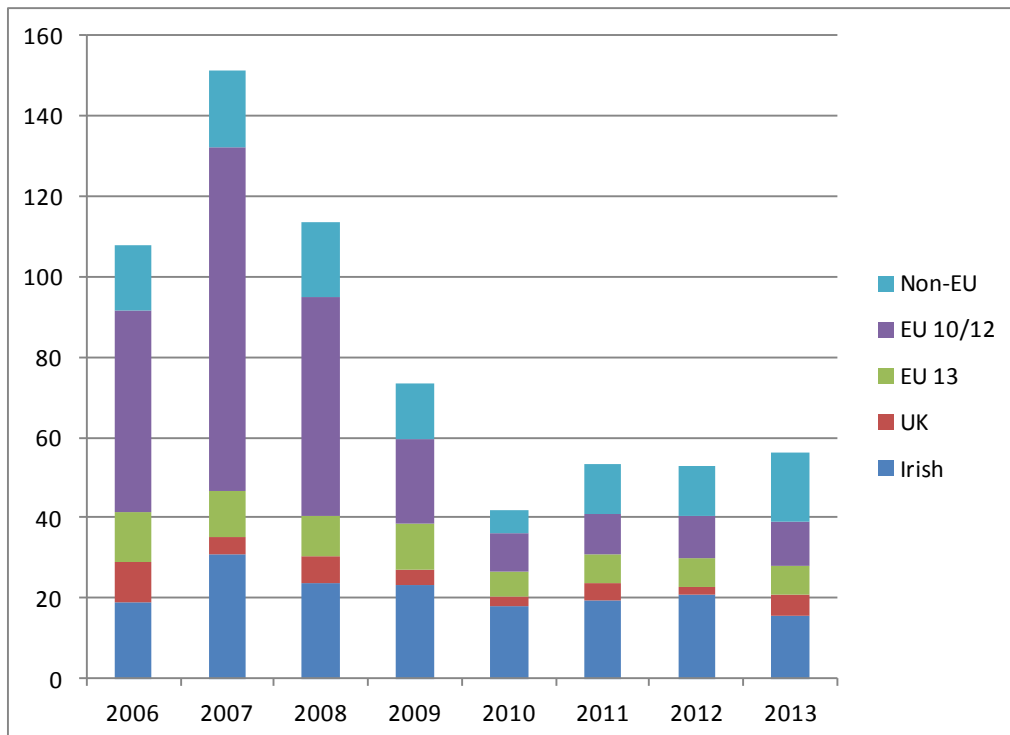
Due to the recession immigration flows decreased while simultaneously many non-Irish nationals and Irish nationals left during 2008-2010. Estimated immigration and emigration flows show that both the inflow and outflow of non-EU population however has been more stable than that of EU nationals. While a clear dip can be observed in 2010, the flow of non-EU nationals continued in 2011 and 2012. Most importantly, the number of non-EU nationals emigrating from Ireland did not increase the same way as that of EU nationals. Since non-EU nationals enjoy less mobility and are less inclined to return home they seem to be less likely to leave even during economic recession.

Emigration flows in Ireland, 2006-2013[5]

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[5] Ibid.
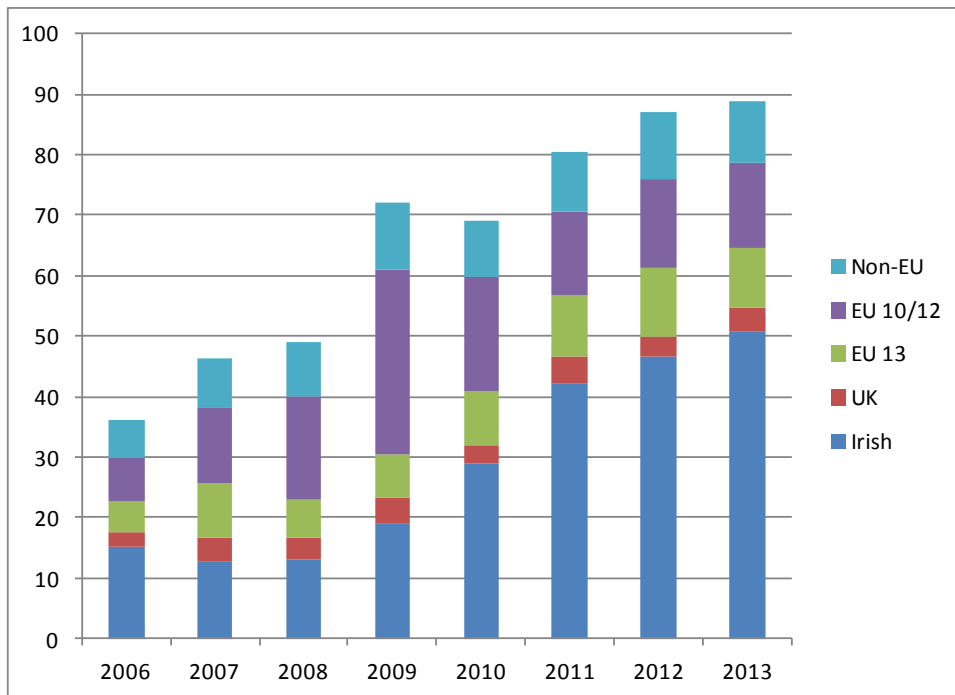
It is interesting to note the difference between birthplace and nationality: the number of non-EU born exceed the number of non-EU nationals by 54,923. This can be largely ascribed to the marked number of groups with dual nationalities who would be classified as Irish in this calculation. The continents have similar representations both in terms of birthplace and nationality apart from the Americas where its representation among non-EU born is significantly greater than among non-EU nationals.

Non-EU born people & non-EU nationals in Ireland, 2011					
Nationality			**Birthplace**		
Non-EU Europe	16307	10.3%	**Non-EU Europe**	22,427	10.6%
Africa	41642	26.4%	**Africa**	54,919	25.9%
Asian	65579	41.6%	**Asia**	79,021	37.3%
Americas	24884	15.8%	**Americas**	47,116	22.3%
Australia and NZ	4243	2.7%	**Australia & NZ**	8016	3.8%
Other	4098	2.6%	**Other**	177	0.1%
Total	**156,753**		**Total**	**211,676**	

The table below shows the 20 biggest non-EU nationality groups including broad groups with dual nationalities[6] indicating also their birthplace. This table shows that there is a significant group of people with dual nationalities. As it can be seen, a large number of those with dual nationality were born in Ireland and presumably gained citizenship through birth. Nevertheless, the majority of people with dual nationalities were born outside Ireland and must have attained Irish citizenship through naturalisation.

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[6] More detailed breakdown on groups with dual nationalities is not available.

Top 20 non-EU nationality groups in Ireland including large dual nationality groups, 2011

Nat.groups	Irish-African/Asian/Austr/NZ	Nigeria	India	Irish-American	Philippines
Numbers	17,726	17,642	16,986	14,699	12,791
Share of Irish born	39.6%	5.1%	5.5%	34.6%	2.9%
Nat.groups	USA	China	Brazil	Pakistan	South Africa
Numbers	11,015	10,896	8,704	6,847	4,872
Share of Irish born	4.4%	4.0%	1.4%	3.6%	2.9%
Nat.groups	Russia	Ukraine	Malaysia	Moldova	Australia
Numbers	3,896	3,343	3,295	2,881	2,849
Share of Irish born	5.0%	3.2%	5.0%	3.3%	5.0%
Nat.groups	Mauritius	Canada	Bangladesh	Congo	Zimbabwe
Numbers	2,844	2,384	2,319	1,770	1,537
Share of Irish born	3.80%	4.20%	2.20%	3.70%	2.50%

Status and background of non-EU nationals

There are various channels of migration. Thanks to the strong economy with labour and skill shortages, many non-EU nationals had arrived in Ireland between 2000 and 2008. However, after the accession of 10 new countries to the EU the EU national population in Ireland many former non-EU nationals became EU nationals while the unrestricted access to the booming Irish labour market attracted thousands of new EU nationals. Subsequently, the share of EU nationals in Ireland increased dramatically between 2004 and 2008 resulting in a migrant population where approximately two-thirds of people had arrived from within the EU. Ireland restricted its very liberal labour migration policy in respect of non-EU nationals in 2004 by limiting the issuance of employment permits to sectors and occupations where EU nationals could not fill the shortages. They also introduced a labour market test.[7] The Green Card scheme for highly skilled non-EU nationals was brought in 2007 to target highly skilled non-EU nationals in strategic occupations.[8]. In 2003 around 47,000 permits (both new and renewal) were issued while in 2008 less than 14,000. Nevertheless out of those there were over 8,000 new permits issued in 2008, only around 2,000 less than in 2004. In 2009 the employment permit system was further tightened[9] and by 2012 there were only 4,007 and 2013 3,863 employment permits issued.

In the mid 90s there were only around 500 applications for asylum per year. This increased dramatically to 11,634 in 2002.[10] After 2002 the number of applications started dropping and in 2012 they were 956 application submitted for asylum while almost the same number, 946

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[7] Vacancies had to be advertised for 4 weeks in the National Employment Authority (FÁS) website and national newspaper. It had to be demonstrated that no EU nationals could not be found to fill the vacancies.
[8] It replaced the previous work authorisation scheme. Qualified applicants do not need to go through the labour market test.
[9] They added many occupations to the list of ineligible occupations and removing strategic occupations from the Green Card list.
[10] In 2000 The Government introduced the direct provision centres where asylum seekers are housed until their applications concluded.

applications were recorded in 2013. [11] The recognition rate for asylum seekers has been low in European comparison (Annual Integration Monitors 2010-2012; Eurostat).

A significant non-EU national group, many of whom were previously asylum seeker, is the so-called "parents of Irish born citizens". Approximately 17,000 people were authorised to stay in Ireland on the basis of being a parent of a child with Irish citizenship on the foot of a once-off scheme in 2005 (known as the IBC scheme). [12] Those children who gained citizenship prior to change in citizenship law in 2004 were allowed to stay and be accompanied with their parents as a result of the scheme. Most recently, a new scheme was introduced following the decision of the European Court of Justice in the Zambrano case. As a result of the new scheme parents of EU citizen children were invited to apply for permission to remain in Ireland if otherwise they do not hold permission to stay.

There are also other non-EU family members that may stay in Ireland. Only refugees and EU nationals have the statutory right to be accompanied by their family members. There are administrative schemes for the purpose of family reunification of non-EU migrant workers and Irish nationals. The registration data suggests (see below) that the number of non-EU family members residing in Ireland increased significantly in the last few years.

Ireland has attracted a growing number of students from the early 2000s. The three main groups are third level students, those in further education and English language students. In 2011, 37% of students studied Degree Programmes, 22% non-Degree Programmes and 9% other (accountancy, secondary school) (Annual Integration Monitor, 2012).

Registration figures with the immigration authorities reveals as to what ground non-EU nationals received permission to remain in Ireland. A similar share of the non-EU nationals arrived as a student and for other reasons where the latter include, among others, the large group of parents of Irish citizen children; a marked but somewhat smaller number came to Ireland as a family member. While still an important group, the number of those whose residency permission was based on employment decreased and the number of family members went up. The overall drop in the number of registration since 2008 is the result of the decline in the number of permits issued for employment purposes. Provisional figures suggest that this trend continued in 2013. The Department of Justice suggested that the significant number of naturalisation might have contributed to the drop in the number of registrations (Department of Justice, 2013).

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[11] Drop in numbers can be linked to a number of factors: the change in citizenship rules as children of asylum seekers no longer qualified for citizenship; introduction of fast tracking of application from countries such as Nigeria and the drop in the number of applications in most industrialised countries.
[12] This scheme followed the enactment of the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 2004 that prescribed that children born in Ireland no longer had the automatic right to citizenship but a parent need to be legally resident for three out of last four year.
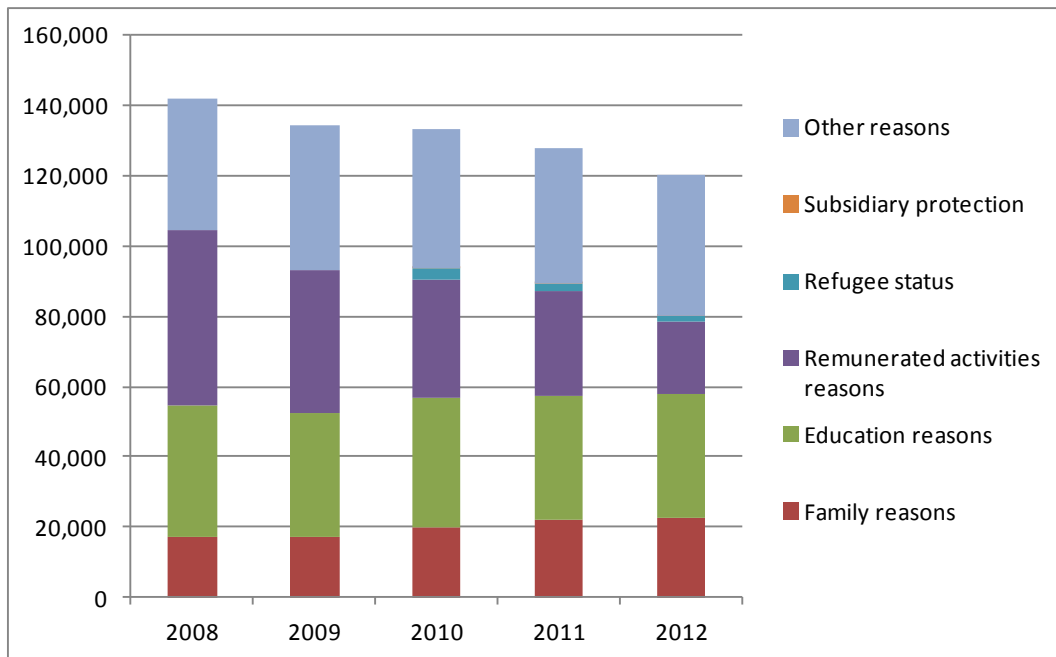
Those non-EU nationals who acquired citizenship may vote in national election. The number of non-EU nationals gaining citizenship increased markedly since 2005. Between 2005 and 2013 more than 70,000 non-EEA national adults received citizenship.

Citizenship acquisitions among non-EU/EEA nationals, 2005-2013[13]							
Year	Adults	Children aged 16>	Top countries*				
2005-2009[14]	20,000	N/A					
2010	4,969	1,040	Nigeria	Philippines	India	S. Africa	China
2011	9529	590	Philippines	Nigeria	India	Bangladesh	Ukraine
2012	20,198	3,973	Nigeria	Philippines	India	Pakistan	Ukraine
2013[15]	17, 934	5,148					

Socio-economic and cultural profile of the non-EU population

The **education background** of non-EU nationals is worth mentioning. The qualification level of non-EU nationals exceeds that of Irish nationals with a large proportion of third degree holders in their group. While this can be partly explained by Ireland's success in attracting skilled non-EU nationals through its employment permit system, the figures suggest that some of the third degree holders

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[13] *Number of naturalisations by EU nationals is small and do not feature in figures. European Economic Area (EEA) comprises of EU Member States, Norway and Lichtenstein. Source: Annual Integration Monitor 2013, based on data from Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service
[14] Includes post-nuptial citizenship in 2005
[15] Provisional figures by INIS (See Annual Integration Monitor 2013)

arrived through other channels, for instance as a family member or as a parent of Irish born citizen. Ireland has one of the most highly skilled non-EU populations in Europe.

	Irish	Non-Irish	Out of which	Old EU	New EU	UK	Non-EU
Second level exam	29.5%	10.0%	5%	7.2%	21.4%	6.8%
Upper secondary	17.3%	14.6%	10%	17.2%	18.3%	9.5%
Post-second level certificate (Trade/Craft)	14.9%	22.0%	18%	31.2%	19.9%	12.0%
All third level degree and above	20.2%	22.7%	40%	15.4%	24.1%	26.3%
Not stated	3.1%	4.8%	4%	4.8%	4.6%	5.2%
Total whose full-time education has not ceased	15.1%	25.9%	23%	24.3%	11.6%	40.2%

Examining **the religious background** of non-EU national groups shed light to some of the cultural differences exist between non-EU and EU groups. The share of Catholic is much smaller than among Irish. Among Asians and Americans the share of those with no religions is much higher. Accordingly, there is marked difference between non-EU groups and Irish nationals regarding their religion. It must not be forgotten however that Muslims and those belonging to Other Stated religions still account for less than half of the African and Asian population. Catholics make up a quarter of the African and a third of the Asian population: a still significant share. The representation of Anglican groups is the same among Africans as among Irish.[16]

	Irish	Non-EU European	African	Asian	American	All nationalities
Roman Catholic	89.8%	13.6%	23.5%	29.6%	55.1%	84.7%
Church of Ireland, England, Anglican, Episcopalian	2.4%	1.1%	6.2%	1.2%	2.5%	2.7%
Muslim (Islamic)	0.5%	12.6%	21.1%	23.4%	0.7%	1.1%
Orthodox (Greek, Coptic, Russian)	0.2%	54.6%	2.0%	3.5%	0.6%	1.0%
Other Christian religion	0.6%	1.8%	13.2%	3.9%	5.3%	0.9%
Presbyterian	0.4%	0.4%	4.2%	0.5%	3.0%	0.5%
Apostolic or Pentecostal	0.1%	0.2%	12.0%	0.6%	0.7%	0.3%
All non-Catholic Christian groups	3.7%	58.1%	37.6%	9.7%	12.1%	5.4%
Other stated religions	0.9%	3.8%	11.9%	19.2%	11.6%	1.7%
No religion/not stated	5.2%	11.9%	5.9%	18.0%	20.5%	7.2%
Total (%)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total (000s)	3,927,143	16,307	41,642	65,579	24,884	4,525,281
Source: EMN Ireland based on Census 2011						

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[16] Not only is religion an important aspect of cultural understanding and possible factor in building trust among groups but in Ireland churches can play an important role as a civic arena utilised by political actors.

Political structures in Ireland

Local authorities and the national parliament

Until 2014 June the local government consisted of the following structures: 79 Town Councils, 29 County Councils, 5 City Councils and 5 Borough Councils. However, in 2012 the Government set out a plan for rationalisation of the current system which had some overlapping authorities due to historical reasons (Department of Environment, 2012). Following the local election in 2014 this reduction in the number of local authorities from 114 to 31 City and County Councils. Council seats were reduced by 500. Integrated areas called 'Municipal Districts' will be set up soon; they largely correspond to local electoral areas. As a result, there is a comprehensive territorial configuration of each county into "municipal districts" based generally around principal towns and titled appropriately, with the combined district membership constituting the membership of the plenary County Council. The significant reduction in the number of seats available created more competition, posing challenges for newcomers, although a number of urban areas saw an increase in the number of seats to be filled as a result of adjustment to correspond to populations increase.

The National Parliament (Oireachtas) consists of the President and two Houses: Dáil Éireann (House of Representatives) and Seanad Éireann (the Senate) whose functions and powers derive from the Constitution of Ireland. Dáil Éireann is the principal chamber of the Oireachtas and is the House from which the Government (the Executive) is formed and to which it is responsible. The 165 Members of Dail Éireann are directly elected by the people.[17] Deputies are called Teachtaí Dála or TD. The Seanad, the Upper House, is not directly elected but selected in a number of ways.[18] The main coalition partner to the present government wanted to abolish the Seanad (Irish Independent, 26 December 2012). However, in 2013 the referenda was – although narrowly – defeated and the Seanad will continue to operate.[19]

Electoral system

In Ireland the **single transferable voting system** is used both in local and national elections. The system is designed to ensure proportional representation by asking voters to rank candidates. Accordingly, an elector's vote is initially allocated to his or her most preferred candidate, and then, after candidates have been either elected or eliminated, any surplus or unused votes are transferred according to the voter's stated preferences. The advantage of the system is achieving approximately proportional representation and reducing wastage of votes by utilising second, third and further preferences votes (where applicable).[20] It also permits voters to cast for individual candidates rather

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[17] The Speaker (Ceann Comhairle) of the Dail is not elected.

[18] 43 senators are elected by councillors and parliamentarians, 11 are appointed by the Taoiseach, and six are elected by universities, giving a total of 60 members. Laws must be approved by both houses in most cases, however the powers of the Seanad are in effect limited to delay rather than veto legislation.

[19] See RTE News, 05 October 2013

[20] An STV election proceeds according to the following steps:
   1. Any candidate who has reached or exceeded the quota is declared elected. Quota is calculated by using the Droop quota: (valid votes cast/seats to fill+ 1)+1.

than for closed party lists by using multi-seat constituencies (voting districts). This aspect of the system leads to competition not only among parties but also within parties as candidates compete for the most important first preference votes in the multi- seat constituencies (See for instance Mutsawaribo, 2012).

Voting entitlement and the election system

In Ireland every person can vote in local election if they are ordinarily resident according to Electoral Act 1992. Furthermore, they can also stand in local election. The right of non-Irish nationals to run in election was introduced in 1963 and the right to stand in election was conferred in 1974. In the mid 90st the large groups of returning Irish followed by the thousands of migrants in the period 2000-2008 gave prominence to that entitlement. Ireland has one of the most inclusive voting rights and it received high scores on MIPEX in that respect.

There are four categories of voters based on their citizenship which determines the type of election they can vote at.

L   Local voters: that group includes non-EU citizens. This group usually include so called potential EU voters; EU nationals who are allowed to vote in local election but have not de-registered in order to vote in the European election

E – European voters: that group includes EU citizens that can vote both at local election and European election

D – Dail voters: that group includes UK citizens that can vote at parliamentary, local and European election

P – Presidential voters: that group include Irish citizens that can vote in referenda and presidential elections as well as parliamentary, local and European elections

Voter Registration process

In order to vote, every person must register at the Franchise Section of their local authority (city/county council). The councils maintain a register of electors which can be accessed by anyone. The Register comes into force the 15th February each year. People need to be 18 years of age on that date (15 February) when the register comes into force. A draft register is compiled and published every year 1st November. People may register 15 days before election by entering their name onto the Supplementary Register. As there is no compulsory registration of addresses in Ireland, the register of electorates is deemed necessary to verify the local residence of voters. Importantly, Garda (The Irish Police Force) needs to stamp registration forms in respect of the Supplementary Register.

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2. If a candidate has more votes than the quota, that candidate's surplus votes are transferred to other candidates. Votes that would have gone to the winner instead go to the next preference listed on their ballot.
3. If no one new meets the quota, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and that candidate's votes are transferred.
4. This process repeats until either a winner is found for every seat or there are as many seats as remaining candidates.

Political parties

The Republic of Ireland has four historical political parties, Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and the Labour Party and Sinn Fein as well as parties with more modern history such as the Green Party. Fianna Fail and Fine Gael have been the two biggest parties in Ireland, although in the 2011 election Fianna Fail suffered a historical loss, with the Labour Party overtaking it as the second biggest party. The government at the time of writing is a coalition comprised of Fianna Gael and the Labour Party.

Fine Gael is a centre-right to centrist political party and it is the largest party in Ireland currently. The Fine Gael party leader Enda Kenny serves as Taoiseach (Prime Minister). Fine Gael was founded on 8 September 1933 following the merger of its parent party Cumann na nGaedheal, the National Centre Party and the National Guard (popularly known as the "Blueshirts", a name still used colloquially to refer to the party). Its origins lie in the struggle for Irish independence and the pro-Treaty side in the Irish Civil War.[21] Fine Gael describes itself as a "party of the progressive centre" conforming strongly to the ideals of Christian democracy and compassionate centrism, and is often seen as being moderate on social issues but conservative as regards economics. It is strongly in favour of the European Union and opposed to physical force of republicanism.

According to their election manifesto, 2011, Fine Gael appear to approach the whole the phenomena of migrants in Ireland as an area of immigration and integration, justice and policing and citizenship processes. In relation to these areas, Fine Gael appears to have the position that immigration is a phenomena that is to be tightly and efficiently controlled and it advocates for addressing integration and diversity issues at government level. Fine Gael also remains committed to providing pathways to citizenship for non-Irish nationals, as well as adequate resources for those pathways to operate adequately for those seeking citizenship. In that respect the Minister for Justice realised those aims by reducing the significant backlog of citizenship applications, introducing new forms and citizenship ceremonies. It promised the introduction of a new version of the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill which was delayed. It remains to be seen to what extent that Bill will differ from the previous Bill introduced by the Fianna Fail government, which Fine Gael heavily criticised as an opposition party.

Fianna Fáil – The Republican Party, more commonly known as **Fianna Fáil,** is a centrist to centre-right, Irish republican and conservative political party in Ireland, founded on 23 March 1926. Historically, Fianna Fáil has been seen as to the left of Fine Gael but its main difference to Fine Gael originates back its anti-Treaty position during the Civil War.[22] Fianna Fail is described a classic "catch all" populist party - representing a broad range of people from all social classes and has been the biggest party in Ireland until the 2011 election. Since the formation of the first Fianna Fáil government on 9 March 1932, the party has been in power for 61 of the last 79 years.

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[21] The Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921 was a treaty between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and representatives of the secessionist Irish Republic that concluded the Irish War of Independence. It provided for the establishment within a year of an Irish Free State as a self-governing dominion within the British Commonwealth of Nations. It also provided Northern Ireland, which had been created by the Government of Ireland Act 1920, an option to opt out of the Irish Free State.

[22] Anglo-Irish Treaty 1921

Fianna Fail, emphasised the importance of streamlining migration processes through the introduction of the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill and thus rationalising the asylum process and minimising the occurrence of illegal migration. When it was in Government, it introduced the Bill which ultimately failed with the early election. However, that version of the Bill was criticised by NGOs whose concern the opposition parties partly adopted in their proposals for amendments.[23]

The **Labour Party** is a social-democratic political party that was founded in 1912 as the political wing of the Irish Trade Union Congress. Unlike the other main Irish political parties, Labour does not trace its origins to the original Sinn Féin. The Labour Party has served in government six times in coalition either with Fine Gael alone or with Fine Gael and other smaller parties, and once with Fianna Fáil. As of 9 March 2011 it is the junior partner in a coalition with Fine Gael for the period of the 31st Dáil.

The Labour Party's position, with respect to Immigration and Integration of migrants, is different from Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. The party, in its 2011 manifesto, approaches issues of immigration and integration with regard to fairness and maintaining an expedient immigration process, as opposed to the labour market, the economy or control of people in the asylum process. The manifesto recognises that there has been a failure to legislate for a fair and transparent immigration system, and that such failure has led to confusion, inconsistencies and long delays. The Labour Party, while maintaining that countries have to control levels of inward migration and set immigration policies, pledged to put comprehensive legislation on immigration and put in place an efficient and transparent administrative system for the immigration process that would incorporate a fair appeals process. The Labour Party also committed "to promote policies which integrate minority ethnic groups in Ireland, and which promote social inclusion, equality, diversity, and the participation of immigrants in the economic, social, political and cultural life of their communities" (the Labour Party, 2011).

Sinn Féin (We Ourselves) is an Irish republican political party in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. It is the oldest Irish political party, founded in 1905 by Arthur Griffith with the intention of bringing together different nationalist groups at the time.[24] Sinn Féin was split during the Civil War (1922-23) resulting in the establishment of a party that later became Fine Gael and lost further support when another faction left forming later Fianna Fail. The party in its present form has historically been associated with the violent republicanism in Northern Ireland. As a result of the peace process Sinn Féin began to competitively contest elections in the Republic of Ireland as well as Northern Ireland. Sinn Féin is currently in government in Northern Ireland. Sinn Féin embraces a unique mixture of ideology where republicanism, Catholic conservatism and leftist viewpoints fit together. Sinn Féin claims to promote civic nationalism as opposed to ethnic nationalism and places great emphasis on equality which probably stems from the fact that until recently Catholics were a minority in Northern Ireland. Those factors explain why Sinn Féin has been, in general, supportive of migrant issues in Ireland despite being classified as a nationalist party.

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[23] For instance, the Bill proposed the introduction of summary deportation in the case of people who could not produce documents verifying their residence in Ireland.
[24] Ireland was still part of the British Empire.

Sinn Fein' approach to immigration and integration is closely embedded in its equality and anti-racism policy. It places great emphasis on protecting migrants' rights and eradicate racism through education, responsible political dialogue, strengthening equality legislation and community-based responses. Its vision on integration is based on the definition of the intra-departmental group: "Integration means the ability to participate 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" (Sinn Féin website, based on Department of Justice, 1999).[25] Sinn Fein is however has not adopted any detailed policy position on immigration and integration recently.

The **Green Party** is a Green political party in Ireland. It was founded as the Ecology Party of Ireland in 1981 and in 1987 was renamed to its current title in English. The Green Party is a political party founded on the principles of peace, democracy, social justice, protection of the environment and sustainable use of natural resources. The Greens became part of the Irish government for the first time following the Irish general election, 2007, having agreed upon a programme for government in coalition with Fianna Fáil and the Progressive Democrats. The party announced its withdrawal from government on 23 January 2011. It lost all its seats in the 2011 early election as many voters felt they were responsible along with Fianna Fail for what many saw as poor handling of the financial crisis.

In 2011 the Green Party explicitly set out priorities in respect of integration of migrants. It promised to protect funding for English language classes, ensure further training in cultural diversity for the public sector and tackle racism and xenophobia through awareness raising and monitoring incidents. After losing all its seats in the 2011 election, the party began to concentrate on rebuilding its support base and preparing for the next local election and does not appear to articulate positions on integration or immigration issues.

There are a number of left parties in Ireland that are small but has increased their popularity since the recession such as People Before Profit, Socialist Party and Socialist Workers Party.

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[25] Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, *Integration: A Two Way Process.* Report to the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform by the Interdepartmental Working Group on the Integration of Refugees in Ireland, Dublin:
DJELR, 2001. p.42.

3. Research

The empirical research on the party political participation of people with an immigrant (non-EU) background in Ireland was completed between May and October 2013. Desk research was mostly completed prior to that in 2013; however, some additional information was also added after the completion of the empirical work to make the report up-to-date as far as possible. The following will present the information collected during the fieldwork, complemented with relevant findings of desk research in each section.

Methodology used in fieldwork

The interviews were conducted using the guidelines adopted by the project partners in April 2013. Accordingly, semi-structured interviews and two focus groups were carried out with the five target groups identified in the guidelines. 37 (39) people were reached through the fieldwork. That included 29 interviews and two focus groups with migrant organisations.[26] All four major parties were approached in early 2013 with a view to securing their agreement to participate in the project. Agreement was secured with the Labour Party, first, followed by ones with Fine Gael, Fianna Fail and Sinn Fein. While Green Party suffered heavy losses in the 2011 elections, it was decided to involve them as they ran several EU and non-EU candidates in 2009; one of whom (an EU national) was elected while two others came very close. The table below shows the results of the latest parliamentary and local elections.

Party	Number of seats won in general election 2011	Number of seats won in local election 2009
Fine Gael	76	556
Fianna Fail	20	407
Labour Party	37	231
Sinn Fein	14	127
Green Party	0	18
Others	5	22
Independent	14	275

The Party secretariat was approached first and they assigned a person to be responsible for the project. This person subsequently provided the researcher with a list of potential interviewees and also offered some help in reaching those people. Some additional people were identified too. Respondents to the questions aimed at party officials about party structure and the approach towards migrant communities included equality officers, members of the executive, senior party member and a chairperson. Political parties in Ireland are more decentralised than in many other European countries and their headquarters are relatively small. Accordingly, it seemed sufficient to interview one official per party and discuss structural questions (membership and nomination) with some political representatives, also.

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[26] Two EU nationals (not include in the overall number of 37) were also invited to one of the discussions to find out the similarities and differences among their experiences and experiences of non-EU nationals.

Parties	Number interviewed
Labour Party	8
Fine Gael	6
Fianna Fail	6
Sinn Fein	4
Green	3
Independent	1
Migrant org.	12 (3 are also party members)

Regarding native politicians, a mixture of national and local Irish politicians were interviewed. Furthermore, 6 non-EU members of parties and 4 local election candidates (2009 election) were included in the research. One person was chairperson of his branch and another held a position in a party's subcommittee. One independent councillor was also interviewed since at the time of the interviews he had been a councillor for the second time (the only migrant politician who can claim that). Out of the 6 migrant members of parties, three were also involved in migrant organisations and/or forums.

Role	Numbers
Councillor with non-EU background (local politician)	1
Candidate with non-EU background	4
Party member with migrant background	6
Migrant intern	1
Irish TD (member of the parliament) and senator	7
Irish councillor (local politician)	4
Party officials	6

Major migrant organisations were approached through existing contacts. Those organisations do not represent single ethnic groups but tend to work across different communities although they may differ in their choosing of key target groups or regional focus. In addition, some representatives of integration forums were also approached. Integration forums have been established in a number of local areas with the view to bringing together various ethnic community representatives to liaise with the local authority and other local services.

The research focused on the party political participation of migrants primarily at local level. This was a natural outcome of the research. The major reason for this is the recent nature of migration into Ireland. Firstly, as confirmed by the desk research, it would be unrealistic to expect any significant political representation in the national parliament and party executives. Related to that is the size of adult second generation migrant population that is too small to allow for drawing any meaningful conclusion (although interestingly, one of the TDs in the Dáil is a second generation migrant). Added to that, non-EU citizens have the full right to run and take part in local election and their focus, if interested in political participation, is therefore is on local participation. On the other hand, it is recognised that in recent years thousands of non-EU nationals received citizenship thus obtaining the right to vote and run in parliamentary elections and therefore this situation is likely to change in the future. This has the potential of creating a new significant voting bloc, something that will be explored later in the report. Nevertheless, when it comes to party political participation in Ireland, as

outlined by the desk research and several interviewees here, it needs to be developed from the local level which is why a lot of discussion centred upon local participation.

Migrants as constituency members and voters

In 2013 just over a third of non-Irish adults were registered to vote (154,008): a considerable group but still is markedly lower that the estimated non-Irish voting age population, aged 18 or older, 450,646 in the same period. UK nationals aside, 102,556 non-Irish/UK nationals were registered among those eligible (353,504); that is an estimated 29%.

According to a research with 400 people representing four large nationality/ethnic groups in Ireland, Nigerians were more likely to register (50%) to vote than Indians or Chinese (15-20%) (Migration and Citizenship Initiative, 2009). Among those who were not registered, 70% of Indians did not know how to register, with only 30% of Chinese and Nigerians reporting similar reason. Lithuanians were the least interested according to the research indicating that EU groups may show less interest either because they see their stay as temporary or for being disinterested in politics, which often characterises citizens of Central and East Europe. Among Nigerians and Chinese around the third of those who were not registered did not exhibit any interest. It was argued that the current registration system may discourage migrants and an electronic registration system would enhance the level of registration among migrant communities (too) (Fanning, 2009, Fanning 2014). In particular, the need for the Garda to stamp supplementary registration forms can act as a disincentive. This especially affects those who distrust the police on account of negative experience in their home countries or having their immigration status pending. Those commentators called for changing that policy so that local authorities would be authorised to approve registration for the supplementary register, too (Fanning et al, 2009; Dobbs, 2009). Aside the potential reluctance to register with the Garda, the general process of voter registration can be seen as unfamiliar for migrants.

Prior to the local election in 2009 a number of councils along with NGOs implemented campaigns of inviting non-Irish nationals to register for voting. The Office of Migrant Integration (then a junior post) funded a number of initiatives. Dublin City Council produced materials in 20 languages. In the 10 biggest local councils in five metropolitan areas an increase of 12,471 non-EU nationals was recorded reaching a total of 38,774 in 2009 prior to the elections. Their numbers exceeded the number of EU nationals registered (2,107). Political parties also carried out voter registration drives (see below); but the biggest efforts were made by the voluntary sector. Dobbs examined the role of voter education campaign in the political participation of migrants in Ireland. She noted that despite some success in voter registration and creating an interest in electoral participation among migrants those non-partisan campaigns were limited in their capacity to build bridge among migrant communities and political parties (Dobbs, 2009).

The Getting On research on four large ethnic groups showed that out of those registered, 40% Nigerians voted but only 11% of Indians. This compares to 21% of Lithuanians (Migration and Citizenship Initiative, 2009). New Communities Partnership and Africa Centre, two of NGOs that carried out a voter registration campaign, disseminated a survey among those who registered to vote as a result of their voter registration campaign. Although it was a small-scale survey, notably

94% of those registered during the campaign exercised their vote (New Communities Partnership & Africa Centre, 2009).

Some commentators argue that the mechanics of the electoral system may be difficult to grasp, and even ranking candidates might be unusual for migrant voters (See Dobbs, 2009). Therefore the complicatedness of the voting system may discourage migrant voters from casting their vote. On the other hand, it is reasonable to assume that most migrant voters can understand the system of ranking once explained to them, which is the central element of the voting process. The aforementioned voting campaigns put emphasis not only encouraging migrants to register to vote but on describing voting process and the role of the councils elected.

*The need for **the State to sensitise** voter participation among migrant communities was also underlined. In 2009 there was funding available to carry out poster campaigns and meetings and thousands of migrants were registered through collaboration between migrant organisations and local authorities; however there are only limited resources available for similar initiatives in the run up the 2014 election. In general, it was argued that more needs to be done to encourage voter participation, including public awareness campaigns and some funding for information workshops including using the large scale citizenship ceremonies attended by thousands of new Irish citizens (Fanning, 2014).*

It was mentioned above that a significant number of non-EU nationals received citizenship since 2005 enabling them to vote in both local and general elections. Niessen points out that in the case of Ireland as well as other five European countries favourable voting rights compensate for difficulties in accessing citizenship in terms of conditions to be met (Niessen, 2012).[27] Improvements in the citizenship process should thus further boost electoral participation. The European Social Survey, using data from the period 2002-2010, demonstrated that a large number of naturalised Irish citizens exercise their right to vote (European Social Survey, 2002-2010). A more recent survey of naturalised citizens also examined voting patterns. 86.8% of the respondents were non-EU citizens in line with nationwide figures. Among those who answered the question 80.3% voted in local election and 53.5% in general election. Although it is small sample, it indicates that among naturalised citizens there seems considerable interest in voting (Immigrant Council, 2013). Further research would be useful to confirm this and examine reasons.

General engagement between political parties and migrants

Migrants as local residents

A key emerging point from many of the interviews was the importance of **initial engagement** between political representatives and migrant communities. Before voter participation and party membership is considered, relationship needs to be developed between political parties and migrant communities. It was noted that Irish politics is often described as local and many parties have local branch meetings where people can be invited to. Furthermore, Irish political representatives run advice services to assist constituency members with their cases mostly concerning accessing various

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[27] Ireland scores well in regard to eligibility as applicants need to have five years residency prior to their application.

public services and engaging with authorities. Those so-called advice clinics are open to any residents and can offer the first point of contact between migrants and political representatives.

There were mixed views as to what extent migrants make use of those opportunities but in general it was agreed by Irish politicians that migrants are, at least to some degree, under-represented among their clients. It was noted that there has been some increase in using so-called **advice clinics** by migrants and some Irish politicians in fact estimated that they had a considerable number of migrant clients but several others did not share those experiences. It is difficult to draw firm conclusion but it seems that politicians' proactive approach may have been a positive factor in attracting good number of migrant clients. Most commonly, non-EU nationals approached political representatives for help with their application for residency (including asylum cases) and citizenship as well as social housing. Several political representatives and party officials talked about assisting and supporting victims of racist incidents through liaising with the Garda (Irish Polish force) and local authorities as well as youth service (when perpetrators were young). One interviewee talked about the importance of demonstrating support through, for instance, cleaning up racist graffiti by local party members.

Both migrants themselves and a few politicians suggested that assistance by politicians created interest at least among some migrant clients in **getting involved i**n political parties. Several politicians and party officials argued however that it was difficult to identify significant political interest among groups. Still, several examples were taken where migrant canvassed for the politicians and casted their votes to the politicians subsequently to previous engagement with them. More active involvement in the party tended to take longer time but it developed to that stage among some migrants.

Migrant organisations and groups

Most political representatives engaged with **migrant groups** and **organisations** and emphasised the need to be open towards what is often described in Ireland as "new communities". Some parties made attempts to be strategic in building relationship with migrants groups and organisations and this brought some success. However, in general individual efforts play a central role in engagement between migrants and party representatives. A number of politicians assisted community groups including religious groups. It was pointed out that by **taking initiative** and visiting places and organisations frequented by migrants, politicians can build relationship with migrant communities. Places of worship and community organisations were highlighted as main examples. An example was taken where the party organised a debate on the Lisbon treaty in a mosque. The format allowed for better participation by certain migrant groups and also led to a discussion of relevant issues concerning those groups apart from debating the treaty.

A number of individuals **supported initiatives** by groups or organisations or invited migrants to attend and present at the party meeting. Organised lobbying was typically carried out by migrant organisations as opposed to ethnic groups and several Irish politicians were aware or even engaged with those organisations. It must be noted however that interviews may have disproportionately attracted politicians with a particular interest in migrant engagement. Of note is the fact that some respondents worked in areas with low migrant population but decided to lend their support to campaigns on migrant issues. One of those politicians took a very active role in engaging with

migrant organisations on a regular basis and addressing the problem of racism by supporting initiatives concerned with legal reform and educational programmes. It was particularly valued by migrants when politicians offered support even if he or she had less obvious political gain. An example was taken when the politician continued to support the local integration forum even when she was no longer the mayor.

One official highlighted that while it seems effective, cross-community initiatives aimed at targeting communities together through their representatives can create difficulties as communities may not have accepted leaders. One community organisation further noted that there could be disproportionate focus on reaching migrants through community and religious organisation whereas many non-EU nationals are not part of an organisation and do not necessarily attend religious services in a church (but for instance gather in their homes). He argued that political representatives should try to ensure that their door-to-door canvassing and local events are inclusive of the local migrant population and do not assume lack of interest among migrants.

Voter registration

In Ireland everyone has to register with their local authorities to be eligible to vote due to the fact that, otherwise, there are no municipal registers in Ireland which would verify people's addresses. It was agreed that registration can therefore be seen as the first hurdle in voting. It is equally important that, once registered, people cast their votes on the day of election. There were mixed views as to who should take the lead in ensuring voter registration and voting among migrant communities. Some argued that more initiative has to come from migrant communities. Interestingly, those who assigned major responsibility of voter awareness to NGOs included both some Irish politicians and migrant candidates. Equally, both some migrant respondents and Irish politicians and officials recognised the need for parties to be proactive. NGOs were especially vocal, pointing out that parties are best placed to raise awareness of voting rights and help with the process of registration whereas similar initiatives require extra resources from migrant organisations. They argued that parties were quick to write off migrant communities citing lack of interest. Some parties felt that previous efforts (mostly initiated from headquarters) did not produce sufficient results. As of now, one party did produce information material to be distributed across local areas and their networks. Another party decided to initiate a focused, localised campaign targeting an area with high concentration of migrants.

Some migrant party members accepted the need for migrant communities to make strong efforts in this field but with support from the party. One interviewee related how he did a significant amount of door-to-door campaigning prior to the 2009 local election and planned similar initiatives before the 2014 local election. He emphasised, similarly to the Irish political representative above, that migrants need to be active in order for their concerns to be taken into consideration, quoting an African saying **"If you don't do politics, politics will do you"** (Migrant party member). Notably, he is a member of a party and suggested the aforementioned initiative of door-to-door canvassing among migrants households. According to him, however, he received lukewarm support among party members. It may have been that the feasibility of the initiative was questioned; however, it is notable that party members were not ready to give more serious consideration to the proposal.

Another migrant party member organised a workshop around political participation in summer 2013 and planned to do similar initiatives in 2014.

A number of interviewees, both Irish and migrants, agreed on the need for **the State to sensitise** voter participation among migrant communities. In 2009 there was funding available to carry out poster campaigns and meetings and thousands of migrants were registered through collaboration between migrant organisations and local authorities; however there are only limited resources available for similar initiatives in the run up the 2014 election. Migrant representatives noted that the inclusion of a leaflet on voting for new citizens at the citizenship ceremonies was a positive step but it required considerable lobbying until the proposal was adopted. In general, both Irish and migrant respondents argued that more needs to be done to encourage voter participation, including public awareness campaigns and some funding for information workshops.

Voting

Party representatives (both politicians and officials) underlined the less than desirable participation of **migrants in elections.** Party representatives, to some degree, put the onus on migrants indicating that if they do not cast their votes they will be less likely to be considered by political representatives. One official stated:

"The more they get involved, the more they are seen as voters, the more politicians pay attention to them…" (Party official)

A TD, who otherwise had assisted several migrants in their application for immigration status and citizenship, argued that **"If new communities all decided to vote, the parties would give them a whole lot more attention." (Irish National Politician)**

It was stressed that mobilising migrant voters is a particular challenge for migrant candidates. They, as migrant candidates, are expected to collect votes from the migrant population but even for them persuading migrants to register and take part in elections is a great task.

Party officials felt that a low voter turn-out characterise not only migrant communities but other parts of the population and focusing solely on migrant communities would not be a sufficient approach. **"The best way to make Irish politics more representative is to increase voter turn-out and interest across all communities. " (Party official)**

It was suggested that parties were becoming aware that there is significant voting power there; although opinion diverged between migrant organisations that felt parties could make stronger efforts and party officials and politicians who argued that migrants should demonstrate their interest. Some argued that parties need to relate to migrant voters and motivate them. One migrant party member noted that migrant candidates also need to run original and convincing campaigns if they wish to draw on the support of migrant voters. The question of how to relate to migrant voters brings us to the question of how migrant issues are represented in the political arena in Ireland.

Representing migrant issues

Integration debate is largely absent in Ireland while migration issues concern a minority of political representatives. According to survey carried out in 2011 and 2012, immigration issues were raised by

only 3 in 10 TDs (Members of the Dail, the principal chamber of the Irish Parliament) in so far as they had spoken in the Dáil about immigrants/refugee rights; although in 2012 this increased to 45% of TDs. In 2011 one in three also felt that immigration would become more politically contentious in the future and over a third of TDS indicated that speaking out in favour of immigrant rights would impact negatively on their support. By 2012 those fearing negative backlash in their constituencies accounted for a smaller share of respondents, with 18% of TDs fearing backlash. This may be reflective of the fact that there were a number of new TDs elected who became more comfortable speaking about issues they previously considered to be more controversial. Nevertheless even in 2012 almost one in five TDs preferred refraining from speaking on behalf of immigrants (MillwardBrown-Landsdown, 2011/2012).

On a positive side, promoting negative, anti-immigrant message is almost non-existent among national politicians who despite the recession did not call for the departure of migrant groups.[28] What is important here that although there is a considerable support among the Irish electorate for restricting migration but that view did not lead to establishment of anti-immigrant parties or developing anti-immigrant policies. O'Malley argues that Sinn Fein occupies the space of an ethnocentric, nationalist party; but due to its historical position in Northern Ireland, its position remained pro-migrant (although some of its supporters may disagree with those views) (O'Malley, 2008). In terms of discourse, The Anti-Racism Election Protocol has been used as an instrument since 2001 in that parties made a public statement that they would conduct the election in a manner that they do not incite hatred or prejudice on the grounds of 'race', colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin, religious belief and membership of the Traveller Community. All of the major political parties have pledged to support the protocol and include it in their election strategies and activities; including Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, Green Party, Labour Party, Sinn Féin, Socialist Party, Workers' Party, Libertas, People before Profit Alliance.[29]

Nevertheless some politicians belonging to the various parties made public comments that can be viewed as racist. Often they would try to defend those as not being intended as such. In 2013 January when debating the Taxi Regulation Bill 2012, Fianna Fail Senator Mooney claimed that non-national driver cannot drive taxi properly and he would not use a vehicle driven by them. He later withdrew his remarks and apologised (Irish Time, 24 January 2013). Earlier in 2012 independent Councillor Seamus Treanor in County Monaghan claimed that immigrants would collapse the welfare system

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[28] There were some local politicians who however made statements that can be regarded as anti-immigrant. See further below

[29] Candidates running for political office will adhere to a number of principles In their campaigning by

- sending a consistent and clear message to my constituents that I reject racism;
- condemning any campaign materials or statements that may incite hatred or express prejudice on the grounds of 'race', colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin, religious belief and membership of the Traveller Community;
- guaranteeing that when engaging in on-going debate in relation to groups which are the potential targets of racism, such as asylum seekers, refugees, migrant workers and Travellers, the candidates contribution to the debate is conducted in a responsible way, with respect to the dignity and rights of minority ethnic groups;
- using appropriate and inclusive language and words when referring to people of different ethnic backgrounds;
- and informing all of the political campaigners about this Protocol.

(Hough J, The Journal.ie, 2012). The widest coverage relates to a member of Fina Gael, Darren Scully. In 2011, Darren Scully, a Fine Gael local councillor and the Mayor of Naas, a town in County Kildare, caused national controversy after making a number of inflammatory comments about Black African constituents. In these comments Scully claimed that he would no longer represent African countries because he found them aggressive and "quick to play the race card". After the comments, which caused a national outcry, Scully attempt to apologise but had to resign his position as Mayor (O'Connell H, The Journal.ie, 2011). His party whip was removed although he was not expelled from the party.[30] Although he was criticised strongly by NGOs and commentators there also appeared to be some support for his views among the public, and T.D. A.O'Riordain, who lodged a complaints against the mayor, received a number of abusive calls and letters (Dervan, Irish Central.com, 2011). D.Scully was re-admitted to the party in 2014 and won a seat in the local election in 2014.

On the whole, the lack of debate may be also linked to the absence of co-ordinated integration policy. The Government published its statement on integration, Migration Nation in 2008 but that document only set out key areas. It convened the Ministerial Council on Integration in 2009 but the five regional councils only met once. It must be acknowledged that a number of public service sector adopted its own intercultural strategies[31]; however strategies in a large part contain strategic goals and principles and resources no longer available to support the implementation of concrete actions. After the election of the new Government in 2011 the Ministerial Position of Integration that was established in 2007 discontinued. The financial crisis and the collapse of public finances diverted attention from areas such as the integration of migrants. A positive development in the early 2014, the Government announced the development of a national integration policy. It put a call for submissions and invited a number of those who made submissions to further discuss their proposal. It remains to be seen if that policy will consist of concrete measures or more overarching aims.

Citizenship is an area which the new Government elected in 2011 decided to concentrate on for the purpose of addressing the shortcomings of the process. It cut the waiting times and increased significantly the number of applications decided. The new Minister for Justice introduced citizenship ceremonies in 2011, which were widely welcomed. The biggest national newspaper and some TV covered the story of a number of new Irish nationals since the introduction of the ceremonies. School education received considerable attention. Schools had little preparation in dealing with a large influx of migrant students. Annual Integration Monitors illustrated that non-English speaking children under-achieve in secondary schools[32]. Regrettably, as part of the cuts, the Government reduced funding for English Language Support in schools. Teacher unions and NGOs criticised the decision.[33] Another important factor is that school over-subscribed, particularly in cities, and in several areas many migrant children are clustered in less popular schools which are often designated as disadvantaged (ESRI). It is also important to note the denominational character of Irish schools: over 90% of primary schools are under the patronage of Catholic church.[34] The secularisation of Irish

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[30] He lost the support of his party but he could still contest the election as Fine Gael candidate.

[31] Intercultural Education Strategy; National Intercultural Health Strategy.

[32] Those from English speaking backgrounds perform similarly to their Irish peers.

[33] Children's Rights Alliance, 2011; RTE news, 'Cuts to English language support criticised'

[34] There are a number of other smaller religions patrons running schools but only a small number of multi-denominational schools exist. The local authorities have no role in school education. The school education

society was a significant factor in reviewing that structure; however, the arrival of migrant students, half of whom are non-Catholic is another crucial aspect of the debate. On the initiative of the former Minister of Education, a member of the Labour Party, a review process of the school patronage was implemented in 2012. It was decided that school patronage will be transferred in 22 areas while 8 multi-denominational schools would be open at post-primary level.

The Government, through the Office of Integration, renamed to Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration in 2011, provided funding for sport organisations, faith bodies and many local authorities. A lot of emphasis in Ireland was put on encouraging participation of immigrant groups in cultural events and sports.[35] Faith dialogue projects were carried out success in Dublin and Cork resulting in the establishment of inter-faith forums.[36] The reduced funding however might lead to discontinuation of activities.

General political discourse on migrants and integration

It was noted that since the recession a lot of focus was placed on the economy, public finances and the large scale of unemployment. A national politician half-jokingly expressed her frustration by saying that **"I am sick of talking about the economy again." (Irish National Politician).** Migrant organisations and an Irish party official stated that, with the onset of the recession, political representatives were more careful or even reluctant to speak about migrant issues for the reason "**they did not want to be dragged into a debate that might become divisive and ugly**" (**Party official)**. Accordingly, he felt that parties and their politicians, at least national level, refrained from scapegoating migrants but became more reluctant to be vocal on migrant issues. Along with other Irish respondents (politicians and party officials) he pointed out that political representatives had been increasingly questioned by some of their Irish constituency members about migrants accessing various social services such as housing and schools as well employment opportunities: a development which can be linked back to the recession and subsequent rise in unemployment. Several Irish politicians and migrant organisations agreed that those views should be addressed by constructively pointing out that migrants are not responsible for inadequate resources.

It was underlined that in recent months several **local politicians made statements** suggesting that migrants gain access to services at the expense of Irish nationals. They noted that such statements and the seemingly soft approach by parties towards those party members may discourage migrants from engaging with political parties even if the party at national level refrain from making negative statements. One party official asserted that those statements did not represent party policies and parties reprimand those politicians (although not necessarily publicly). NGOs however felt that parties should have a clear disciplinary policy on how to react to anti-immigrant statements and send a clear message that they do not tolerate such misrepresentation of groups.

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system in Ireland is characterised by a unique partnership between schools, their patron bodies and the Department of Education.

[35] That included international sports, such as football and basketball, and traditional Irish sports. See www.integration.ie.

[36] See for instance Monitoring Integration in Dublin (2012)

Positive examples

On the other hand, migrant representatives agreed that a number of Irish politicians engaged with migrant communities very actively and can be seen **champions of integration issues**. Concentration of migrant population alone does not explain this; although politicians in an area of large migrant population tend to engage more with migrant communities they do not necessarily place particular emphasis on advocating on migrant issues (apart from individual cases). Those "champions" of integration issues that frequently attended meetings of migrant organisations and lobbied for policy changes came from areas with varying level of migrant population, with some areas heavily populated by migrants while others are less so. Irish politicians interviewed by this research confirmed this: they all engaged with migrant groups and organisations but the concentration of migrants in their constituencies actually varied. A number of migrant organisations were of the view that members of certain parties might be more willing to embrace migrant issues but individual interest and willingness were still considered key factors.

A number of migrant members talked about appreciating the opportunity to **speak at party meetings** about their backgrounds and problems. They felt that they were encouraged to bring issues of concerns and recommendations and felt being listened. One migrant member in fact expressed his satisfaction that some of his proposals made at local level were further discussed at constituency or even national level. Nevertheless none of the migrant party members could clearly identify a key issue that was raised by them to which the party responded through adopting a policy proposal at national level or making a representation at the local council or in the Dail (Irish Parliament). Interestingly, however, one independent migrant politician cited the example of a policy area where he managed to secure support in adopting a motion initially in his local council then, with support of other councillors representing parties, in other local councils across Ireland.

Recommendations

It was suggested that the best way forward is to **embrace key concerns of migrants**. One party official stressed that the parties need to champion a key policy issue e.g. change in the asylum system. An Irish local politician argued that the party benefited previously when, in government, it adopted policies that were favourable to migrants. It was observed that in 2013 parties were however not prioritising those issues and were not confident in their ability to convince the public of the universal benefit of the changes. An Irish local politician placed the responsibility on migrants, highlighting that parties will not make serious efforts in supporting migrant causes unless there is considerable number of votes by migrants. A national politician also observed that sometimes groups try to lobby politicians during election campaigns when candidates (and parties) are less likely to make serious commitment. He suggested that groups need to develop relationship with politicians during a period when election is not due.

A number of Irish politicians and a party official noted that **migrants should organise themselves better** and make concerted efforts in lobbying. Several politicians acknowledged the work of NGOs in advocacy and raising awareness and supported initiatives by NGOs e.g. anti-trafficking legislation, third level fees for resident non-EU children and hate crime legislation. However, it was felt that the activities of NGOs do not replace the need for migrant communities to become more organised and politically active at local level. Some migrant respondents were critical of migrant organisations

suggesting that NGOs do not necessarily facilitate political involvement of migrants. The opinion was that migrant organisations take a non-partisan approach in their advocacy work and very careful about engaging with the political actors that would suggest any bias. Accordingly, they tend not to facilitate or even encourage party political involvement of migrants, aside from encouraging voter registration and voting. Furthermore, one migrant respondent actually critically noted how her own organisation were effective in involving migrants in campaigns but did not promote the involvement in such opportunities as the Opening Power to Diversity internship scheme with TDs.

Some argued that a **lack of migrant representatives** can contribute to a perception among migrant communities that their issues are not considered strongly and therefore they should not approach political parties. The Intercultural Section in the Labour Party emphasised that they wished to offer a visible space where migrant issues can be discussed and proposals (in the form of motions or policy documents) can be brought forward. Their intention was that the committee is seen as voice for migrant and ethnic minority groups and their issues testified by the number of migrants serving on the committee. Notwithstanding the value of having such committee, the importance of having migrant representatives was underlined by interviewees from the Labour Party as well as other parties.

Party members

Becoming a member

The difficulty with quantifying the number of migrant members with political parties was underlined in previous studies. Party officials argued that the current membership does not allow for recording of birthplace or nationality of members. Firstly, there is no harmonised database of members in most parties at the moment. Secondly, it was argued that members, especially migrants, would not feel comfortable with answering questions on their nationalities Fanning argued that lack of monitoring may result in parties under-estimating the number of migrant members (Fanning, 2009).

Fanning also observed that there were considerable shift in parties' approaches towards immigrants in the run up to the 2009 local election. This was particularly noticeable with parties other than the Labour Party and Green Party. In 2007 many deferred actions on account of the majority of the migrant population lacking the right to vote in parliamentary election (Fanning et al, 2007). However, in 2009 all the parties have attempted to reach migrant communities with a view to attracting votes and candidates to the party. Fanning et al observed various approaches followed by parties:

1. *Labour party, as explained above, emphasised the importance of equality principles when approaching immigrants and ethnic minorities. Accordingly, the Labour Equality group, and more specifically, the Equality Officer led the work in respect of migrant communities. The party argued that the leadership of the party has to publicly encourage migrants to join the party but equally, grassroot efforts have to be made through engaging with community organisations. For instance, Labour party led workshops with African women's community groups. It also published guidelines on canvassing for its politicians to ensure that they*

approach migrant communities with sensitivity[37], refrain from any racist language and behaviour and are aware of the different voting rights of the groups of non-EU, EU and UK nationals.

2. *The Green Party underlined the core principle of openness, and accessibility of the party structure which was beneficial in their engagement with migrants. Sinn Fein party supported local initiatives but did not pursue centralised efforts to reach out to migrant communities. Similarly to Labour, it highlighted equality as a core principle underlying their work vis-à-vis migrant communities. It reported to researchers in 2009 that they had a branch which was predominantly Polish.*

3. *Both Fianna Fail and Fine Gael recruited integration officers to lead co-ordinated campaign to reach migrant communities. Further, Fianna Fail developed an Integration Strategy. Their primary target was the Polish community and the two Integration Officers, both Polish, made significant effort to encourage them to register and exercise to vote for the party and also run as candidates. They developed a special Polish section on their respective websites. It seemed that they regarded the Polish community as the easiest to reach and targeting other communities to the same degree may have been deemed too ambitious. Nevertheless, the Integration Officer from Fianna Fail reported establishing connection with various migrant communities. They published party literature in a range of languages; apart from Polish they provided materials in such language as Chinese and Lithuanian etc….The Integration Officer encouraged Fianna Fail representatives to engage with local migrant communities and prepared some information on those communities. But the major efforts were concentrated on the Polish community. Fianna Fail representatives met with a number of local Polish communities and attended their events. It is of note that according to rough estimation Fianna Fail may have had more African than Polish members. Notwithstanding the clear efforts made by parties to attract migrant voters and candidates, there remains a problem of the absence of monitoring the result of those efforts.*

4. *Most recently, perhaps the Labour Party and to some degree the Green Party has some specific policy or structure in place that is related to migrants. The Irish Labour Party structures and policies in place that are designed to reach out to various different social groups that are at risk of being marginalised. The special Labour Party Equalities Section, which is subdivided into subsections targeting those who are LGBT and people with disabilities, as well as another subsection targeting intercultural participation. Labour Intercultural promotes engagement with migrant groups and aims to attract them to the party but also ensure to create a platform for them to discuss and respond to integration and migration issues. It has engaged in wide ranging activities that aim to raise awareness of voting rights among potentially marginalised groups in a non-partisan manner; such activities include organising events, reaching out to NGOs and offering political activity.*

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[37] For instance, they highlighted that the practice of door-to-door canvassing might be unusual for migrant communities.

> 5. *The Constitution of the Green Party, which lost much of its support in the 2011 election, has addressed the issue of multiple Party memberships across national boundaries signifying the Green Party's recognition and acceptance that members may come from political jurisdictions outside of Ireland, i.e. non-Irish nationals. In the run up to the local election its manifesto included support for local integration plans developed in collaboration between community groups and local councils.*
>
> 6. *Fianna Fail has appointed a Women & Equality Officer in 2013. The person is responsible for outreach to women as well as young people and migrants. It was stated that much of the work had been done through the Ogra (Youth) section that recruited some migrant members.*

Rate of membership and monitoring

All parties reported having **migrant members** although they could not quantify the actual number of migrants in the party. Almost all Irish interviewees had engagement with a migrant member and/or volunteer in the party. It was accepted that migrants are under-represented within the party although some parties seemed to have better relative representation than others. It is also likely, as stated above, that interviews were skewed in the sense that Irish politicians with interest and engagement with migrants were more likely to be chosen for this research by the party. Party officials argued that the current membership does not allow for recording of birthplace or nationality of members. Firstly, there is no harmonised database of members in most parties at the moment. Secondly, it was argued that members, especially migrants, would not feel comfortable with answering question on their nationalities. Several parties however talked about efforts to streamline their system through issuing membership cards and improving their membership database.

Motivation for involvement and selection of parties

Among the interviewees, there was a great variety of **motives for becoming members** of the respective political parties. Many of the interviewees - but not all - were highly active members of their local communities, mostly through active citizenship activities and they felt that, by being involved in local political organisations, they could further their goals and objectives. It is of note that there were two Irish politicians who did not have a long history of community involvement and yet succeeded; however, one of them worked for a school and the other was involved in a sport club that potentially helped their campaigns. Several Irish and migrant interviewees joined parties with the clear intention of seeking out political office, but the many of the others thought about this only after a few years being a member in the party. In addition,, a number of migrant party members had political experience or at least interest in their countries of origin, although political participation was often difficult and ensued even persecution; their interest in political participation resurfaced in Ireland. Other migrant respondents (one politician and one intern in the Dail) talked about the significant change they experienced in his attitude towards politics: while in their countries of origin they refrain from being involved in politics (one person referring to it as "murky waters"), they enjoyed the initial positive experience that encouraged them to take an active part in politics in Ireland.

Ideology played a role for several Irish and migrant nationals in **choosing a party**. Interestingly, some migrant members reported surprisingly strong reasons for identifying with a party quoting historical

backgrounds and values such as "strong focus on environment;" "understanding the difficulties faced by farmers"; "limited government intervention"; "importance of equality". This suggests that they had carried out significant research (even if their perception of the party may not be fully shared by others or could be regarded as somewhat idealistic). Some respondents also regarded the party of their choice to be the most suitable to realise the goals they attached great importance to, related mostly to social issues. One migrant respondent underlined the importance of assistance received from a politician that was the first step towards him becoming interested in the party. An Irish politician also related that a client of hers, a constituency member she had assisted, had become interested in the party.

Pathways to involvement

As to **entry routes**, several Irish politicians joined the party as students, a route that were not available for most migrant nationals. Others entered the party through interaction with politicians or party members. A number of migrant nationals joined campaigns or canvassing for candidates of the party (e.g. leaflet dropping, talking to local residents). Irish politicians also reported that they recruited some migrant nationals to help with those activities. As campaigning and canvassing are regular activities for local party branches in Ireland, they proved a useful entry point for migrant nationals to learn about the political process and the party itself. Furthermore, some migrants were invited to make presentations at local branches' meetings and that experience contributed to their decision to join the party. Local branch meetings for many Irish and migrant nationals were often the first engagement with a party structure before becoming more involved in party activities.

How can parties' approaches towards **recruitment** of migrant communities be best summarised? One Irish politician argued that most commonly in Ireland people join parties when they are asked while another senior politician pointed that "*recruitment is, generally a very passive affair*". When asked about recruiting new members, one party official stated that members are encouraged to bring family members and friends. To put it simply, it was pointed out that parties in Ireland tend not to carry out general recruitment drives or rallies and recruitment is heavily dependent on local networks and the party's general perception. Based on that reasoning, an Irish party official argued that increased interaction between Irish and migrant nationals in employment and community activities is potentially an effective although indirect way of recruiting new member to parties.

Nevertheless, a former employee of one of the parties talked about concerted efforts in targeting new communities prior to the 2009 local election, with the strongest attempt made in respect of Polish communities. The party worked with regional organisers to target communities through information materials in English as well as different languages and organised meetings. The Integration Officer led the effort and was a key contact for people. However, efforts were discontinued after the 2009 local election: the reason given was that they did not bring about the expected success.

Recommendations

It was put forward that parties could renew their efforts in attracting migrant communities by using statistical data and focusing on key local areas. In fact one of the smaller parties decided to pilot a local initiative which, as described earlier, entailed introducing the voter registration and election process through information materials in different languages and drop-in information services. It

also hoped to encourage migrants to join the party. Another party planned to do open days for interested new communities although it was unclear where this would take place.

A number of migrant representatives, notably echoed by a party official and a few politicians, stressed that **strategic long-term approach** is perhaps necessary to improve migrant participation in party activities. One migrant member argued that the plan should influence activities from the branch to national level. Interestingly, one party official in fact indicated that they hoped to adopt a strategic plan for improving migrant participation similarly to the recent plan adopted in respect of women. Nonetheless there was also concern expressed as to whether party can elicit sufficient response from migrant communities. As noted above, several politician and party officials suggested that if migrants were to vote in larger numbers, parties would target them with more intensity, not just as voters but potential members.

Targeted measure: Opening Power To Diversity scheme

The Opening Power to Diversity project has been funded by the European Integration Fund and managed by the Crosscare Migrant Project. Non-EU national participants are matched with a TD for over six month period for the purpose of assisting them in all aspects of their work such as attending meetings, writing notes and press releases, processing and following up queries in constituencies as well as other administrative work. Between 2012 and 2014 four rounds of placement gave opportunity to 22 people. The placement was devised with due consideration of the MP Shadowing Scheme in the UK. The aim of the internships is to provide opportunities for migrants that would like to learn about and experience the work of political representatives and the Irish political system while also expose TDs and political parties to the diversity that migrants have brought to the Irish society. It was hoped that as a result of the scheme some participants may consider a career or some involvement in politics and promote the idea among other migrants (Crosscare, 2012). To date it was found that much valuable cross-learning occurred among migrant interns and political representatives as well as their staff, which should impact on how political representatives approach the migrant population and how the latter understand the political system in Ireland. It was also indicated that some participants might consider career in politics (Chiefo, The Journal, 2012).

Four of the five parties had interns working with politicians from the party through the Opening Power to Diversity Scheme, one of whom was interviewed. They praised the initiative which facilitated learning among both migrant interns and political representatives. One migrant intern, interviewed by this project, related how her view of politics (corrupt, nepotist and not accessible) was changed by completing the internship in Ireland. She highlighted that she learnt a lot about activities within the Dail (Irish Parliament) and taking part in outside events. What she valued the most was the increased confidence in participating in political life: something that could potentially propel her to take an active party in politics after finishing the internship. Equally, two politicians talked about their positive experience of engaging with new communities and building lasting relationship through interns that were in placement. They also suggested that the internship could promote political participation beyond the internship among members of that community.

However, challenges to fulfil those ambitions were mentioned by other interviewees. One local politician who learnt about the initiative argued that the migrant intern should be required or strongly encouraged to pass on their knowledge to members of their (or other) local communities.

Although some may do so, there is no guarantee that they will embark on such an initiative. Secondly, it was noted that parties should take more ownership of the scheme. The organisation, Crosscare, was limited in its ability to initiate any transfer of learning for the purpose of parties incorporating learnings of the scheme into their operations and possibly run the scheme in some form. One Irish local politician argued that internship should be offered for all under-represented groups and not only migrants. He also pointed out that including migrants in consultative structures and civic platforms, for instance the Joint Police Forums between councillors and local Garda (police), has a positive "spill over effect" on political participation.

Being a member

Welcoming process

Interestingly, when asked about how the party '**welcomed**' them as new party members, all of the people interviewed said that there was very limited **formal introduction processes**. While all of the more established members of the local constituency party were friendly and welcoming informally, there was no systematic attempt to help new members understand the party structure or gain an insight into current party issues or policies. There was a general consensus particularly among Irish members and politicians that such knowledge and understanding could only really be developed by new members being highly active and involved in all the local party activities; canvassing for current candidates and on party policies and issues, attending local party meetings regularly and engaging in debate and dialogue, and attending national meetings and seminars. By engaging in this party activity, the new party member learns about how the party operates at both national and local level, what the policies of the party are and who the important people are. A number of the interviewees clearly said that if a person was going to join a political party then there was a responsibility, on behalf of the new member, to do as much research on the party as possible.

Despite this, all of the interviewees said that this was an area of weakness that needed to be improved. A more structured introductory process could help newcomers with building networks in the party and understanding the structure of the party. A migrant candidate said that it took him a long time to even understand who was responsible for his local ward because there was no sitting elected representative from the party in that ward and it was not clear who was the nominated custodian of the local party. One interviewee mentioned that attending his first local meeting had been one of the most daunting things he had ever done.

However, there was no clear agreement as to how the parties would actually create a welcoming process. A number of migrant nationals proposed organising welcoming events. One migrant party member and former candidate noted however that the process should not be over-ritualised. Apart from discussing orientation measures, it was also suggested that more consideration could be given to ensuring a welcoming environment through, for instance, providing inclusive food choices. Some representatives claimed that the party made an attempt to organise social events, often attached to meetings, where they target new members. Another Irish party member noted that her party began to organise bigger meetings, often based on themes, and move away being heavily reliant on local branch meetings. She opined that this change benefits new party members including migrants as they feel less exposed or threatened than in a small branch meeting.

A number of party officials noted they begin to renew efforts to welcome people in the party and provide them with **membership packs** although this is not necessarily the case with all parties. Members in general also receive newsletters. Furthermore, it was noted that Membership Officers would be available to offer any advice or information to new members.

Migrant members also took responsibility in reaching out to migrant communities. For instance, in one of the smaller parties two African members of a local branch (with support from Irish members) organised a meeting for the different African communities living in the area. The other example was the open days organised by The Intercultural Section in the Labour Party with strong involvement its migrant members. Migrant groups and organisations were invited to learn about the Irish political system and the party itself.

Two parties had an **equality officer** in place whose task is, among other groups, to support engagement with migrant communities and lead the work of reaching out to and supporting them within the party. In one party the equality officer was notified if a new member with a migrant background joined the party and offered their help. The officer also leads outreach efforts in collaboration with a special sub-committee in the party. Furthermore, this party also had appointed local equality officers who are responsible for supporting particularly new members from under-represented groups such as migrants. It has to be underlined, however, that much of the work by equality officers at national level concentrated on recruiting and supporting women within the party in light of the new law that conditions the funding of parties on having 30% female candidates.

Membership experience
A number of Irish and migrants described their **membership experience** as slow development. Initially they tended to have low involvement within the party and became more active a few years later. One migrant member described how she attended the local branch meetings first and later received invitation to regional events and different meetings. Another member initially started attending meetings and later decided to become more active and joined a sub-committee of the party. In general migrants gave positive account of their experience; they felt that they were listened to and appreciated within the local section of the party. One migrant member suggested that migrants need to be patient and not to expect that they could exert significant influence at the early part of the membership. Others added that in an Irish context it takes significant time to develop networks and move up within party ranks even for Irish newcomers. Due to the recent nature of migration into Ireland, migrants are unlikely to have moved up within the party ranks.

One candidate of a small party however critically noted that although parties welcome members, the majority are not comfortable with the notion of migrant taking positions (either elected or non-elected). The migrant candidate explained that, after being approached by a few parties, the choice was made on the basis whether the new person could influence any decisions within the party. It was suggested that smaller parties perhaps are more likely to facilitate the **advancement of new members** including migrants, evidenced by one migrant member becoming one of the spokespersons of a small party in a relatively short period. In fact two non-EU interviewees became chairperson in their local branch not long after joining the same party and ran as candidates in the local election. A few examples of migrants taking positions in bigger parties were also mentioned:

branch secretary, election observer and local equality officer, but advancement in those parties appear to be slower.

Candidates

1. The nomination process is carried out at local level in political parties. Being highly active in the local constituency is a major factor in being selected for election as that is seen to increase the electability of the member in terms of the general local area that he or she will be standing in. Several studies looking at the background of migrant candidates referred to the strength of the networks of local candidates within the community. (Fanning & Boyle 2010a.) It was also found that migrants may face bigger competition for nomination in urban areas as there are already longer-standing members seeking nomination (Fanning et al, 2009).

2. In 2009, 16 out of the estimated 46 local election candidates with a migrant background ran as independents. In contrast, the majority, 21 out of 31 contested the election as independents in 2014. Apart from less proactive approach by parties in 2014, this is also the result the otherwise good work of the Polish umbrella organisation, Forum Polonia. The organisation supported 10 Polish candidates in preparation to the 2014 local election, with all candidates running as independents. Importantly, only 2 migrant candidates returned to contest the local election in 2014.

3. Sinn Fein did not run any migrant candidates in the 2009 local election. However, it did run a candidate originally from the Democractic Republic of Congo. He got elected to Fingal County Council.

4. Labour ran four migrant candidates in the last local election in 2009: one from Poland, Moldova, Netherlands and Columbia each. In 2014 it ran two migrant candidates, one from a Nigerian and one from a Moldovan background. The latter one got elected to Limerick City and County Council.

5. Regarding the number of candidates, four of the nine migrant candidates of Fianna Fail came from Poland, two from Nigeria, one from Pakistan, Russia and Lithuania. In 2014 it did not run any migrant candidates.

6. As for Fine Gael, four of the seven migrant candidates arrived from Nigeria, two from Poland and one from Latvia. In 2014 it ran two migrant candidates. One of them arrived in Ireland from Estonia and the other had a Pakistani background. The first candidate got very close to being elected.

7. As a sign of its success, the Green Party ran five candidates in the 2009 local election which is only two less than the numbers run by the much bigger Fine Gael and one more than the number of migrant candidates that represented the Labour Party. Three of the five migrant candidates arrived from Nigeria, one from Zimbabwe and one from Russia. In 2014 it ran two migrant candidates from Lithuanian backgrounds and one from a Dutch background.

Boyle and Fanning investigated motivations of migrant candidates running for local election in 2009. While reasons vary and might coincide with that of Irish candidates, there are also specific reasons reported by migrant candidates, particularly by Africans. They found that African candidates were engaged in community activities in their area and political activity was seen as a natural continuation of their community activism (Boyle, 2012). As mentioned above, all African were member of immigrant and Irish community organisations and groups. In addition, initial steps towards involvement were taken by some migrant following a positive engagement with, or even assistance received from, a politician.

Importantly, Africans viewed political participation much the same way as they approached community and civic engagement and were reluctant to identify with political ideologies (See Fanning & Boyle, 2010). Boyle pointed out that many cited reasons associated with universal humanism, i.e. addressing local concerns and working for their communities. Tellingly, four out of ten African candidates ran as independents partly to distance themselves from political parties as opposed to only one of the 10 East European candidates (Boyle, 2012).

On the whole, migrants, particularly candidates understood that politicians need to be community representatives in an Irish context. A number of candidates in 2009 placed great emphasis on demonstrating that they would represent the whole community. In fact in the interviews with 18 local immigrant candidates all of them expressed a desire to promote the interest of their local area, with only one citing the needs of his own community as a reason to enter politics (Fanning & Boyle, 2010). Perhaps not surprisingly, 16 of 18 had children living with them.

"If I get elected I am not going to represent Nigerians, I am not going to represent Africans, I am not going to represent immigrants, I am going to represent everybody! … Don't allow anybody to refer to you as an immigrant candidate – you are a contestant in the elections who just happens to be an immigrant!" (Fanning et al, 2009. p.2)

In line with this opinion almost all candidates expressed a desire to foster integration (Fanning & Boyle, 2010). Fanning found that many East European candidates felt that such political participation offered a way to overcome difference and alienation. In contrast, African's main reason to participate actively in politics was racism and discrimination and the desire to tackle those.

Fanning also highlights that many immigrants may often start out in civic engagement with immigrant specific concerns, however, as (and when) time passes and issues surrounding status, integration and acceptance become more resolved, immigrants concerns become more multifaceted and similar to the all of Irish society (transport, health etc.)..This is when they are likely to enter the political arena. However, five candidates, four Africans and one East European (also) named clear personal reasons for involvement in politics, namely political career and business interest. All those five were standing for one of the two parties that formed the government.

Not only those five candidates but, when it comes to party affiliation and loyalty, most non-Irish potential candidates were pragmatic about which party they will connect with as well as the

proximity of that relationship (Fanning et al, 2009). Some candidates had been approached by several political parties in order to stand, while others may explore the cultures or core values of parties as well as the general political landscape, before deciding which party to join, if any. It was shared by immigrant candidates that there is not one party that would be far more attractive for immigrants than others. That may have contributed to the large number of independents that made up half of the non-Irish candidates. In general, welcoming culture and interest in migrant issues were more important than ideology for migrant candidates (Fanning et al, 2010b).

Lastly, it was also found, that many African candidates had pre-migratory experience with politics in contrast to East Europeans. This may have been indirect involvement in parties but contributed to their decision to participate in political life in Ireland. Interview with migrant candidates by Boyle reveal some telling view of those they saw as a role model. A number of African candidate mentioned Barack Obama as someone who combined community activism with vision and broad political appeal to all groups in society. This also explains why a number of Africans refused to be associated with certain political ideology and why addressing community concerns were at the heart of their political motivations (Boyle, 2012).

Prior to the 2009 local election fourteen migrant candidates were hosted by the speaker of the Parliament (Ceann Comhairle) and the then Minister for Integration. The event celebrated the fact that migrants adopted an active role in Irish political life. It was hoped that the event would contribute to depicting the candidates as role models and encourage other newcomers to enter political life (MacCormaic, 2009). Previously, the newly elected Lord Mayor, Adebari who arrived from Nigeria, was hosted in a reception by the Speaker in 2007 (Ceann Comhairle) (Fanning et al, 2009).

Arguably Mr Adebari is one of the few migrant elected representatives who has received substantial media coverage, and it does present Mr Adebari's life story, electoral journey and career as an elected representative in such a way that that he may have become a role model for migrants. Mr Adebari, a refugee from Nigeria whose original asylum application was rejected, before the birth of his third son meant that his family could remain has, since moving to Ireland, experienced many of the challenges migrant face when moving to Ireland. Mr Adebari has experienced intolerance, unemployment and uncertainty in his status. Yet he has also been socially active in the community in Portlaoise, setting up a support club for unemployed people in County Laois, and has become a third level educated self-employed consultant (Thompson, 2004). His progression from refugee, to socially active resident, to elected representative and holder of public office, demonstrates to others who identify with all or parts of his story that this path is not beyond their reach.

Becoming a candidate

Nomination process

It was related that the **nomination process** is locally driven as the nomination of candidates is carried out by local members in all parties. The National Executive and within that a specific committee usually sets the number of candidates the party run and endorse nominations. It has the power to intervene; however, it was underlined that only rarely do they intervene and add a candidate to the list. Removing a candidate from the list was practically unheard of.

Factors outside the party influencing nomination

It was agreed that when local constituency parties are scouting for potential candidates, they will always look for people who have a number of specific characteristics. Firstly, the party will look for members who have a track record of being **highly active in the local constituency.** They will gauge the electability of the member in terms of the general local area that he or she will be standing in. All of the non-EU members who were interviewed said that, in being approached, their experience and dedication, either in party activities or in local community activities, were highlighted as reasons why they were approached. The political parties will seek out those members who have demonstrated that they have the capacity and knowledge of running an election campaign and holding political office. One party official put it in simple terms: "**they can relate to voters.**" Some other respondents gave more detailed responses that referred to the strength of the networks of local candidates within the community. When asked, a number of the interviewees confirmed that the term "political capital" was a good description.

A number of interviewees talked about the **role of migrant voters** and to what extent migrant candidates can rely on those communities. Two Irish politicians argued that in 2009 migrants were selected partly on the basis that they have the capacity, the electoral capital, to gather sufficient votes from the migrant communities. However, in several places the migrant vote became split between candidates. More importantly, it was found that there was not sufficient voter turnout from migrant communities that would have given a considerable edge to migrant candidates. Several respondents, both Irish and migrant, pointed out that the migrant population is diverse and it is unlikely to support one migrant candidate in a unified manner. Accordingly, it was suggested that the political parties may be more careful in selecting migrant candidates in 2014 and lower their expectation regarding votes from migrant communities.

Factors inside the party influencing nomination

Most interviewees who stood for candidacy had more than one year of **membership of a political party**. They were very active in the party campaigns, including supporting the campaign of a candidate, and in the local constituency meetings and they all agreed that this was an important time in their career trajectories in their respective parties. During this time all of the interviewees gained extensive political knowledge about issues and policies, the logistics of campaigning, how the party achieved its aims, and how to develop networks of people within the party that could help further an individual members aims.

All of the interviewees who belonged to political parties stressed that, because the decision on who would be running as a candidate in any election would, by and large, be decided by the local constituency, potential candidates needed to have developed such political capital **within the local constituency** as any campaign that was being undertaken would be the responsibility of the local constituency, with the national party providing assistance, rather explicit direction. Developing strong relationships with other members of the local party is also important for the purpose of helping to fundraise and canvass support for the campaign. One party official explained that one migrant nominee lost her nomination partly because although she worked on developing networks in the constituency, she failed to lobby for support within the local constituency.

It was emphasised that the nomination process is localised but also democratic. Others (not only several non-EU but also Irish members) highlighted that tnew nominee face strong challenges nevertheless due to the fact that **incumbent sees them as competitors** and have the advantage of possessing a strong existing network within the constituency. Two migrants gave account of negative experiences. One mentioned how he was discouraged by a party member not to run based on the argument that he would not yet stand a good chance, only to find out that the party member in question ran in the same constituency. Another migrant was asked to stand in a constituency where he had great difficulties winning a seat but could support the other Irish candidate through transfer votes.

As to the **relevance of immigrant background**, while all of the interviewees confirmed that the process was a fair and democratic process, all of the interviewees who were not native Irish felt that it was **harder for migrant members** to develop the political capital required to mount a serious **nomination** bid. They felt that migrant nominees 'needed to do more' to show that they met all the criteria for successful candidacy and that they were at a disadvantage in terms of building positive networks in the party, understanding the social networks and activities in the local constituency that are more subtle and informal, and, especially, demonstrating their electability among the general public.

Several migrant party members argued that migrants have particular difficulty securing nomination in cities even though a large proportion of the immigrant population lives there. They ascribed this to the stronger presence of parties in cities and their reluctance to challenge old incumbents in the party. One migrant candidate expressed strong criticism implying that migrants are unlikely to receive nomination unless the party is weak in the area: "**major parties are open to the idea of migrants as potential voters but not as potential candidates**" (**Migrant candidate and party member**). An Irish politician challenged this view arguing that there are not many people contesting nominations: "**people are not exactly jumping up and down trying to secure nominations as candidates**" (Irish national politician). Nevertheless the experience of two migrant candidates showed some difficulty in being considered by major parties.

Two party officials explained the need for new candidates including migrants to bring new members to the local party branch or constituency. Not only does this increase the number of secure votes but can influence other constituency members in their decision to vote for them on account of the support they garnered. In addition, two Irish politicians also emphasised that active membership can also convince local party members to support someone's nomination. Another Irish politician described the difficulty faced by her as an Irish member. When joining the party, similarly to migrant members, she did not have familiar connections with party members and felt initially excluded. However, as a result of strong efforts in building networks within the party she became a chairperson of the branch first then the constituency and later was selected as a candidate.

Motivation
A number of migrants respondents (not only African) talked about the significant change they experienced in his attitude towards politics: while in their countries of origin they refrain from being involved in politics (one person referring to it as "murky waters"), enjoyed the initial positive experience that encouraged them to take an active part in politics in Ireland. When it comes to

putting themselves forward, it is interesting to look at the difference between the decision of Irish and migrant candidates that ran in the last election. All of the native Irish members who were interviewed had a clear vision and ambition to seek out political office, while all of the **migrant candidates were *approached*** at some point, either by other party members or by members of their local community, and actively encouraged to stand for election and therefore their nomination was straightforward. One migrant candidate remembered:

"**The idea that I should stand in local politics came from the local people, it was never my idea."** **(Migrant candidate)**

It was also suggested that parties were encouraged and got positive publicity when running migrant candidates in 2009. Whatever difficulty may have been there for migrants as newcomers to receive nomination, a good number were chosen by parties as candidates in 2009 and migrant candidates valued that. However, in 2014 the political and social climate has changed. Demonstrating electability has, according to all non-EU interviewees, become harder in the last five years since the economic crisis. It was also suggested that migrants may still not be seen as someone with strong potential to win seats at the election as there is a perception within parties that the local constituencies may not be fully supportive of visibly different candidates. It was accepted however that migrants can still prove their electoral value being active in their local constituency but they tend to start with some disadvantage.

One party noted that they still do talent spotting, although in an informal manner, and tried to persuade several migrants to run. In general migrants appeared less confident in contesting nomination in 2014 while parties seemed less proactive in searching for migrant candidates (perhaps on foot of less desirable outcomes in 2009). Running as an independent candidate who does not have to contest nomination was emphasised as a strong alternative option for migrants. Independent candidates made up a considerable proportion of migrant candidates already in 2009 (a third, 16 out of 47) and to date half of the migrants that declared their candidacies was going to run as independents in the 2014 election (4 out 8). Not surprisingly, an independent candidate asserted that migrant can prove their credential without relying on parties.

Assistance and intervention by parties
Importantly, one Irish politician talked about how the incumbent candidate was not willing to give up his place and managed to retain his nomination at local branch level. Subsequently, he was nominated by the Executive and added to the existing candidate of the party at the local election. The decision by the Executive proved right as he won a seat and the incumbent lost. The politician pointed out however that the decision by the Executive to add a candidate to the list "**rarely goes down well with the local membership**" and the step was taken by the party at the time when the party "**was on its knees**" (Irish national politician).

Three interviewees, two of whom were very senior elected representatives in different parties, explained that members who had the ability, ambition and motivation could be **'mentored'** or 'championed' by more experiences senior party members; guided by these senior members to develop their political careers. One of the interviewees described where he himself had been

encouraged and guided by senior elected representatives of his party and, subsequently won elections as a local councillor and as a member of the Dail.

There were divergent opinions on the question of introducing a **quota** to ensure better representation of migrants. It was suggested that if the quota ensuring the proportion of women candidates proves feasible, a similar initiative could be tried out in respect of migrants. Party officials and several Irish politicians opposed the idea for various reasons. One argued that if they introduce a quota for migrants they need to adopt similar measures in respect of LGBT community and other under-represented groups. When asked why a quota can be justified in respect of women candidates the answer was that women representation had been low for many years while migrants were relatively newcomers with not necessarily stable status (they may depart from the country). A key argument put forward by one party official was that currently there is not sufficient number of migrants in parties to justify the introduction of such a measure.

Three migrant respondents emphasised urgency arguing that measures taken now can help to avoid disenfranchisement and social tensions later. They felt even a few candidates, particularly if elected, could have a positive impact. The growing young second generation population and their desire to be reflected and heard in politics was highlighted by one of the respondents. He referred to the importance of political representation in the context of riots in other countries:

"If the children do not feel the warmth of the city, they will burn it…This is exactly what has happened in France and the UK. Those guys felt that there is no one there to listen…" (Migrant member in party)

Two other migrant party member suggested along with an Irish politician that Seanad (the Upper House) could serve as a platform for appointing a few key migrant representatives. In fact this initiative was taken by one large organisation but the government did not respond to the proposal. The other suggestion was to have a migrant seat at Executive level in parties that could drive and increase engagement with migrants.

Being a candidate

It is also well-documented that due the nature of the electoral regime and the history of Irish political system, broader local social networks hold significance for candidates. Dobbs states in regard to one of the parties: "Extensive personal networks were a key factor in how this particular party decided to put candidates on the ballot (Dobbs, 2009; p.21)."

On one hand, immigrants as newcomer to the area can be regarded as disadvantaged in respect of building networks and developing a profile. Establishing local networks and gaining acceptance can be a slow process. Door-to-door canvassing, a common practice in Ireland, and its dominance in targeting voters surprise many migrants, with some finding it unpleasant in some cases. For instance, some found canvassing outside churches unusual in their home countries. That affects both general involvement in parties, where knocking on doors is one of the main activities of local party organisations, and the type of practices immigrant candidates need to familiarise themselves with (Fanning et al, 2009; Fanning & Boyle, 2010a). On the other hand, a number of African candidates reported that they accustomed to that practice and apart from some negative experience they found

the practice useful in establishing relationship with electors and utilising existing networks in that type of campaigning. [38] *Boyle also underlined that migrant candidates were relatively confident about their capacity to demonstrate their local knowledge and establish relationship with their local communities. They felt that becoming part of the local community was a surmountable challenge whereas having accepted as Irish in the larger society (in a socio-cultural sense as opposed to in terms of citizenship) is a formidable task. In creating their image, many African candidates placed great emphasis on their "localism"; their achievement in the community and emphasised that they are a local candidate. Added to that, they made an attempt to demonstrate their connections to Irish organisations and affiliations with Irish party members (or even leaders) (Boyle, 2012).*

Fanning points out that this type of localism, which also plays to the "parochial" nature of the Irish political system, to some extent mediates ethnic and racial distinctions. In a case study of the 2009 local elections in Dundalk the authors found evidence of this development but also its limits. The Fine Gael candidate from an African background who depicted herself as a local candidate received third of the vote compared to her Irish running mate. The candidate as well as the RTE coverage of the results in Dundalk suggested that the outcome could be interpreted as a result of racist, or at least, intolerant attitudes among voters. However, the candidate also secured a number of transfers from parties including Sinn Fein whose supporters in general were regarded the least tolerant and welcoming towards migrants. Furthermore, both she and particularly the Green Party candidate in the town council election performed better than a lot of other native candidates (Fanning, 2010b). On the whole, the campaign emphasising localism did produce votes but not an adequate number. It such a system candidates may need to be persistent in building networks and support for their election. Regrettably, only 2 of the 46 candidates returned to contest election in 2014, one of whom proved the assumption to be right, as she was elected for the second time.

The second migrant candidate to be elected received a moderate number of first preference votes but collected an extremely large amount of transfer votes from his Irish running mate at Sinn Féin. His experience compares favourably that of the Fine Gael candidate in 2009 as although both collected similar number of first preference votes (in fact the Fine Gael candidates got approx. 200 hundred more votes) but the Sinn Féin candidate secured far more superior amount of transfer votes. It appears that party loyalty was stronger in the case of Sinn Féin. On the other hand, the difference between the number of first preference votes among African and the Irish candidate is unusually high. Accordingly, a clear pecking order was established among the two candidates, which is not common among party candidates running in the same area; however, it is also clear that the Irish candidate explicitly promoted second preference votes for his African running mate. Furthermore, it also showed that the electorate openly supported – although mostly through second preferences – the election of an African candidate showing that Sinn Féin supporters were in favour of electing a migrant representative.

As to the migrant electorate, it seems that in 2009 there was an assumption that a significant number of votes can be secured from migrant groups living in the area. In some ways, in one of the most diverse area this led parties to pitting African candidates against each other, which in effect

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[38] Migrant candidates talked about how making friendship with Irish neighbours or knowing the child of the voter proved beneficial when approaching voters in their campaign. See Boyle, 2012.

split the African electorate (Mutwasaribo, 2012). In 2014, the expectations of building on the "migrant vote" dampened and parties were less proactive in selecting migrant candidates but also running them against one another. In the Portlaoise area, however, Rotime Adebari, who had become to some extent a symbolic figure, lost its seat after 10 years of being an independent councillor, with one of the possible reasons being to compete for seats with another candidate from a Nigerian origin.

Electoral campaign in the local community

In terms of running for office, once their nomination succeeded, all of the interviewees who stood for office agreed on some key aspects of organising an **electoral campaign.** The candidate was also responsible for identifying issues that were exclusive to the local constituency and developing a programme that was, at the same time, addressing local issues and reflective of party policy nationally. Broadly speaking, their **main areas of interest**, as candidates, strongly reflected their motivations for joining the political parties in the first place; free market or left-wing ideologies, educational reform, specific local issues etc. The difference being that, as a candidate, their areas of interest had to include some political party priorities and 'issues of the day'.[39]

All candidates said that it would be their responsibility to **represent their local community** and be open to all members of the local communities equally. Interestingly, all the native Irish interviewees made great efforts to elaborate how they represented their local constituents who had migrant backgrounds, while all the migrant interviewees made a great effort to explain how they were not exclusively representing migrant communities or the issues of migrants. Nevertheless, one migrant candidate expressed his discontent of being drawn into debates on immigration and integration that misrepresented his position.

Resources for campaigns and differences between Irish and migrant candidates

In relation to the **allocation of resources**, interviewees said that it was the responsibility of the candidate to finance and organise the logistics of the election campaign. This meant that the candidate had to find ways of fundraising legitimately, as well organising distribution of materials, canvassing and managing media coverage. The parties' support for the campaigns was very limited; parties would negotiate for cheaper material production through subsidised printing and design templates for leaflets and posters. They also offered some guidance on national policy, as well as maintaining a national media presence for the political party (but not the individual candidate).

However, there was no differentiation or discrimination between native Irish or migrant candidates in terms of the allocation of these resources. The reason for the minimal assistance available to candidates was that the parties simply did not have the resources to give substantial support to any one candidate. The knowledge and networks developed by members in engaging in active participation with the local constituency prior to standing for nomination for candidacy allows the candidate to garner the support and voluntary work of other party members, develop an effective

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[39] One TD interviewee explained this by saying that, as a new party member, he was 'mainly interested in educational reform and social justice in inner city Dublin, and (he) never thought that he would eventually become expert on pregnancies, gestation periods, abortion techniques and perinatal psychology', as he had done in the weeks of the Protection of Life Bill (2013).

campaign strategy and manage the campaign. Many of the interviewees compared their activities as members to a kind of political education that aided them in their campaigns.

However, many of the non-EU interviewees expressed a belief that migrant candidates were at a disadvantage in terms of resources compared to native Irish candidates, though none of the native Irish interviewees shared this opinion. Firstly, it was felt that migrant candidates did not have the same amount of political or electoral capital established to run a campaign of similar effectiveness to native Irish candidates. They suggested that their **social networks** were small and that they had fewer contacts that they could rely on in order to garner support, volunteers or financial assistance.

"(…) as an ethnic candidate you always find that you need to do more in order to have a successful campaign. You always have to tap into your own resources, such as your friend and family."(Migrant candidate)

They also felt that they '**had to go the extra mile to convince people that they were genuinely electable**'. Candidates for bigger parties felt that this factor made it difficult to find volunteers to organise campaigns and canvassing; though, they stressed that this was not racially or ethnically motivated, it was simply that volunteers will prefer to canvass with a candidate who they are confident will win. One candidate observed a changed in attitude within the party which positively y affected the support she received:

"The party supported me as well, to a certain extent, but it was harder to build this support maybe because they didn't see from the beginning my real potential as a candidate to succeed." (Migrant candidate).

Interestingly, an Irish politician from a bigger party whose running mate was an incumbent councillor also cited the very minimal support from the party explaining that his main campaigning team consisted of his mother, partner and a friend. On the other hand, migrant candidates that ran for smaller parties gave relatively positive account of their experience with canvassing. They reported having received support from party members when canvassing in local areas and valued the help of volunteers. One migrant candidate also mentioned support received from friends including student peers and colleagues, indicating the strength of his network. He, as a town council candidate, also collaborated with the party's candidate for the county council. One party official stated that they encouraged organising mixed canvassing teams to ensure good support for migrants; but she admitted that the party do not advise its branches on recruitment and composition of volunteers.

Secondly, migrant nationals also regarded **financial resource** a great challenge, more than Irish nationals. When an individual gets nominated as a candidate for an election, whether in a party or not, it places an extraordinary strain on the individual's personal finances and non-political career. Often candidates invest some of their own money in the campaign and rely on friends and family members to help them canvassing in the local community whenever voluntary support is unavailable. In the case of migrants, whose social networks and financial capabilities tend to be less secure than those who are Irish nationals, this is especially the case. This problem with perceived electability also made fundraising difficult as donors were less likely to provide a donation to a candidate if they feel the candidate will not get elected. Some migrant candidates however did

acknowledge the support they receive from the party in fundraising, notwithstanding the challenges it posed for them.

Campaigning also puts pressure on a candidate's **employment security** as well; indeed three of the interviewees who were migrants expressly highlighted this as a serious barrier. Campaigning can often require a candidate to either work less in employment, or take a leave of absence altogether. Naturally this causes great insecurity in their employment, and there is no safety net for the candidate, should their campaign be unsuccessful and their current employment compromised. They also highlighted that many migrants in Ireland do not have extensive family networks that can support them through financial difficulties and their access to social protection might be limited. The three interviewees explained that running for elections was a much greater risk for migrants than for Irish nationals, and such risk and insecurity would mean that many potential migrant candidates with the right experience and attributes could reject any proposed nomination. Party official who previously engaged with various migrant groups agreed and cited examples where candidates pulled out when they realised the level of risk involved in campaigning for election.

In addition to that, all of the migrant candidates said that, as a migrant candidate, they '**were starting the electoral race a few step behind the (native Irish) candidates'**. When asked to elaborate, some of the interviewees said that much of **the electorate** would struggle to see someone who is either nationally or ethnically different as being representative of the local community or understanding of the issues faced by local communities. One of the migrant interviewees explained that there may be a perception among the electorate that a candidate with a migrant background would represent the interests of migrant communities and that this was not helped by the way media coverage would often portray a migrant candidate only in terms of their migrant background rather than the qualities they would bring to public office. However, some others argued that migrants can be seen as fresh voice: a new group that is not connected to the previous political elite. With a convincing campaign they can demonstrate they understand the concerns of the native population.

The process campaigns
Another specific factor that was highlighted by two migrant interviewees was the lack of detailed knowledge about what they called '**the game' of politics,** which particularly affects **relationships between candidates**, even those from the same party. Both of these interviewees explained that winning elections in Ireland was an extremely tactical affair and that they had experienced the political culture to be both highly competitive, even between candidates of the same party, and sometimes 'underhand'. One of these interviewees, gave accounts of other rival candidates actively trying to undermine his campaigns and his credibility, publically trying to discredit his reputation in the media and using the nomination processes with their parties to attempt to 'split' the interviewees core constituency. The other interviewee gave an account of how another candidate from his own party leaked negative polling information to the press without informing the interviewee that this information would be publicised, therefore discrediting the interviewee as unelectable three days before the election. Both of these interviewees said that migrant candidates needed more support to understand the political culture in Irish society and 'how to play the political game'.

To what degree can **advice and information by the party** help to address that and (other) knowledge deficit? Several interviewees held that previous experience is an effective way to learn about election campaigns. They referred to both the importance of becoming familiar with the various levels of political work and specifically the experience of supporting other candidates. This view was shared by some Irish as well as migrant candidates. One Irish politician argued:

"Each step on the political ladder teaches you something that is essential for the next rung."

A number of migrants reported receiving advice and training from the party. One party official claimed that they offered training for candidates who required it. In general, training was limited in its scope and a lot of advice came from party networks. One migrant candidate observed that he would have benefited from more detailed information on its local electorate and the best strategies to tailor policy issues to different groups. He also felt that parties may not have been open about their strategies when they ran migrants as secondary candidates referring to the fact that parties could decide to run candidates to collect second preference votes for the candidate within the same party.[40] When the migrant candidate got eliminated, whoever was named in the ballot paper as second choice, typically his/her Irish running mate, got the vote. He criticised the fact this was not pointed out to him prior to the campaign. An Irish party official stressed however that new candidates often complain of being used as "sweepers"; namely collecting second preferences votes for the long-standing party member in the same district.

Interestingly, in the last local election in 2014 a candidate of African origin was elected thanks to the transfer of large number of second preference votes from his Irish running mate.[41] Crucially, the person ran for Sinn Fein, a nationalist party in Ireland proving that local party voters, a large part of whom are likely to be Irish, had no objection to supporting a candidate of African origin, at least as a second candidate. To be precise, he received a small number of first preference votes relative to this Irish running mate much the same way as other migrant candidates five years earlier. The difference between his first preference votes and that of his Irish running mate was larger than what is normally observed between candidates in the same party and same electoral area. In contrast however, he enjoyed a far more generous amount of second preference votes transferred to him from his Irish running mate than other migrant candidates who were in similar situation in 2009.[42]

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[40] As a result of the proportional voting system, voters not only select one candidate but rank candidates of their constituencies according to their preferences (first choice, second choice etc…).

[41] While the successful migrant candidate collected just 353 first preference votes, he profited from 1023 number two votes, being transferred from his Irish running mate who got elected in the first round and thus the surplus number 2 votes on his ballot paper were transferred in the second round mostly to his running mate of an African background. See www.irishtimes/news/election and http://clairebyrne.ie/counts/animation.php?count=fingal_mulhuddart

[42] In 2009 another African candidate representing Fine Gael in the Dundalk area too collected considerably fewer votes than her Irish running mate (a third of his votes) but did not receive such large amount of transfer votes as Sinn Fein's migrant candidate in 2014. The candidate as well as the RTE coverage of the results in Dundalk suggested that the outcome could be interpreted as a result of racist, or at least, intolerant attitudes among voters. The authors argued that this might be a simplistic interpretation of the results. While collecting fewer votes than her running mate, the candidates did not perform badly in comparison to other candidates and also secured transfer votes from the Sinn Fein candidate. See Fanning B, Howard K and Boyle N (2010b)

Elected representatives

What can be further observed in an Irish context in the local election that the number of candidates usually around three times the number of seats (See Mutsawaribo, 2009). The competition is slightly stronger in national elections.[43] There are two local councillors with migrant background since 2014; there were 4 between 2009 and 2014. In 2009 the 4 was elected out of 45 in non-Irish candidates, which is around 9% success rate; even lower success rate characterises the group of migrant candidates in 2014 (2 out of 31; 6,5%). The figures suggest a less than desirable success rate among migrant candidates. Due to small numbers, caution needs to be taken when analysing those figures.

The number of elected representatives with migrant background and its impact

Currently there are two elected migrant representatives at local level and one second generation migrants in the national parliament, the Dail. Therefore, there are only two first generation migrant politicians from non-EU countries in Ireland, one of whom did not belong to any parties. That makes it difficult to make meaningful conclusions about the experience of migrant party politicians in Ireland.

A number of people talked about possible reasons for lack of migrant elected representatives, many of which were already mentioned above: recent nature of migration into Ireland and within that the local area, less resources and public perception. One migrant candidate gave a balanced view suggesting that while migrants may face extra challenges they can get elected:

"As I was relatively new to the area, I had to work twice harder than the rest of the candidates…I genuinely believe that candidates who can deliver have all chances to succeed, indifferently of where they come from." (Migrant candidate)

A number of interviewees talked about the impact of the absence of migrant elected representatives. It was observed that the political arena does not currently reflect the diversity of the local communities which can negatively affect trust in the political process and, more specifically, voting. Furthermore, it was also highlighted that lack of role models can discourage migrants from running at elections creating a vicious circle of lacking migrant representation in politics. It was argued that both migrants and political parties need be proactive: migrants need to put themselves forward and parties need to identify and support migrants with good electoral potential.

Media portrayal of migrant politicians

The Irish media tended to highlight two aspects of non-Irish national's participation, as candidates, in the political process. The first aspect is the difference and unfamiliarity of foreign candidates to both the political landscape in Ireland, and also the Irish electorate.[44] It may also be insinuated whether candidates and representatives with a migrant background 'understand' Irish politics and Irish issues, and, while these commentaries may be light hearted in nature, they also question if a person who is

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'Immigrant Candidates and Politics in the Republic of Ireland: Racialization, Ethnic Nepotism or Localism? *National and Ethnic Politics* 16: 3, 420-442.

[43] In 2011 a total of 566 candidates contested the 165 seats in the general election in Ireland. So that is one in 3.4

[44] For example, The 'Irish Independent' (2008) commenting on the "quare name" of Adeola Ogunsina, a Fianna Gael candidate for Fingal County Council who narrowly missed gaining a seat on the council in 2009.

so different from the social norm of a locality can really represent a local population and understand their issues, especially in areas that are more rural than urban. That portrayal is likely to hinder the career of migrant candidates.

The second aspect often commented on is the recognition that, in a society of increasing diversity, there is a need for increasing diversity in the political process including among representatives. However, there does appear to be a paradox to the media portrayal. The media recognise that, if such candidates are to be successful, their activities and campaigns must be multi-faceted and representative of the wider community, rather than the narrow interests of minority communities. Yet, the media continue to identify such candidates according to what makes them different from the majority of their constituency, whether it is their ethnicity, nationality or status, or only associate the candidate with immigration and integration issues. Such portrayal both helps and hinders the political integration of migrant candidates, particularly those coming from outside Europe.

This paradox is most obvious in the media portrayal of the political career of Rotimi Adebari. In all of the articles relating to Rotimi Adebari's candidacy, election to the town council and nomination as Mayor of Portlaoise it is very clear that the media concentrated on how the presence of ethnic minority and non-Irish candidates and elected representatives reflect modernity and progressivity in the Irish political landscape. During the 2004 local elections, K Holland (Irish Times, 2004) described Rotimi Adebari campaigning in a very sensitive and positive way, highlighting the challenges Adebari faced getting elected, such as unfamiliarity and being unaffiliated with any political party at the time there was little recognition, by political parties, of the need to promote participation among non-Irish nationals, whilst also describing the openness and acceptance that appeared to be evident among the local electorate. The election of Mr Adebari as Mayor of Portlaoise was described as an important milestone for the Irish political process (DeFaoite, 2007).[45] This positivity and celebration portrayed by the media seems to emphasise the phenomena of electing diversity, and how that positively reflects Irish society without concentrating on their policies and their contribution to local civil society. With regard to Rotimi Adebari, the media continued to refer to him as "Irelands first Black Mayor" and strongly associate him with integration and diversity, which, to a certain extent, seems to highlight how unusual diversity really is among candidates for public office and public representatives.

In contrast, the media coverage of Kristina Jankaitiene, a Lithuanian citizen who were elected on to Carrickmacross Town Council, rarely focused on her migrant status, but on her political activity within the Green Party and within Carrickmacross Town Council; such as her rejection of Town Council motions resisting the property tax and water charges, as well as her role in nominating Darcy Lonergan as Mayor of Carrickmacross (Kelly, IrishCentral.com, 2012). One factor contributing to this different portrayal is that her look and status is so close to that of Irish.

General reasons for under-representation of migrants in political parties

A number of general reasons were mentioned that may contribute to the under-representation of migrants in party political life, related to the several general social factors identified by discussants.

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[45] Such articles reported the nomination by describing it as "History (…) being made today (…) by the people of Portlaoise", by Mr Adebari himself (deFaoite, 2007a).

Those factors can also influence, often indirectly, migrants' participation as party voters, party members and candidates. They were related to the theme of social integration and social climate and the extent and impact of racist and negative views towards migrants.

Engagement of migrants in social and civic activities

Dobbs pointed to the existence of informal barriers to political participation which can prevent immigrants from playing active roles in political parties and run as candidates. The influence of so-called "feeder organisations" such as sport clubs, particularly the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA),[46] farmers organisations, trade unions and parishes is notable in an Irish context as they are often create the entry opportunities in political participation, most importantly in party politics. In Ireland there were many support groups and organisations set up for and with immigrants, although a number of those ceased to exist with the recession. Dobbs concurs with other authors that while those organisation might be helpful in creating "social bonds", they have limited potential in building bridges between those organisations and civil and social organisations that act as feeder organisation to political parties (Dobbs, 2009).

The Annual Integration Monitor 2011 it was shown that membership in sport clubs was far lower among non-EU nationals than among Irish nationals. 41% of the latter group reported membership compared with 15% of non-EU citizens. The authors noted however that social participation in sport is more common in rural areas (Mc Ginnity et al, 2012). Those areas were found to have much smaller groups of non-EU nationals that tend to be concentrated in urban areas (Census, 2011). Therefore sport organisations, particularly GAA, may play less important role in party politics in cities; nevertheless, it remains an important player in informal networks characterising Irish politics. Informal local networks arguably also create opportunities for migrants who are able to utilise those.

Further, non-EU nationals were shown to play active role in churches that are also important stakeholders in the informal networks surrounding Irish political parties, although their influence has decreased in recent years. Many migrant candidates, mainly Africans, reported strong membership in local churches (Boyle, 2013). Strong church involvement is characteristics of many Africans but this was also a vehicle for the political involvement of African candidates. Boyle underlined the importance of religion for African candidates in establishing networks, which were utilised in their political involvement, too (Boyle, 2013). It should be noted that many African candidates were involved in Protestant churches which are the minority in Ireland as the Catholic Church continues to be dominant. This suggests that church involvement offers limited benefits especially in the longer term. In comparison, Catholicism was perceived a cultural bridge between Polish candidates (and indeed the wider Polish population) and political parties. Fine Gael and Fianna Fail were seen as Christian Democrat parties that were attractive to Polish candidates (Boyle & Fanning, 2010)

Trade union membership among migrants increased in the period of 2004-2014 although this may not be consistent among all groups. In general it is difficult to estimate precise trade union participation rate among migrants in Ireland. The aforementioned research with large ethnic groups showed that 7% of Indians and a small group of Chinese were members of trade unions. In contrast, a

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[46] The Gaelic Athletic Association is a nationwide amateur sport and cultural organisation. Its main task is to promote Irish (Gaelic) sports such as hurling or Gaelic football. The Association has over 2,300 clubs in Ireland and is the largest sport organisation.

quarter of Nigerians reported membership (Immigrant Council, 2008). In comparison around a third of the Irish population was estimated to be member of trade unions. SIPTU, the largest trade union organisations with over 200,000 members reported circa 14,000 non-Irish members in 2014, 7,000 of whom were Polish. Non-Irish nationals made up about 7% of trade union members suggesting a reasonably good penetration rate. SIPTU Equality officer noted that the union has members from over 50 countries thanks to the extensive outreach work completed by organisers and activists among whom one can find representatives of the Polish, Lithuanian and Latvian community to name the main groups. Numbers suggest that the organisation succeeded in convincing many migrants in the benefit of joining the union; since a considerable number of migrants are employed in low-skilled jobs, reaching migrants are of particular importance. SIPTU also ensured that migrants are adequately represented in the decision-making structures of the organisations: two seats in the equality committee are reserved for migrants. Further to this, there is a migrant sub-committee as well as a separate Polish sub-committee, explained by the large number of Polish members, to discuss problems and proposed actions. However, on grassroots level SIPTU remain committed to organising groups together and not setting up migrant groups or branches in recognition of the potential risk of segregation and lack of solidarity for each other. Although lower that their general share in the population, SIPTU figures suggest a much better participation rate of migrants in trade union than political parties. Such participation does not seem to translate into political activities, even though SIPTU even supported the Polish initiative aimed at encouraging Polish people to register and vote in local elections in 2014. This is especially regrettable as SIPTU effectively reached EU groups who tend to show less interest in civic and political activities.

Importantly, all Africans candidates interviewed in 2010 were members of community and voluntary organisations or groups. While African had membership in Irish organisations, only three Polish candidates were active in Irish organisations (Fanning & Boyle, 2010). Therefore, Africans tend to show more civic interest, interest in non-ethnic organisations, than East Europeans. SIPTU figures suggest, however, that trade unions are an exception to this.

The majority of interviewees touched upon aspects of social integration that in their view impacts on political participation. All of them recognised existing challenges but views were different as to the extent of those challenges. Some felt that there was limited interaction between Irish and migrant communities. One of the reasons for that many migrants moved in to working class neighbourhoods where Irish communities tended to be closely knit. One migrant candidate argued that there needs to be better acceptance by the host community towards migrant communities to facilitate engagement. On the other hand, it was also mentioned that many migrant communities access different social outlets to their Irish neighbours slowing down interaction between migrants and natives; many non-EU nationals were active in newer churches and avoid social events including alcohol.

Several Irish politicians also noted that migrants do not actively take part in residential associations and sport clubs that are part of the civic sphere in Ireland and often serve as a stepping stone to more political involvement. Two migrant candidates agreed with the view of migrants not making enough efforts to partake in civic and political activities. One of them critically noted:

"There needs to be a movement away from immigrants just being happy with their visas."
(Migrant Politician)

Conversely, one Irish politician felt that in his constituency migrants joined residential associations and parents associations or school boards. Representative of a religious organisation highlighted the fact that the non-EU population tend to be very skilled and is not concentrated in ghettos. Another Irish local politician underlined the importance of structures that facilitate engagement across communities. He noted that "**we need surface areas for interaction**" (Irish local politician). It was felt by some interviewees that local authorities and schools had made good efforts; however, integration should become a key consideration in developing areas and planning services.

Prejudice, racism and its impact

A number of interviewees talked about racism and its impact on political participation. The overall feeling was, among both Irish and migrant interviewees, that negative opinions towards migrants has increased in recent years. Much of this is centred upon a critical view of migrants' access to services such as housing and schools and the labour market embedded in the context of economic recession. Some argued that those views are not racist but indicates that migrants are still seen as newcomers. Others including both Irish and migrant respondents highlighted that negative attitudes towards migrants is manifested in verbal threats and damage to property in several neighbourhoods in big cities. One respondent took the example of a girl who needed to be accompanied to school to guarantee her safety. In a few cases families had to move out of the area they lived in. One migrant member of a party received threats and her property was damaged. The verbal abuse she received played a role in her decision to change her traditional dress to more European style of attire. Those instances were however more common in working class areas with social housing estates and even there example of positive interactions were also shown. Nevertheless the problem was recognised by all politicians. Politicians suggested that educational activities along with firm responses from the Gardai (Irish Police Force) are key elements of responding to racism. What was highlighted is that migrants need to be empowered to raise their voices and make authorities and the public be aware of the incidents. One Irish party official and former councillor working on a disadvantaged area passionately stated: **"We need to break silence over racism" (Irish party official).**

To what degree does racism impact on political participation? Interestingly, when questioned on their **experience of racism** all migrant candidates from 2009 said that their experiences of direct racism was minimal and, even then, they all, without exception, managed to reframe their experiences in an understanding light. One interviewee described how, when canvassing in public, people would occasionally call him racist names, however, he felt that all of the candidates and canvassers had similar experiences because politicians in Ireland had such a bad reputation and that, because he was black, it was the first curse that popped into people's heads when they saw him. Another interviewee was able to frame his experiences of racism as a bit of a joke that he would tell people in light conversation. In general the importance of engagement and challenge of prejudice was underlined by a number of migrant candidates. However, other respondents suggested worsening of attitudes since 2009. They argued that migrants wanted to keep a low profile in the current economic climate referring to unwelcoming attitudes in the constituency. This can particularly affect potential migrant candidates and party volunteers and may have played a role in

(to date) fewer number of migrant candidates contesting the 2014 elections and the almost lack of migrant candidates (with two exceptions) returning to contest elections after 2009.

A number of observations were made for establishing **responses to the more negative social climate** in Ireland. One party official highlighted how parties and their representatives can challenge negative views constructively and not simply dismiss views as inappropriate. That includes explaining why migrants are not responsible for inadequate services. Another party official, a candidate for the 2014 election, explained how local party members had supported victims of racist incidents. A number of other Irish politicians talked about assisting victims and taking their complaints seriously. Lastly, it was also suggested that mixed canvassing teams can offer a support to migrant candidates and volunteers and help to challenge negative views at the doorstep. Some migrant respondents also believed that more needs to be done to portray migrants as contributors to the economic and social life in Ireland. More concrete example was taken by one interviewee. He emphasised that the majority of the Muslim population in Ireland is highly educated and have good English but discussion on Muslims often focused on challenges and did not highlight their contributions.

More transient life

Security of status is a key concern for non-EU nationals and can influence their ability and ambition to participate in politics. Ejorh's interviews with Africans in Dublin, Dundalk and Waterford highlighted that strong interest in political involvement (98%) does not necessarily translate into actual political participation: only 27% of interviewees exercised their vote and a very small number, 2% of respondents were members of political parties (Ejorh, 2006). The main reason cited were racism and sense of insecurity. This suggests that security in a legal sense, that is, security of status, and security as being accepted and safe, are both equally important.

Possibly the view on the importance of security of status is voiced by some asylum seekers who may wait for years for their applications to be concluded. Securing refugee status does help: however refugees also need to renew their status regularly. In the same vein, non-EU workers had to renew regularly and their residency status depends on having a job until they secure long-term residency permit. Recession presented some difficulties in securing long-term residency when worker lost their job. [47] Even upon receiving Long Term Residence, their family members will not be exempt from employment permit requirements.[48] To sum it up, while security of status is more of a concern to some non-EU groups than others, it affects quite many of them.

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[47] As a result of the recession a number of non-EU nationals however could not qualify for this status due to losing his/her job (they may have completed five years but lost the job at the time of their applications). The Government adopted a new policy whereby people could qualify after five years even if they are longer in employment. Ex-permit holders were also allowed to stay to look for employment six month after being made redundant. However, a number of people still faced difficulties when they did not have 60 months residency recorded and could not get a job in 6 months. Ireland received poor scores by the MIPEX on the subject of long-term residency on the basis that the status is discretionary and it is entirely dependent on security of employment.

[48] Ireland opted out the Long Term Residency Directive that extends long-term residency rights to family members. It was envisaged that Green Card holder would gain permanent residency after two years on employment: however, the accompanying bill is yet to be adopted. Currently Green Card holders renew their permission every year.

Non-EU nationals may also apply for citizenship after five years residency. Until recently both the citizenship process was lengthy but the current Minister of Justice made significant improvements and sped up the citizenship application process. It can be argued that in Ireland citizenship process offers a better option for non-EU nationals to secure their status. Firstly, it is available not only for employment permit holder but family members, refugees and other protection status holders. Furthermore, it requires the same length of residence but offers more favourable rights and entitlements. Therefore, it can be assumed that many non-EU nationals may defer political participation until they have received citizenship.

Of course, African candidates in local elections did not hold citizenship when they got involved in politics suggesting that non-EU nationals may decide to participate once they achieve at least certain degree of security. However, it is feasible that more permanent status encourages more non-EU nationals to participate in political life. Fanning summarises it as follows:

"…insecurities about residency status impede involvement in social issues and hinder the political participation of non-EU migrants. …Whilst for African respondents securing rights and entitlements granted by citizenship were both a motivation and a disincentive for political participation, in the case of many East European respondents naturalisation and political participation were conceived as part of a more general commitment to integration." (Fanning & Boyle, 2010; p425-426)

A number of Irish and migrant interviewees emphasised that migrants tend to have less stable life circumstances and feel less settled. They may not have a permanent or long-term legal status in Ireland. A lot of them are **concerned with employment** and financial difficulties as many are in temporary contract, work in anti-social hours or looking for employment and they also tend to live in rented accommodation. Most commonly the recent arrival of migrants was highlighted by interviewees. Those factors can explain why migrant political participation is not yet significant. That view however was criticised by others: one migrant party member pointed out that a large number of migrants had been living in Ireland for many years and thousands of non-EU nationals received citizenship in recent years. A lot of them, notwithstanding the growth in unemployment, are in skilled employment. Therefore, they argued, there is cohort of the migrant population who is settled and may be interested in political participation. Their actions are also dependent on the parties' efforts in creating interest among the migrant population.

4. Summary of positive and negative factors affecting political participation

Rights
Positives

- Anyone can vote in local election after 6 months residency
- Anyone can run in local election after 6 months residency
- Anyone can join a political party & trade union
- Non-EU nationals can become citizens after 5 years residency (their applications need to be processed but recently the average two year waiting time has been shortened)

Negatives

- Non-EU nationals' do not have secure residency until citizenship is attained
- Political rights are not promoted widely and regularly
- Voting system is unique: the preferential voting system where voters have to rank candidates are unfamiliar for most migrants
- Town councils, to which it was easier to get elected, are abolished.

Political landscape and social climate
Positives

- There is no far-right, anti-immigrant party in Ireland at the moment
- National politicians refrain from anti-immigrant rhetoric in the main although some local politicians have made negative statements
- Citizenship ceremonies enjoy support and got some positive publicity
- There are some "champions" of integration issues among politicians

Negatives

- Racist incidents, although mostly non-physical, are becoming more frequent
- In working class areas as well as online there is clear expression of resentment related to migrants' accessing services (housing, school)
- In Ireland there is no national integration policy framework while parties did not adopt an identifiable integration policy position, either.
- Since the recession migration issues are less likely to feature in political discourse

Migrant communities
Positives

- Many migrants, particularly those from non-EU background appreciate the freedom of political association.
- Pre-migratory political involvement tends to be a factor in political involvement, particularly among Africans.

- Challenging experiences, such as discrimination or racist incident, often trigger civic activism and by extension, political participation.
- Although several migrants have left, many are taking root: since 2005 almost 80,000 got citizenship, mainly non-EU nationals.
- Notwithstanding language difficulties, many non-EU groups such as Nigerians, Indians and Filipino migrants have good command of English.

Negatives

- A lot of migrants are still more active within their own groups (e.g. churches) than in local community settings. Related to this is the fact that a strong cohort of non-EU nationals may not feel comfortable in public events or meetings, for instance because of service of alcohol or absence of inclusive food choices.
- It is felt that migrants may not have the confidence that parties will promote their issues. This is reinforced by the lack of migrant representation within parties.
- Many migrants rent a place and have not committed to a particular locality. In Ireland it was shown that those in rented accommodation are less likely to take part in politics.
- Furthermore, their employment situation may also be precarious and this combined with some increase in negative attitude towards migrant communities contribute to their desire to keep low profile in recession.
- Migrants may be disillusioned with politics. This was shown to characterise Central and East Europeans more than non-EU nationals. But it was also acknowledged that non-EU groups may overcome those suspicion and with time express appreciation with what they see is a more open and accessible political system in Ireland.

Party electorate
Positives
- Migrants represent a sizeable voter base and politicians need votes in the Irish system
- Politicians operate advice clinics that any local resident can use including migrants.
- A number of migrants received support in dealing with racist incidents from local politicians.
- Although it depends on actual politicians (as noted below), a number of political representatives actively engaged with migrant organisations and places

Negatives
- Engagement between parties and migrant groups is dependent on individual politicians
- A lot of migrants still do not know about advice clinics or local party meetings
- Parties may still perceive lack of interest which affects their approach

Membership in parties
Positives

- Parties want and are open to new members
- In general parties show welcoming attitude
- Some parties tried to give specific focus to migrants (and members of other under-represented groups) by appointing a dedicated person with equality brief within the party

- Recently there were attempts made to develop welcome packs and offer orientation through networking events
- Campaigns and canvassing are potential entry point for newcomers to parties including migrants who can try out politics without having to commit themselves in the long term.

Negatives

- Parties do not have specific statements on attracting migrant members nor are there strategies in place
- There is no formal introduction process. Efforts to make welcome packs or organise events are not fully developed.
- Historical context to Irish parties may be difficult to understand for migrants
- Parties do not monitor diversity of their membership and efforts to target migrant members have not been evaluated

Candidacy

Positives

- Migrants can be seen as a fresh voice in Ireland, especially as in recent years people have become disappointed with long-standing representatives.
- Although not in a structured manner, parties do talent spotting when looking for candidates, especially in areas where the party is less strong
- Local activism is more important than ethnic background.
- Parties can help with materials.
- At times parties offer help with canvassing and support the formation of mixed teams where migrants are supported by natives.

Negatives

- The system favours incumbents due to the extensive networking involved in Irish political life.
- Many migrants live in urban areas and they face more competition when putting themselves forward as candidates
- It takes time to develop networks which is important in an Irish context
- At the moment, with the exception of Rotime Adebari, there does not seem to be role models for migrants in politics.

- Migrant candidates may be perceived more as helpers (transfer) and not real winners
- Migrant candidates may be pushed into immigration issues.
- Fundraising is challenging for newcomers to an area.
- It is harder for migrants to get a team of volunteers together, which is needed for canvassing and leaflets/posters: a central aspect of campaigning in Ireland
- Migrant vote may be split between migrant candidates

5. Tables

Migrant candidates in 2014 local elections, Ireland					
Name	**Political Party**	**No of first p. votes**	**Country of origin**	**Council**	**Local Electoral Area**
Elena Secas (elected)	**Labour Party**	**867**	**Moldova**	**Limerick**	**Limerick City-East**
Nadine Meisonnave	Fine Gael	645	Estonia	Dublin City	Pembroke-South Dock
Rotimi Adebari	Independent	581	Nigeria	Laois	Portlaoise
Ann-Maree Quinn	Independent	511	Australia	Dublin City	Pembroke-South Dock
Edmond Lukusa (elected)	**Sinn Fein**	**353**	**Congo**	**Fingal**	**Mulhuddart**
Agnieszka Wieczorkowska	Independent	338	Poland	Dublin City	Ballymun
Farah Deeba	Fine Gael	312	Pakistan	Cork	Ballincollig-Carrigaline
Memet Uludag	PBP - People Before Profit	306	Turkey	Fingal	Castlenock
Kemi Adenekan	Labour Party	301	Nigeria	South Dublin	Tallaght Central
Patrick Akpoveta	Independent	275	Nigeria	South Dublin	Lucan
Felix Omorodion	Independent	236	Nigeria	Clare	Ennis
George Ati-john	Independent	197	Nigeria	Clare	Ennis
Sunnymartins Duruagwu	Independent	183	Nigeria	Limerick	Limerick City-West
Zahid Hussain	Independent	181	Pakistan	South Dublin	Lucan
Grzegorz Zalewski	CPPC - The People's Convention	141	Poland	Cork	Kanturk-Mallow
Wladek Hanczar	Independent	139	Poland	Kilkenny	Kilkenny City-West
Billy Banda	PBP - People Before Profit	138	South Africa	Donegal	Letterkenny
Kebba Cham	Independent	134	Gambia	Sligo	Sligo
Mohammed Kamal Uddin	Independent	133	?	Mayo	Castlebar
Osaro Fajimyo	Independent	108	Nigeria	Laois	Portlaoise
Lech Szczecinski	Independent	104	Poland	Fingal	Howth-Malahide
Gerben JF Uunk	Green Party	92	Netherland	Clare	Ennis
Rafal Kornatka	Independent	91	Poland	Dublin City	North Inner City
Grazvydas Vaitekunas	Green Party	91	Lithuania	Monaghan	Monaghan
Sylwia Jakubas	Independent	71	Poland	Louth	Dundalk-Carlingford
Lech Szczecinski	Independent	70	Poland	Dublin City	Crumlin-Kimmage
Lech Szczecinski	Independent	57	Poland	Same	Swords
Marcin Czechowicz	Independent	44	Poland	Dublin City	Pembroke-South Dock
Remi Sikora	Independent	40	Poland	Kilkenny	Kilkenny City-East
Adam Zagorski	Independent	30	Poland	Kilkenny	Kilkenny City-East
Raimonda Leonaviciene	Green Party	22	Lithuania	Monaghan	Ballybay-Cones

Migrant candidates in 2009 local election, city & county councils					
Name	**Party**	**No of first p. votes**	**Country of origin**	**County**	**Local Electoral Area**
Elena Secas	Labour Party	1,045	Moldova	Limerick East	Castleconnell
Adeola Ogunsina	Fine Gael	965	Nigeria	Fingal County	Mulhuddart
Baby Pereppadan	Independent	799	India	South Dublin	Tallaght South
Rotimi Adebari (elected)	**Independent**	**649**	**Nigeria**	**Laois County**	**Portlaoise Town**
Tendai Madondo	Green Party	636	Zimbabwe	South Dublin	Tallaght South
Idowu Sulyman-Olafimihan	Fianna Fail	611	Nigeria	Fingal	Mulhuddart
Benedicta Attoh	Fine Gael	586	Nigeria	Louth County	Dundalk South
Ignatius Iggy Okafor	Independent	464	Nigeria	Final County	Mulhuddart
Shaheen Ahmed	Fianna Fail	448	Pakistan	South Dublin	Lucan
Jose Ospina	Labour Party	390	Columbia	Cork South West	Bantry
John Hardt	Green Party	367	United States	Kildare County C.	Kildare
Anna Michalska	Fianna Fail	311	Poland	Kilkenny City C.	Kilkenny City C.
Festus Peters Asemota	Independent	263	Nigeria	Cork County C.	Bandon
Yinka Dixon Oludaiye	Green Party	261	Nigeria	Laois County	Drogheda East
Rashid Butt	Independent	185	Pakistan	Westmeath County	Mullingar West
Patrick Maphoso Tatlhego	Independent	154	South Africa	Dublin City	Dublin Inner City
Gbemi Shogunle	Independent	151	Nigeria	South Dublin C.	Clondalkin
Zahid Hussain	Independent	136	Pakistan	Fingal County	Castleknock
Sheikh M Ahmed	Independent	129	Bangladesh	Waterford County	Waterford East
Anna Banko	Fianna Fail	66	Poland	Limerick City	Limerick City South
Lech Szczecinski	Independent	55	Poland	South West Inner City	Dublin City
Senthil RamRamasamy	Independent	23	?	Waterford City C.	Waterford North
Senthil RamRamasamy	Independent	12	?	Waterford City C.	Waterford South

Migrant candidates in 2009 local election, town and borough councils				
Name	**Party**	No of first p. votes	**Country of origin**	**Town or Borough Council**
George Enyoazu	Green Party	406	Nigeria	Dundalk Town C.
Taiwo Matthew	Independent	378	Nigeria	Ennis Town C.
Tomasz Askuntowicz	Fine Gael	310	Poland	Tullamore Town C.
Alex Peter Ivanov	Green Party	294	Estonia (Russia)	Bailieborough Cootehill Town C.
Katarzyna Gaborec	Fianna Fail	289	Poland	Mullingar Town C.
Kristina Jankaitiene (elected)	**Green Party**	**202**	**Lithuania**	**Carrickmackross Town C.**
Michael Abiola Phillips	Fine Gael	193	Nigeria	Letterkenny Town C.
Okey Williams Kalu	Fine Gael	150	Nigeria	Castlebar Town C.
Chinwe Obadeyi	Independent	140	Nigeria	Ennis Town C.
Paul Osikoya	Green Party	123	Nigeria	Tuam Town C.
Anna Rooney (elected)	**Fianna Fail**	**110**	**Russian**	**Clone Town C.**
Wojciech Wisniewski	Fianna Fail	105	Poland	Shannon Town C.
Frances Soney-Ituen	Independent	102	Nigerian	Athy Town C.
Jan Rotte (elected)	**Labour Party**	**77**	**Netherland**	**Lismore Town C.**
Rashid Butt	Independent	77	Pakistan	Mullingar Town C.
Ina Nemirskaite	Fianna Fail	76	Latvia	Carrickmackross Town C.
Agnieszka Faltyn	Fine Gael	70	Poland	Templemore Town C.
Ala Olsevska	Fianna Fail	59	Lithuania	Portlaoise Town C.
Vilma Moceviciene	Fine Gael	57	Lithuania	Balbriggan Town C.
Eddie Kimpwene	Independent	53	Congo	Castlebar Town C.
Anna Kulikowska	Labour Party	50	Poland	Shannon Town C.
Philips Femi Obimah	Green Party	40	Nigeria	Mullingar Town C.
Stella Oladapo	Fianna Fail	40	Nigeria	Letterkenny Town C.

Register of Electors, 2012/13, Department of Environment

	All eligible for Presidential election (Irish citizens)	All eligible for Dáil elections (Irish & UK citizens)	All eligible for European elections (Irish, UK and EU citizens)	All eligible for Local elections (Irish, UK, EU & Non-EU citizens)
City Councils				
Cork	77,453	78,269	78,613	81,224
Dublin	307,235	312,564	313,302	325,772
Galway	39,378	39,902	40,156	43,334
Limerick	36,181	36,435	36,487	37,963
Waterford	25,512	25,874	26,064	26,542
County Councils				
Carlow	38,355	38,820	39,606	40,251
Cavan	53,058	53,665	53,742	55,475
Clare	83,691	85,580	86,089	88,492
Cork	286,375	292,677	294,398	303,574
Donegal	119,441	121,029	121,201	123,021
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	146,179	148,835	149,876	152,849
Fingal	159,247	161,875	162,485	176,064
Galway	128,431	130,193	130,881	132,469
Kerry	107,288	110,183	112,417	114,612
Kildare	132,879	134,737	135,373	139,058
Kilkenny	66,757	67,623	67,847	55,106
Laois	54,749	55,429	55,974	57,256
Leitrim	23,941	24,897	25,083	25,722
Limerick	97,496	98,470	98,654	100,634
Longford	27,647	28,265	28,518	29,758
Louth	86,488	87,220	88,287	91,691
Mayo	95,138	97,566	97,908	100,346
Meath	131,984	133,580	135,348	137,490
Monaghan	44,495	44,745	44,790	47,332
North Tipperary	50,676	51,699	52,120	53,328
Offaly	54,083	54,756	54,896	56,332
Roscommon	45,504	47,118	47,252	48,241
Sligo	49,315	50,305	50,457	51,534
South Dublin	173,797	175,259	175,506	184,540
South Tipperary	61,756	62,917	63,335	64,500
Waterford	50,786	52,035	52,164	52,988
Westmeath	62,747	63,417	63,846	66,178
Wexford	104,943	106,532	107,773	109,411
Wicklow	88,867	90,853	91,565	92,793
Totals	**3,111,872**	**3,163,324**	**3,182,013**	**3,265,880**

Estimated size of broad nat. groups on the electoral register, based on the Register of Electors 2012/13			
Councils	**Only local election** (Non-EU nat. & EU nat. who did not deregister)	**Only European** (EU nat.)	**Only Dail** (UK nat.)
City Councils			
Cork	2,611	344	816
Dublin	12,470	738	5,329
Galway	3,178	254	524
Limerick	1,476	52	254
Waterford	478	190	362
County Councils	-	-	-
Carlow	645	786	465
Cavan	1,733	77	607
Clare	2,403	509	1,889
Cork	9,176	1,721	6,302
Donegal	1,820	172	1,588
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	2,973	1,041	2,656
Fingal	13,579	610	2,628
Galway	1,588	688	1,762
Kerry	2,195	2,234	2,895
Kildare	3,685	636	1,858
Kilkenny	1,085	224	866
Laois	1,282	545	680
Leitrim	639	186	956
Limerick	1,980	184	974
Longford	1,240	253	618
Louth	3,404	1,067	732
Mayo	2,438	342	2,428
Meath	2,142	1,768	1,596
Monaghan	2,542	45	250
North Tipperary	1,208	421	1,023
Offaly	1,436	140	673
Roscommon	989	134	1,614
Sligo	1,077	152	990
South Dublin	9,034	247	1,462
South Tipperary	1,165	418	1,161
Waterford	824	129	1,249
Westmeath	2,332	429	670
Wexford	1,638	1,241	1,589
Wicklow	1,228	712	1,986

Totals	83,867	18,689	51,452

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