In this second newsletter from our series, we describe the diverse socio-demographic profile of the families of ‘second generation’ children living in Ireland. We also provide information on the employment status of mothers and their use of childcare. The experience in other countries shows that the second generation tends to overcome some of the challenges their parents faced, but nevertheless experience some disadvantages, for example, in education and labour market access\(^1\). Much of this is attributed to the lower socio-economic position of their parents, which is often characterised by lower skilled work and high unemployment amongst some migrant groups\(^2\).

The information presented below is drawn from the *Growing Up in Ireland* (GUI) nine-month-old Infant Cohort. This cohort included 11,000 children aged nine months who were born between December 1\(^{\text{st}}\) 2007 and June 30\(^{\text{th}}\) 2008. A comprehensive description of all aspects of the methodologies employed by *Growing Up in Ireland* are documented in a series of technical reports which are available to download from www.growingup.ie.

**Length of time living in Ireland**

As shown in Figure 1, the length of residence differed noticeably between groups, with Asian and EU Accession State migrants being comparatively more recent arrivals. In contrast, mothers who were born in the United Kingdom tended to have lived in Ireland for more than ten years. This is similar to the wider trend of migration to Ireland.

The large proportion of births among migrants from the EU Accession States in particular, which occurred from 2004 onwards has a number of important policy and societal implications given that second generation births among this cohort now accounts for a substantial proportion of all births in Ireland.

**Household social class**

As shown in Figure 2, we show that the distribution of social class was broadly similar for Irish and U.K. households. However, households from the EU-13 Member States were over-represented in the higher social classes, while those from EU Accession States were mostly found in the skilled, semi-, and un-skilled classes. More than one quarter of African households (27.3%) were included in the unclassified social class group which includes those not economically active and also those for whom there was not enough


information to classify them in one of the other groups.

**Figure 2. Household social class**

Mothers’ educational attainment

In general we found that migrant mothers were more likely than their Irish peers to have a third level qualification, although Primary Caregivers from Africa had lower overall levels of educational attainment. As shown in Figure 3, mothers from ‘old Europe’ were the most likely to have a third level degree (60%) and least likely to have left education before completing the equivalent of the Leaving Certificate (7%). The percentage of mothers from EU Accession States to have attained a third level degree was the same as that among Irish mothers.

**Figure 3. Percentage of mothers with lower secondary or less, or degree of higher education**

When social class and education were considered in conjunction for both Primary and Secondary Caregivers from EU Accession States in particular, a mismatch was observed between their education level and social class, compared to other groups. This suggests that many of this group work in lower status jobs than might be expected given their education level which is in line with previous research on this group.

**Household income**

The average household equivalised income of the families in GUI was €21,451. When income quintiles were examined, we found that households with one or more parents from an EU Accession State were the least likely group to be in the highest income quintile with more than one-third (36.2%) in the lowest quintile. Households with at least one parent from an EU-13 Member State tended to have higher equivalised household incomes than other migrant groups.

**Figure 4. Household equivalised income**

**Where and how the families live**

As Figure 5 illustrates, households from each of the other nationality groups were more likely than their Irish peers to live in urban areas with African (74.0%) and Asian (71.3%) households in particular, concentrated in urban areas.

![Figure 5. Percentage of households living in urban or rural locations](image)

Purchasing a home requires a long-term financial commitment by households and therefore likely reflects an intention to remain in the country in the medium to long term. However, securing a mortgage requires an established employment and credit history which makes qualifying for a home mortgage particularly difficult for recent immigrants. Equally, the rental housing market, particularly in the private sector, is expensive and rents account for a large proportion of a households’ net monthly income. Here, we found large variation in the housing tenure of the households (Figure 6).

![Figure 6. Percentage of households who own or rent their accommodation](image)

Overall, similar rates of home ownership were observed among Irish, U.K., and EU-13 households, which reflects the fact that they were, on average, living in Ireland for longer, and were also the most economically advantaged groups. Most notably among the other groups, only 22.9% of households from EU Accession States owned their home compared to 80% of their Irish peers.

** Mothers labour market participation**

While the reasons for migrating to Ireland are varied, those who migrated to Ireland from EU Accession States from 2004 onwards were predominantly economic migrants. Therefore we should expect high rates of employment among mothers from these countries prior to the birth of the Study Child. As shown in Figure 7, this was indeed the case, with 61% of this group in full-time employment and a further 14% if employed part-time.

![Figure 7. Percentage of mothers employed full- or part-time prior to birth of Study Child](image)

For a myriad of reasons, many new mothers withdraw from the labour market either for a period of time or, in some cases, completely, after the birth of their child. A number of public policies are in place to support mothers who wish to re-enter the labour market, the most important of which is Maternity Benefit. This is a payment made to women who are on maternity...
leave from work and is covered by social insurance. It is paid for 26 weeks by the State and in 2012 was a maximum of €262 per week. Mothers are also entitled to an additional 16 weeks unpaid maternity leave.

The effect of maternity leave on mother’s timing of their return to work can be seen clearly in Figure 8. Only 8% of mothers had returned to employment by the time their child was 5 months old. At month six, there was a marked increase in the number of mothers engaged in paid employment, which demonstrates the importance of paid maternity leave.

Figure 8. Percentage of mothers at work in each month after giving birth

Mothers’ engagement with the labour market following the birth of a child is intertwined with childcare provision and is a critical issue for all mothers. It also constitutes an important feature of the lives of migrant mothers in Ireland which to date has been little researched.

The ‘New Irish Families’ report is available to download from: www.tcd.ie/merc/publications.

The project team consists of Dr Antje Röder (PI); Dr Mark Ward; and Dr Carmen Frese. Email: NewIrish@tcd.ie