

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST IMMIGRANT WORKERS

Irish evidence on the impact of recession

Workplace discrimination against immigrants in Ireland is fairly stable over time, regardless of the economic circumstances. That is one of the findings of research to be presented to the NORFACE migration conference at University College London this weekend.

But migrants who arrived in Ireland during the recession were more likely to report experiencing discrimination when looking for work than those who had arrived during the boom.

The research by **Gillian Kingston**, **Frances McGinnity** and **Philip O'Connell** analyses reports of work-based discrimination during the economic boom and in the subsequent recession.

The research was based on modelling responses from a module on Equality (2010) in Ireland's Labour Force Survey – the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS). The report also used data from the 2004 Equality Module to compare the experiences of immigrants during the boom and recession.

This survey asked respondents about their experience of discrimination in the past two years across a range of domains. This research focuses on the experience of discrimination when looking for work and discrimination in the workplace.

In this timeframe, Ireland experienced rapid immigration and an unprecedented period of economic growth, followed by the most severe economic and labour market crisis that the country has experienced. While it is obvious that the recession triggers unemployment, this research focuses on how the financial crisis affects the experience of work-related discrimination.

The research finds that overall non-Irish nationals experienced higher rates of reported discrimination in the workplace than natives. Nationality and ethnicity play a large role in the subjective experience of work based discrimination. The Black African and Ethnic Minority EU groups fare worse than other national-ethnic groups in their experience of discrimination.

But in terms of change over time, while the research finds that discrimination persists in the workplace for most groups, reported discrimination when looking for work has fallen for most national ethnic groups.

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And the Black African group in particular are faring badly; discrimination while looking for work has increased over time for this group. The Black African group also experienced discrimination when looking for work in 2004 and 2010. And this group experience particularly high unemployment rates.

Gillian Kingston notes:

'Despite the large scale economic recession that Ireland experienced between 2004 and 2010, there is no significant evidence that work-related discrimination among immigrants has increased with the recession.'

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The study was carried out by Gillian Kingston and Frances McGinnity, Gillian Kingston and Frances McGinnity of the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) Dublin, and Philip O'Connell of University College Dublin (UCD)

The study was based on Central Statistic Office (CSO) Ireland data

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