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Spatializing immigrant integration outcomes

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Abstract

Measurements of immigrant integration outcomes generally occur at the national scale and, to a lesser extent, at the urban scale. This paper argues that immigrant integration outcomes should be measured at other scales in order to better understand how the process of integration is affected by where people live. It uses existing large-scale data sets for the Republic of Ireland to show differences in integration outcomes, measured using the Zaragoza indicators, for three of the country's eight NUTS 3 regions. The analysis shows that there are marked differences in immigrant integration outcomes across regions and highlights the different regional barriers to and enablers of integration. The paper concludes that geographers should advocate for a more nuanced understanding of immigrant integration as a spatialized process and should insist on the importance of making relevant data available at a range of spatial scales.

KEYWORDS

immigrant integration, Ireland, place, region, scale, Zaragoza indicators

1 | INTRODUCTION

Since 2004, when the EU published its Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy (European Commission, 2004), there has been considerable attention directed towards the meaning, measurement and enhancement of immigrant integration across European countries. Despite this attention, the meaning of integration remains unclear. Although the first Common Basic Principle asserts that integration is a two-way process involving immigrants and residents, it does not specify what this means in practice. This lack of clarity has persisted. A recent U.K. Home Office report opens by stating that 'the term integration has multiple meanings in different contexts' (Ndofo-Tah et al., 2019, p. 11), whereas Penninx (2019, p. 9) acknowledges the concept 'comes with a lot of fuzziness'.

Because of the difficulties in defining what integration means, more effort has been expended on defining what immigrant integration might look like. Specifically, the focus has been on ways of measuring integration, with an emphasis on quantification. From a policy perspective, this work has been driven by the European Ministerial Conference on Integration, which developed the Zaragoza indicators of integration (European Commission, 2010). The Zaragoza indicators, later augmented or further developed by the DG Migration and Home

Affairs (Huddleston, Niessen, & Dag Tjaden, 2013), pay particular attention to immigrants' integration outcomes in key domains, such as employment, social inclusion, education and active citizenship. These outcomes and indicators have been chosen to allow for comparability across EU member states; they work on the basis that integration means the economic and social convergence of the experiences of immigrants and nonimmigrants. To date, there have been two comprehensive international comparisons of immigrant integration using the Zaragoza indicators for EU and OECD countries.¹ The first was published in 2015 (OECD/European Union, 2015), the second in 2018 (OECD/European Union, 2018), and both included data for OECD and EU member states. These reports highlight the extent to which there has been convergence of economic and social outcomes for immigrants and nonimmigrants in each country and point to 'successes and failures' in immigrant integration outcomes across time and space. The Zaragoza indicators are now widely used to identify successes or challenges in the process of immigrant integration at the national level.

The focus of this paper is immigrant integration outcomes. We argue that the extensive literature on immigrant integration outcomes, by both policy makers and academics, is limited because of the way in which it conceptualises and operationalises place and scale. Using the

example of the Republic of Ireland, we show how a focus on place and scale provides a more nuanced understanding of immigrant integration outcomes and of the process of integration more generally. The paper is structured as follows. In the next section, we provide an overview of how place and scale is considered in literature and research on immigrant integration. Following this, we introduce the context of the Republic of Ireland as an immigrant-receiving society, describing immigrant flows, immigrant settlement and the current state of knowledge about immigrant integration outcomes. In the next section, we describe our broader research project on immigrant integration and settlement and detail how we used existing large-scale data sets to develop indicators of immigrant integration at the regional scale. We then discuss regional indicators for three regions in the Republic of Ireland in more detail, showing how attention to different scales provides important insights into the role place plays in processes of immigrant integration. In the final section, we conclude that discussions of immigrant integration outcomes require a more developed spatial awareness in order to better understand how place matters for integration.

2 | INTEGRATION, PLACE AND SCALE

Processes of immigrant integration occur in place, but there are clear limitations to how place and scale are conceptualised in literature and research on immigrant integration outcomes. In this section, we show the spatial and scalar understandings that dominate and how these limit our understanding of the role and significance of place and scale in the process of immigrant integration.

The national scale is of most significance in research and literature on immigrant integration outcomes. The Zaragoza indicators were devised to permit cross-national comparison, and the operationalisation of the indicators by the OECD and EU considers outcomes for all immigrants within a specific country. As an example, the 2012 report considers data for 34 countries, whereas the 2015 and 2018 reports provide data for 41 countries (OECD, 2012; OECD/European Union, 2015, 2018). In general, the reports consider outcomes for all immigrants within the individual countries and seek to categorise and rank countries in terms of integration outcomes. In particular, the more recent reports (2015 and 2018) identify a range of immigrant destination types on the basis of period of time as an immigrant destination and the broad characteristics of immigrants. These types are used to frame the discussion of immigrant integration outcomes, with better outcomes identified for immigrants and their offspring in countries with a longer history of immigration and/or with more highly educated immigrants. Although much of this work deals with outcomes for all immigrants, there are some efforts to address differences in outcomes based on sociodemographic factors. The 2015 report has separate chapters on the outcomes for young people and third-country nationals, and this is supplemented with an additional chapter on gender in the 2018 report. However, all of these chapters take the national scale as the starting point for assessing immigrant integration outcomes, and they again emphasise

differences and similarities between countries. As a consequence of this activity, immigrant integration outcomes—particularly as shown by large-scale data sets—are primarily measured at the national scale and understood as a consequence of national characteristics, policies and practices. A wide range of academic literature supplements the policy focus of the OECD/EU, using national and cross-national databases to assess immigrant integration outcomes in key areas such as labour market integration, naturalisation and education (for a review of this literature, see Bilgili, Huddleston, & Joki, 2015). Other representative examples include Alba and Foner, 2015; Algan, Dustmann, Glitz, & Manning, 2010; and Cebolla-Boado & Finotelli 2015. The key point is that from both policy and academic perspectives, there is considerable emphasis on asserting the national as the most important scale for assessing immigrant integration outcomes.

The second significant scale for reporting on immigrant integration outcomes is the urban. The Zaragoza declaration mentioned the importance of urban initiatives directed towards integration, taking place specifically in 'districts with a high immigrant concentration' (Council of the European Union, 2010). Despite this, there is no discussion of urban integration outcomes in any of the three OECD/European Union reports. Instead, our knowledge of immigrant integration outcomes comes from a range of research—using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies—that often focuses on one or a small number of urban settings. One strand of this research investigates neighbourhood effects, that is, whether or not where people live affects their life chances (Sharkey & Faber, 2014, p. 560). Research on neighbourhood effects pays particular attention to people who live in neighbourhoods that are characterised as 'disadvantaged'. While recognising that findings are not always conclusive, Van Ham and Manley (2012, p. 2787) list the aspects of people's lives where neighbourhood effects have been identified: 'educational achievement, school dropout rates, deviant behaviour, social exclusion, health, transition rates from welfare to work, and social and occupational mobility'. When this work is used to consider the specific experiences of immigrants, it is most often applied to (urban) neighbourhoods where immigrants are residentially concentrated. As a consequence, it tends to be used to assess both levels of residential segregation and the negative (economic and social) consequences of living in an immigrant neighbourhood. Another, more recent, strand of research considers urban areas through the analytical lens of super-diversity: 'the multiplication of social categories in specific localities' (Wessendorf, 2014, p. 2). This research emphasises everyday experiences and encounters in urban settings, with a particular focus on cities in Europe and North America (e.g., London, New York, Amsterdam; see, for example, Foner, Duyvendak, & Kasinitiz, 2019; Grzymala-Kazłowska & Phillimore, 2018; Platts-Fowler & Robinson, 2015). This work is more concerned with understanding immigrant integration outcomes experientially and holistically, and it is generally based on qualitative research that is not necessarily linked to outcomes measured at the national scale.

This brief overview of policy and academic research on immigrant integration outcomes shows the scalar and spatial limitations of this work. National-scale outcomes reflect and inform the development of

national integration policies and enable cross-national comparisons, but they fail to adequately capture spatial differences within countries. This demonstrates what Favell (2019, p. 3) has described as the dominance of 'national integrationist thinking'. Urban-scale outcomes emphasise the uniqueness of urban (and local) places but make limited efforts to connect these places to others, preferring to highlight differences. In doing so, this more localised research does not adequately engage with either integration outcomes in other types of local places, for example, rural, suburban or 'ordinary' cities, or the links between integration outcomes in different places and at different scales. Although some authors argue for the importance of comparison in assessing immigrant integration outcomes, this is again bordered nationally, either in terms of country of origin or within the destination country (Penninx & Garcés-Masareñas, 2016, pp. 24–25). The bifurcated emphasis on either countries or urban neighbourhoods has resulted in a limited understanding of the range of spatial contexts and spatialized outcomes for immigrant integration.

Geographers have been to the forefront in arguing for a more expansive and nuanced spatial and scalar understanding of immigrant integration outcomes. Robinson (2010, p. 2452), writing about 'new immigration' in the United Kingdom, insisted that 'the experiences and impacts of new immigration cannot be fully appreciated without the application of a geographical perspective on place' and concluded that most analyses of new immigration had failed to acknowledge this reality. This was developed by Phillips and Robinson (2015, p. 417) who, in a call to recognise the importance of place, insisted on the need to 'explore the interplay between various scales and different dimensions of place'. In her review of educational and wage outcomes for U.S. immigrants and their descendants, Goodwin-White (2016) draws two important conclusions. The first is that second-generation immigrant outcomes depend in part on the location choices of the previous generation. The second is that we need a more detailed understanding of how places matter for immigrant integration outcomes. In doing so, Goodwin-White (2016, p. 820) argues that we need to understand places not as fixed but rather as changing alongside immigrant settlement. Connor (2020) has extended this argument further, showing that what he calls 'reception context', that is, the sociospatial characteristics of the counties, states and regions where immigrants settled, was highly influential for the integration outcomes of Irish immigrants and their descendants. Focusing on the experiences of refugees in Sweden, Vogiazides and Mondani (2020) insist on the significance of investigating regional immigrant integration outcomes. They argue that the regional context is particularly important for understanding labour market integration, and they use regions as the main unit of analysis in combination with more localised neighbourhood data. Their analysis shows clear regional differences in labour market outcomes for refugees in Sweden. Taken together, these accounts emphasise the importance of place—understood as mutable rather than as fixed—for immigrant integration outcomes and show how spatial differences within countries can and should be identified. They also demonstrate the importance of considering immigrant integration outcomes at a number of scales in order to better identify the broader structures and processes that enable or inhibit integration.

In this paper, we add to this emerging body of work on the spatial and scalar dimensions of immigrant integration by considering outcomes at the regional scale. Specifically, we compare a wide range of integration outcomes across three different regions in the Republic of Ireland using existing large-scale data sets. Our use of regions, rather than the national or urban scale, allows us to acknowledge both spatially variegated settlement patterns and the specific barriers and opportunities associated with living in particular places, including rural areas and new immigrant destinations (McAreevey & Argent, 2018). Our regional focus on a wider range of outcomes—in addition to labour market integration—also allows us to acknowledge the range of aspects of social life in place that matter for *all* residents, regardless of migrant status. In our use of an expanded spatial and scalar register, we highlight the difference that place makes in assessing immigrant integration outcomes and show how attention to place and scale provides important insights into how the process of immigrant integration works.

3 | IRELAND, IMMIGRATION AND IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

Ireland is one of a number of European countries that have traditionally experienced net emigration. In Ireland, this changed in a sustained way in the 1990s, when the period of economic growth known as the Celtic Tiger era led to a reduction in emigration flows and a considerable increase in immigration flows. In the 23-year period from 1996 to 2019, Ireland experienced net immigration in 18 of these years.² As a consequence, the proportion of the population born outside Ireland increased from 7% in 1996 to 17.3% in 2016, the date of the most recent Census. The changes to migration flows were not just in size but also in composition. In 1996, of the 7% of the population born outside Ireland, 75% were born in the United Kingdom and 6.2% in the United States (CSO, 1996). By 2016, only 29% of those born outside Ireland were born in the United Kingdom and 3.8% in the United States. In the same year, 31% of foreign-born came from EU13 countries, 7% from African countries and 12% from Asian countries (CSO, 2017a). This marks a considerable diversification of migration flows and countries of origin over a relatively short 20-year period. The settlement pattern of immigrants in Ireland is also noteworthy. Data published by the CSO in 2006 revealed the extent of the immigrant population in small town and rural Ireland, with high concentrations of immigrants living in some regions of rural Ireland, for example, the west and south-west (Mac Éinrí & White, 2008, p. 157; see also Gilmartin, 2015b). Mac Éinrí (2008, p. 157) suggested that this distribution could be explained by continued out-migration from these peripheral regions to more high-skilled employment in larger urban centres with potential long-term consequences of leaving less well-paid employment for less highly qualified indigenous and migrant workers.

These changes in immigration flow and stock—scale, composition and settlement patterns—make Ireland an interesting site for the investigation of contemporary processes of immigrant integration.

The relatively homogenous nature of the migrant population in Ireland prior to 1996 meant that, unlike many other European countries, Ireland had little in the way of preexisting immigrant communities associated with particular places. As a consequence, from the 1990s onwards, a new public debate about immigration began, with a particular focus on immigrant integration. Irish officials drew from the experiences of other European countries, for example Denmark and the Netherlands, and frequently mentioned the need to 'get it right' in relation to immigrant integration (Tittley, 2012, p. 821). This was evident in growing policy attention to questions of immigrant integration. A wide range of related policy documents was published in this period, including an interdepartmental report on refugee integration, *Integration—A Two Way Process* (published in 2003); a report by NESC, *People, Productivity and Purpose*, and the National Action Plan against Racism (both published in 2005); and a NESC report on *Managing Migration*, published in 2006 (Gilmartin, 2015b; Gray, 2006, 2011). These documents were followed by the creation of a ministerial post with responsibility for integration in 2007 and the publication of the first policy document, *Migration Nation*, in 2008 (Office of the Minister for Integration, 2008).

The issue of immigrant integration outcomes became a key focus from 2010 onwards. The work of articulating what integration might look like was subcontracted to a nongovernmental organisation, the Integration Centre, in conjunction with a not-for-profit research institute, the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI). The Integration Centre and the ESRI published four annual reports on integration, in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 (McGinnity, Quinn, Kingston, & O'Connell, 2012, 2013, 2014; McGinnity, Quinn, O'Connell, & Donnelly, 2011). In 2014, the Integration Centre merged with another non-governmental organisation, the Immigrant Council of Ireland, and the impetus for monitoring integration was lost. The post of Minister for Integration was abolished in January 2011, and there was no minister with specific responsibility for immigrant integration again for 5 years.³ Since the creation of a new junior ministerial post with responsibility for Equality, Immigration and Integration in 2016, there have been renewed efforts in relation to the issue of immigrant integration policy and measurement. Two further reports on integration have been published, for 2016 and 2018 (Barrett, McGinnity, & Quinn, 2017; McGinnity et al., 2018). These reports have been published by the ESRI, with support from the Department of Justice and Equality. Additionally, the Irish Government published its second ever policy document on immigrant integration, the *Migrant Integration Strategy*, in 2017 (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017). Immigrant integration is again an important area for policy focus and state monitoring, after many years of being sidelined.

A review of how integration outcomes were measured in Ireland during this period is instructive. Table 1 provides an overview of the key immigration outcomes that were included in the monitoring reports from 2010 to 2013, in 2016 and 2018. The range of outcomes included across all six reports is quite limited and certainly less extensive than the Zaragoza indicators suggested. In total, only 12 outcomes were consistently measured and reported across all six publications. Although each report includes an additional, in-depth

focus, for example, on employment or on children, the lack of a sustained engagement with a broader set of outcomes means that the body of comparable measures across the period since 2008 provides a limited quantitative account of immigrant integration in Ireland.

A review of the six reports highlights further limitations of the measurement of integration outcomes in the Irish context. The first is the definition of immigrant, which mostly uses nationality as a marker of immigrant status. This has the effect of classifying immigrants who become naturalised Irish citizens as nonmigrants, thus misrepresenting or minimising their integration experiences. It also minimises the immigrant experiences of Irish nationals moving or returning to Ireland. The second is the classification of nationalities, which generally distinguishes between Irish, United Kingdom, EU-13, EU-12 and non-EU nationalities. The grouping together of non-EU nationals erases differences in this group related to immigrant status, which ranges from asylum seekers to refugees to international students to family members to labour migrants. Differences in their experiences are erased in this type of grouping, with a resulting categorisation that is of limited use for understanding processes of immigrant integration. Although a recent supplementary report considers integration outcomes using country of birth as a measure of analysis (McGinnity, Privalko, Fahey, Enright, & O'Brien, 2020), this has yet to be embedded in the annual monitoring reports on integration. In addition to the limitations of what is included in the reports, for the purpose of this paper there is also a clear exclusion in relation to the understanding of immigrant integration processes. Although the reports show trends over time, they are mostly silent on the question of place. Immigrant integration outcomes until recently are measured at the national scale only, effectively as an aspatial phenomenon. There is just one exception to this: The inclusion of data on voter registrations by local authority in the 2016 and 2018 reports only. As a result, these reports reaffirm immigrant integration as a national-scale process, measured in relation to national identification. Other than one limited statistic in a third of the reports, there is no other reference to any other spatial scale in the assessment of integration outcomes. The reports are the main source of analysis of immigrant integration outcomes for the country as a whole, and there is limited evidence of further academic research on national-scale integration outcomes. As a consequence, the reports are influential in shaping broader policy, political and public debates about immigrant integration in Ireland.

In contrast, academic research on immigrant integration outcomes in Ireland is often more small-scale, more localised or more focused on specific dimensions of immigrant integration. There has been a small number of neighbourhood effects studies using large-scale data sets, often focusing on Dublin. For example, Fahey and Fanning (2010, p. 1626) identified considerable migrant segregation in the city, with a slight clustering in areas considered disadvantaged; whereas O'Boyle and Fanning (2009) considered two specific areas in Dublin with a high immigrant concentration. A neighbourhood effects study considered levels of residential segregation and concentration in disadvantaged areas for the country as a whole (Fahey, Russell, McGinnity, & Grotti, 2019). However, this literature is limited, and there is considerably more emphasis on qualitative studies of immigrant experiences,

TABLE 1 Integration Outcomes included in Annual Monitoring Report on Integration, 2010–2013, 2016 and 2018

Integration outcome	2010	2011	2012	2013	2016	2018
Employment						
Employment rate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Unemployment rate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Activity rate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Education						
Highest educational attainment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Share of 25- to 34-year-olds with tertiary education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Share of early leavers from education (20–24)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mean reading and mathematics scores for 15 year olds	✓	✓	☒	✓	✓	✓
English reading scores	☒	☒	✓	☒	☒	☒
Social Inclusion						
Median net income	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
At risk of poverty rate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Consistent poverty rate	☒	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Population share with self-perceived good or very good health	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Proportion of property owners	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Active Citizenship						
Share of immigrants that have acquired citizenship	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Share of immigrants with permanent/long-term residence permits	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Share of immigrants among elected local representatives	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Annual naturalisation rate	☒	☒	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note. Sources: Barrett et al., 2017; McGinnity et al., 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2018.

which include some attention to integration outcomes. This includes studies of small towns with high immigrant populations, such as Gort and Ballyhaunis, both in the West region (Maher & Cawley, 2016; Woods, 2018). It also includes research on the integration experiences of particular categories of immigrants, including African immigrants (Coakley, 2016; Maguire & Murphy, 2012; Mutwarasibo & Smith, 2000), European and Asian immigrants (Feldman, Gilmartin, Loyal, & Migge, 2008; Gilmartin & Migge, 2015), and immigrant children (Gilligan et al., 2010; Ní Laoire, Carpena-Mendez, Tyrrell, & White, 2011). There have also been studies of particular dimensions of integration, including active citizenship and education. This work included a focus on the obstacles to political participation for immigrants in Ireland, despite the rights of all immigrants to vote in local elections (Okigbo, 2014; Szlovak, 2017), the varied nature of immigrant involvement in active citizenship and activism (Lentin & Moreo, 2012; Ugba, 2005) and the challenges of immigrant integration in the education system (Darmody, Byrne, & McGinnity, 2014; Devine, 2011; Faas, Darmody, & Sokolowska, 2016; Kitching, 2010). Although there is a substantial body of qualitative, smaller-scale and sectoral academic work on immigrant integration, the focus is most often on the process and/or experiences of integration. As a consequence, the issue of integration outcomes is rarely addressed in a systematic or sustained way in these studies.

The issue of immigrant integration outcomes is of increasing importance in Ireland, which now has an established first and second-generation immigrant population. Research on immigrant integration outcomes in Ireland follows the broader pattern we have identified: a number of national-scale overviews of outcomes using large-scale data sets and some urban-based assessments using the same data sets, supplemented by qualitative studies. However, the dispersed pattern of immigrant settlement in Ireland means that a more comprehensive approach to the spatial dimensions of immigrant integration outcomes could provide useful information in the Irish context and could also highlight the usefulness of expanding the spatial register. In the next section, we describe our spatialised approach to assessing immigrant integration outcomes in more detail.

4 | THE STUDY

In this paper, we use results from a broader study entitled 'Mapping processes of integration and settlement in contemporary Ireland', funded by the Irish Research Council under its Research for Policy and Society scheme. This study, which was carried out between 2017 and 2018, aimed to consider spatial and social differences in relation to immigrant integration and to consider how these might be

connected to the provision (or not) of settlement services specifically designed to improve integration outcomes. In our research proposal, we committed to making use of existing data sets rather than generating new data sets. The key large scale data sets that provide potentially relevant information on immigrant integration outcomes in Ireland are listed in Table 2.

As Table 2 shows, there are differences in how respondents are identified and in how results are presented that create some difficulties in using these data sets to assess immigrant integration outcomes. The first difficulty relates to the marker(s) that may be used to identify immigrants, which vary from Country of Birth and (potentially) Ethnic/Cultural Identity in the Healthy Ireland survey, to Nationality, Place of Birth, Lived Outside Ireland and Ethnic/Cultural Identity in the Census. Just one, the European Social Survey gathers data on the place of birth of a respondent's parents. As a consequence, some of these data sets are less effective in providing robust data on immigrant integration outcomes. The second difficulty is how geographic data is presented. Although all these data sets use point data to identify households, very few present data other than through spatial aggregation at the broad NUTS 3 scale. The third difficulty is the level of coverage. The Census alone provides universal coverage but, as it is conducted every 5 years in contrast to the more regular LFS, SILC, ESS and Healthy Ireland surveys, it is less effective in capturing the dynamic nature of migration flows and immigrant integration experiences.

Given this, for the purposes of our study, we decided to use 2016 Census data, where available, to consider immigrant integration outcomes at sub-national spatial scales. In particular, we wanted to look at outcomes for regions, because there are considerable socio-economic differences across regions in Ireland. In order to do this, we decided to concentrate on one spatial scale, that of NUTS 3. We did this for two reasons. The first is that the regions that are demarcated under NUTS 3 are the smallest territorial units used for regional statistics across the EU. The second is that many of the existing surveys already report findings at the scale of NUTS 3, so we hoped this would mean greater accessibility to data. In Ireland, there are 8 NUTS 3 regions: Border, West, Mid-West, South-East, South-West, Dublin, Mid-East and Midlands (see Figure 1). Key demographic indicators for these eight regions are shown in Table 3.

In order to consider immigrant integration outcomes at the regional scale, we consider three different regions in more detail: Dublin, Border and West. The Dublin region—comprised of four administrative areas: Dublin City, Fingal, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown and South Dublin—is the most populous, most urban and most diverse, with the lowest dependency ratio and one of the lowest unemployment rates. In contrast, the Border region has a relatively small population and is the most rural and one of the least diverse regions, with the highest unemployment rate and the highest dependency ratio. The West, the third region we have chosen, includes a large city (Galway) and its large rural hinterland so is located between

TABLE 2 Existing large scale data sets in Ireland

Data set	Coverage	How immigrant status is/could be identified	Geographic identifier in data collection	Scale for presentation of results
Census 2016	Resident population of Ireland	Nationality Place of birth Lived outside Ireland for a year Ethnic/cultural identity	Household	Range of scales from Small Areas to NUTS 3 regions and provinces
Labour Force Survey (LFS) (previously Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS))	32,500 households	Nationality Place of birth Lived outside Ireland for a year	Household,	Aggregated to NUTS 2 and NUTS 3 regions
Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC)	9,800 households	Nationality Dual citizenship Place of birth	Household	Urban/rural Aggregated to NUTS 3 regions
European Social Survey (ESS)	2,390 approved interviews (response rate 60.7%)	Citizenship Place of birth Parent(s)' country of birth Minority ethnic identity group	Household	Aggregated to NUTS 3 regions
Healthy Ireland Survey	Wave 1: 13,720 households (response rate 61.2%) Wave 2: 13,720 households (response rate 59.9%)	Ethnic/cultural identity Country of birth	Household	Small Areas aggregated on the basis of levels of deprivation

FIGURE 1 NUTS 3 regions in the Republic of Ireland, 2016**TABLE 3** Key socio-demographic indicators for NUTS 3 regions in Ireland, 2016

NUTS 3 Region	Total population	% Living in rural areas	% Irish nationality	% Unemployed	Total dependency ratio
Border	394,333	55.9	87.4	15.7	58.3
West	453,109	53.4	85.7	12.8	56.0
Mid-West	473,269	42.6	87.5	13.9	55.4
South-East	422,062	42.8	87.9	15.4	56.7
South-West	690,575	35.2	85.8	11.0	53.7
Dublin	1,347,359	1.8	80.0	11.6	46.1
Mid-East	688,857	28.0	86.6	12.6	53.9
Midland	292,301	43.1	86.2	16.3	56.2
STATE	4,761,865	30.1	84.8	12.9	52.7

Note. Source: CSO, 2017a: Tables E2009, EB003, E7002, E3006.

the Dublin and Border regions in a range of demographic indicators. In discussions of spatial inequality in Ireland, Dublin is often described as the 'core' and the Border and West regions as the

'periphery' (Rigby et al., 2017). Dublin dominates the Irish space economy, particularly through 'property development, service industries and the city's disproportionate attractiveness to foreign direct

investment' (Moore-Cherry & Tomaney, 2018, p. 5). The growth and primacy of Dublin has led to

dramatic spatial and social divides across the country: economically as measured by unemployment for example; socially in terms of access to housing and emigration, particularly from western seaboard counties; and physically in terms of abandoned unfinished developments and quality of life. (Moore-Cherry, 2019, p. 53)

The Border region, in 2016, included six counties: Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth. Five of these counties share a border with Northern Ireland. In contrast to the Dublin region, the Border region has a long history of population decline and has been affected by the decades-long conflict in and beyond Northern Ireland. During the height of the so-called Troubles, a militarised and policed border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland made cross-border trade difficult. As a result, the Border region is economically disadvantaged compared to other parts of the Republic of Ireland, and Northern Ireland is economically disadvantaged compared to other parts of the United Kingdom (Hayward & Magennis, 2014, pp. 157–158). Although there have been improvements in levels of prosperity in the Border region since the end of the conflict, new uncertainties have emerged in relation to the potential impact of Brexit on the region (Gilmartin, Wood, & O'Callaghan, 2018; Walsh, 2019). The West contains three counties: Galway, Mayo and Roscommon. The region includes Ireland's fourth largest city (Galway) and also the more rural counties of Mayo and Roscommon. The region includes many dispersed and scattered settlements that rely on agriculture and seasonal industries for employment and also includes smaller urban centres with manufacturing and public service employment. These regional differences have further been intensified by the recession in Ireland (Morgenroth, 2014). The structural differences between the Dublin, Border and West regions, illustrated by Table 3, allow us to consider in more detail how the places that immigrants move to and settle in affect their experiences of integration and integration outcomes. We discuss regional integration outcomes for the three regions in more detail in the next section, in order to investigate whether immigrants living in different regions of the country have different access to resources and opportunities based on where they live, rather than on who they are.

5 | REGIONAL IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION MEASURES: THE DUBLIN AND BORDER CASE STUDIES

Our starting point is to highlight the different immigrant profiles in the three regions. An overview is provided in Table 4. The immigrant population of the Border and West regions is dominated by people born in the United Kingdom, many of whom are Irish nationals. In contrast, the immigrant population of the Dublin region is more diverse, with a considerable proportion born outside the EU and a much

smaller proportion of Irish nationals. Based on the 2016 Census, the key nationality groups in the Border and West regions are United Kingdom, Polish and Lithuanian nationals. In contrast, the key nationality groups in the Dublin region are Polish, United Kingdom, Romanian, Lithuanian and Brazilian, with significant numbers also from India and China.

5.1 | Employment

At the national level, employment outcomes for immigrants are reported in three ways: through the employment rate, the unemployment rate and the labour force activity rate. The ESRI overview of immigrant integration outcomes concludes that non-Irish nationals have a higher employment and labour force activity rate than Irish nationals and a slightly higher unemployment rate (McGinnity et al., 2018, p. 24). When these figures are spatially disaggregated by region (see Table 5), the situation is more variable. Of particular note is the higher unemployment rate for the Border region in general, and the considerable difference in employment rates between Irish and non-Irish nationals in both the Border and the West regions. These important differences are masked when integration outcomes are reported for the state as a whole, or for the Dublin region. Regional employment figures clearly show that immigrants living in the Border and West regions are more likely to be unemployed, thus raising broader concerns about immigrant integration, particularly because the labour force participation rate is much higher for non-Irish nationals in both regions.

Reports on immigrant integration rely on these three measures to indicate employment outcomes. However, the Census also provides additional insights into other ways in which differences exist between Irish and non-Irish nationals in relation to employment, particularly through its identification of the sectors people work in. The concentration of immigrants in particular sectors of work, such as manufacturing and services, is a broad global trend (Castles & Miller, 2009). Within Ireland, earlier research identified the emergence of sectoral concentration (Gilmartin, 2015a), and provided in-depth insights into the experiences of immigrant workers in the service and manufacturing sectors in particular (Maher & Cawley, 2016; McPhee, 2016; Woods, 2018). The overview is provided in Table 6 confirms broad patterns of sectoral concentration both by region and for immigrants, which we obtained following a special request to the CSO. In terms of regional differences, there are higher concentrations of workers in Agriculture, Construction and Human Health in the Border region; in Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities in the Dublin region; and in Manufacturing, Human Health and Agriculture in the West. In contrast, the proportions employed in Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities in the Border and West regions, and in Manufacturing, Construction and Agriculture in the Dublin region are lower than the national average. This translates to pay, with the Dublin region having the highest average pay, and the Border and West regions having the lowest and second-lowest average pay, respectively (CSO, 2020). The situation is more stark in relation to

TABLE 4 Resident population by region, place of birth and nationality, 2016

	Border		Dublin		West	
	Place of birth (%)	Nationality (%)	Place of birth (%)	Nationality (%)	Place of birth (%)	Nationality (%)
Republic of Ireland	80.7	89.1	79.2	83.0	82.6	88.0
UK	11.0	2.8	4.2	1.5	7.8	3.1
Rest of EU15	0.7	0.6	2.3	2.4	1.1	1.1
EU13	4.2	4.5	5.8	6.1	4.3	4.5
Rest of World	3.4	1.6	8.5	4.6	4.2	2.0
Other	-	1.3	-	2.5	-	1.4

Note. Source: CSO, 2017a: Tables E7050, E7002.

TABLE 5 State and regional immigrant integration outcomes in employment, 2016

Outcome	State	Border			Dublin			West		
	Total	Total	Irish	Non-Irish	Total	Irish	Non-Irish	Total	Irish	Non-Irish
Employment rate	53.3%	49.6%	49.2%	53.1%	56.5%	54.1%	66.5%	52.0%	51.4%	55.7%
Unemployment rate	12.9%	15.7%	15.0%	20.5%	11.6%	11.6%	11.6%	12.8%	12.1%	17.2%
Labour force participation rate	61.4%	59.1%	58.1%	67.0%	63.9%	61.2%	75.4%	59.9%	58.7%	67.5%

Note. Source: CSO, 2017a, Table EB003 (special tabulation).

TABLE 6 Proportion of active labour force employed in selected sectors, by region, 2016

Employment sector	Average earnings (2016) €	State (%)	Border			Dublin			West		
			Total (%)	Irish (%)	Non-Irish (%)	Total (%)	Irish (%)	Non-Irish (%)	Total (%)	Irish (%)	Non-Irish (%)
Wholesale and retail trade	26,426	11.7	11.4	11.3	12.4	10.7	10.7	11.8	11.3	11.2	12.7
Human health and social work	32,741	9.7	10.5	11.1	7.3	9.4	10.6	5.9	11.2	11.8	8.1
Manufacturing	n/a	8.8	9.2	8.6	13.9	4.8	4.9	5.1	11.7	11.6	13.0
Education	40,977	7.7	8.1	8.9	3.3	7.2	8.3	4.0	8.3	9.1	4.1
Accommodation and food service activities	16,564	5.1	5.4	4.7	10.6	4.9	3.3	11.3	5.8	4.7	12.5
Professional, scientific and technical activities	41,687	4.9	3.1	3.3	2.6	7.0	7.6	5.4	3.6	3.7	3.0
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	43,542	4.6	4.9	5.5	1.3	4.7	5.8	1.2	4.5	5.2	1.2
Construction	36,018	4.4	5.1	5.4	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.0	4.8	5.1	3.5
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	n/a	3.9	7.3	7.7	5.0	0.3	0.3	0.4	5.8	6.6	1.4

Note. Sources: CSO, 2017a: Tables EB027, EB028 (special request); CSO, 2017b.

non-Irish nationals. In the Border and West regions, non-Irish nationals are disproportionately concentrated in Manufacturing, Accommodation and Food Services (especially in the West), and Wholesale and Retail Trade, and significantly underrepresented in Education, Human Health, Construction and Public Administration. In the Dublin region, non-Irish nationals are disproportionately concentrated in Accommodation and Food Services and Wholesale and Retail Trade, and significantly underrepresented in Education, Human Health and Public Administration. These patterns show that, in general, non-

Irish nationals are disproportionately concentrated in sectors that have lower pay, and underrepresented in sectors that are better paid and more likely to have better working conditions.

Access to decent work matters for people's participation in society. These tables suggest that it has not been easy for non-Irish nationals to access certain sectors of employment—particularly the sectors with better quality working conditions and pay. This is intensified in the Border and West regions because of broader spatial inequalities in Ireland. Although national level data clearly shows the

existence of sectoral concentration, the regional data provided in Table 6 identifies the extent to which sectoral concentration, and indeed sectoral exclusion, is exacerbated based on where immigrants live.

5.2 | Education

The Census provides a useful insight into how levels of education vary spatially. It is possible to disaggregate two variables spatially with reference to Irish and non-Irish nationals. The first is the highest level of educational attainment, and the second is the proportion of those aged between 25 and 34 with a tertiary education. In general, reports of immigrant integration outcomes in Ireland comment that 'the non-Irish population enjoys a large and statistically significant advantage in educational attainment over the Irish population of working age' (McGinnity et al., 2018, p. 38). In Table 7, we can see this general advantage in relation to both the proportion with lower levels of formal education (i.e., primary or lower) and the proportion with postgraduate degrees.

However, a closer examination of Table 7 again indicates spatial inequalities, with clear regional differences in the highest level of education completed. Just 5.7% of the Border population has completed a postgraduate degree, less than half the proportion in the Dublin region (11.9%). In contrast, 43% of the Border population is educated to secondary level or lower, compared to 36.5% in Dublin and 39.2% in the West. These differences also play out in relation to Irish and non-Irish nationals in the three regions. Overall, Irish nationals in all three regions are more likely to be educated to primary level only. However, non-Irish nationals in the Dublin region have a higher level of completed education than non-Irish nationals in the Border region, whereas levels for non-Irish nationals in the West are very close to the national average.

When these figures are disaggregated by age, however, a different story emerges. Using the measure of the proportion of 25- to 34-year-olds with tertiary education, we see a clear spatial pattern. Specifically, there is a higher proportion of 25- to 34-year-olds with tertiary education in the West: 56.7%, compared to 55.7% in Dublin

and 52.4% in the Border region. In all three regions, though, non-Irish nationals aged 25–34 have a considerably lower level of completed tertiary education than Irish nationals. This gap is 12.4% in the Border region, 13.5% in the Dublin region and 14% in the West. This gap may have emerged because there is a considerably higher proportion of non-Irish nationals in this age group currently studying, so they are not included in the numbers who have completed education. However, there are clear differences in the levels of educational attainment both between the three regions and between Irish and non-Irish nationals. This is further complicated by reported regional differences in levels of English language proficiency. Around 19% of those living in the Border region whose first language is not English report that they are not well able to speak English, compared to 14.8% in the West and 12% in the Dublin region (CSO, 2017a, Sapmap NUTS3_West; Gilmartin & Dagg, 2018, p. 46). Lower levels of English language proficiency, allied with lower levels of completed education, may create longer term difficulties for immigrant integration, particularly in the Border region.

5.3 | Social inclusion

The reports on immigrant integration outcomes in Ireland regularly report on four to five indicators of social inclusion (see Table 1). The most recent report shows that immigrants in Ireland have lower levels of income, lower levels of property ownership and higher levels of poverty than the Irish population (McGinnity et al., 2018, pp. 49–60). The data come from The Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC). Although general results from SILC are provided by the Central Statistics Office, the publicly available data does not include any information that identifies immigrants, and the spatial data are also limited. As a result, we made a special request to the Central Statistics Office for data disaggregated by region and by nationality and were provided with the information shown in Table 8. This shows the clear difference in social inclusion indicators more generally between the Border, Dublin and West regions. Specifically, the Border region shows consistently higher levels of poverty and deprivation than the State average; the Dublin region shows generally lower levels of poverty and

TABLE 7 Highest level of education completed by region and nationality, 2016

Highest level of education completed	State %	Border			Dublin			West		
		Total %	Irish %	Non-Irish %	Total ^a %	Irish %	Non-Irish %	Total %	Irish %	Non-Irish %
Primary or lower	10.3	14.1	15.3	5.4	8.5	10.1	2.0	11.5	12.7	4.3
Secondary	27.3	28.9	29.8	23.4	23.1	26.0	12.5	27.7	29.1	20.4
Technical/vocational	16.2	16.9	16.3	22.9	13.4	13.5	14.8	16.1	15.4	21.4
Undergraduate degree	15.1	12.9	13.1	12.0	17.3	17.7	17.6	15.0	15.3	14.2
Postgraduate degree	8.3	5.7	5.8	5.9	11.9	11.9	13.0	8.0	8.1	8.3
Proportion of 25–34 year olds with tertiary education	55.0	52.4	55.3	42.9	55.7	61.4	47.9	56.7	60.5	46.5

Note. Source: CSO, 2017a: Table EA003

^aThe Total figure includes those whose nationality is not stated. These are not included in either the 'Irish' or 'Non-Irish' category.

TABLE 8 Social inclusion indicators by region and nationality group, 2016

Social inclusion indicator	State	Border		Dublin		West	
		Irish	Non-Irish	Irish	Non-Irish	Irish	Non-Irish
At risk of poverty rate	16.5%	23%	27%	11%	19%	23%	23%
Deprivation rate	21.0%	26%	26%	21%	19%	15%	22%
Consistent poverty rate	8.3%	13%	17%	7%	12%	8%	9%
Household net income—mean €	46,036	43,429	37,376	66,791	57,856	47,920	44,282

Note. Source: CSO, 2018 (special request).

deprivation; and the situation in the West is more variable and closer to the State average. The differences between Irish and non-Irish nationals in the three regions are less clear. However, non-Irish nationals in all regions have a higher consistent poverty rate and a lower net household income than their Irish national counterparts. The difference in household net income is particularly stark in Dublin. Non-Irish nationals in both the Border and West regions have a household net income that is lower than the national average—almost €10,000 lower in the Border region. These indicators show that where people live has a greater influence on measures of social inclusion than nationality, which illustrates the importance of providing regional measures of immigrant integration.

In the Irish context, housing tenure is a particularly important indicator of social inclusion. Traditionally, levels of home ownership in Ireland were very high. As a consequence, the private rental market was seen as a short-term option for most people and was relatively unregulated, with very limited availability of long term leases. However, this pattern has changed rapidly in recent years, and Ireland now has one of the highest rates of decline in home ownership in the EU (Hearne, 2017, p. 73). Earlier research suggested that immigrants were disproportionately concentrated in the private rental sector where, in addition to insecure tenure, the cost of rent has been rising rapidly. This has consequences for social inclusion, because tenants in the private rental market experience a consistent poverty rate almost three times higher than owner-occupiers (Hearne, 2017, p. 69). However, the ESRI report comments that 'there has been a large increase in homeownership across all migrant groups' (McGinnity et al., 2018, p. 60), suggesting that housing tenure indicators show improved integration outcomes for immigrants in Ireland.

Again, we made a special request to the CSO to access information on housing tenure by region and nationality. These data are shown in Table 9.

There are differences between the three regions, with a considerably higher proportion of owner occupiers in the Border and West regions and of renters from private landlords in the Dublin region. However, the most stark difference is evident in relation to nationality, with 47.6% of non-Irish nationals in the Border region, 53.4% in the West and 67.1% in the Dublin region renting from private landlords, compared to 18.2% for the State as a whole. The reliance by non-Irish nationals on the private rental sector creates clear difficulties in relation to social inclusion, because of the lack of long-term leases and the lack of predictability in relation to the cost of rent. There is a higher proportion of non-Irish national owner occupiers in the Border and West regions than in the Dublin region, which may be linked to the different age profiles in these regions, and may also be linked to the lower cost of housing outside Dublin. There is also a higher proportion of non-Irish nationals living in local authority (i.e., public) housing in both the Border and the West regions, whereas in Dublin, the proportion of non-Irish nationals in local authority housing is considerably lower than the State average. The preponderance of non-Irish nationals living in private rental accommodation across all three regions is a cause for concern, particularly because access to so many services in Ireland—from voting to healthcare to education—assumes a stable address. It is also important because of people in the private rental sector are at increased risk of homelessness. This is already having consequences, with immigrant families making up 40% of homeless families in September 2016 (Hearne, 2017, p. 70). However, considering data at a regional level points to important variations in access to housing. In particular, the Border and West regions may offer more opportunities for immigrants to secure their housing tenure, whether through home ownership or local authority housing, than is available to immigrants living in the Dublin region.

TABLE 9 Households by region, nationality group and type of occupancy, 2016 (%)

Type of occupancy	State	Border			Dublin			West		
		Total	Irish	Non-Irish	Total	Irish	Non-Irish	Total	Irish	Non-Irish
Own with mortgage/loan	31.6	29.3	31.1	15.5	30.7	34.2	13.0	29.4	31.6	15.0
Own without mortgage/loan	36.0	42.5	45.4	18.1	29.4	33.8	5.5	41.5	45.0	16.5
Rented from private landlord	18.2	14.1	10.3	47.6	23.9	16.4	67.1	17.8	12.9	53.4
Rented from local authority	8.4	8.5	8.0	12.9	9.3	10.0	5.8	5.9	5.5	9.2
Other	5.7	5.6	5.3	6.0	6.8	5.7	8.5	5.4	5.0	5.9

Note. Source: CSO, 2017a: Table E1014 (special request).

6 | CONCLUSION

In the preceding section, we have used existing large-scale data sets to show the importance of considering immigrant integration outcomes at the regional scale in Ireland. We focused in particular on the socio-economic variables of employment, education and social inclusion and demonstrated the broader differences between three NUTS 3 regions in Ireland, the Border, West and Dublin regions. These differences matter in terms of the characteristics of the immigrants who chose to move to these regions and in terms of the opportunities that are available to them when they move. As a consequence, the integration outcomes for immigrants living in the Border and West regions are less favourable, in general, than the integration outcomes for immigrants living in the Dublin region. A key difference relates to the housing situation of immigrants in the Border and West regions, who appear to have slightly better security of tenure than their Dublin counterparts. However, other important indicators—such as the unemployment rate and the at risk of poverty rate—suggest that immigrants in the Border region in particular are at a considerable disadvantage. Overall, though, it is important to note that immigrants living in the Dublin region are less disadvantaged than Irish nationals living in the Border and West regions, suggesting that place plays a more important role in processes of immigrant integration than has been previously acknowledged. If our assessment of immigrant integration outcomes in Ireland continues to rely primarily on data aggregated to the national scale (e.g., McGinnity et al., 2014; McGinnity et al., 2018), we will miss these important spatial differences and likely not adjust integration policies and practices to better support specific regional needs.

However, our research has implications beyond the specific case of Ireland. There are, we argue, three important lessons that emerge from this study. The first is that, as geographers, we should continue to advocate for a more nuanced understanding of immigrant integration as a spatialized process (Phillips & Robinson, 2015). Immigrants move to and settle in places that are already positioned in broader socio-economic hierarchies. It is more difficult for people living in disadvantaged regions—regardless of nationality—to have the same access to opportunities for socio-economic advancement. If measures of immigrant integration focus primarily on the state and on cities, these spatial differences will not be adequately identified (Vogiazides & Mondani, 2020). The second is that existing large-scale data sets provide the means for a spatialized investigation of immigrant integration outcomes. However, as is clear in the case of Ireland, this aspect is often overlooked in the presentation of publicly available data. In Ireland, for example, although data on immigrants are often made available in a variety of ways, it is rarely provided at a regional scale. Much of the data presented in this paper had to be manipulated to provide information at NUTS 3 scale and were only directly available for two broad nationality categories: Irish and non-Irish. In many instances, we had to make special requests to get that information, because providing spatially disaggregated data by nationality is not considered a core requirement. A concerted effort is needed to insist on the importance of making data on immigrant integration publicly

available at a range of spatial scales. The third is that paying attention to spatialized differences in immigrant integration outcomes provides better evidence for the structural barriers immigrants and others face, whether this relates to sectoral concentration in one region or housing difficulties in another region. This, in turn, allows for the development of more targeted responses by policy makers and by service providers that can provide support for addressing these inequalities.

The assessment of immigrant integration outcomes at the regional scale provides an alternative insight into the process of integration. These outcomes are a snapshot in time: they need to be considered over a longer time period, and in conjunction with other studies, both quantitative and qualitative. However, they serve the important function of showing spatial differentiation in integration outcomes using existing data sets, so can be calculated relatively easily. If we are to approach the broader question of integration using a more nuanced spatial perspective, it is important that our work does not end with these measurements. Instead, we also need to see how places are changed by the presence of immigrants and how these processes in turn create or challenge further barriers to inclusion (Goodwin-White, 2016). Geographers already demonstrate the importance of place in understanding immigrant experiences and socio-spatial encounters but often at the local scale. Our approach allows for the identification of a broader register of scales for understanding the process of immigrant integration, in the process moving away from the identified reliance on national integrationist thinking and showing the key difference that place makes.

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NOTES

- ¹ An earlier report (OECD, 2012) considered OECD countries only.
- ² The exception was the period from 2010 to 2014. There was net emigration of 107,000 people over this 5-year period as a consequence of the economic crash that began with a bank bailout in 2008 (Gilmartin, 2015a).
- ³ From 2014 to 2016, there was a junior minister with responsibility for 'New Communities, Culture and Equality', Aodhán Ó Riordáin. Although this included the integration brief, the key focus of the minister appeared to be on areas of culture and equality.

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