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**Discrimination in the Irish labour market:
nationality, ethnicity and the recession**

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Discrimination in the Irish Labour Market: Nationality, Ethnicity and the Recession

Abstract

Previous research shows that immigrants, in common with other groups that suffer disadvantage in the labour market, are more vulnerable during recession (Hoynes et al., 2012; McGinnity et al., 2013; Sierminska and Takhtamanova, 2010). However, little research has focused on the impact of the Great Recession on work-related discrimination. We examine the extent to which discrimination varies across different national-ethnic groups, and whether discrimination increased between 2004, during an economic boom, and 2010, in the midst of a severe recession. Our analysis draws on two large-scale nationally representative surveys on the experience of labour market discrimination. We find that overall immigrants do experience higher rates of work based discrimination, however discrimination does not increase with the recession. We find substantial variation in discrimination across national-ethnic groups, and indicate that ethnicity plays an important influence on the experience of discrimination.

Keywords

Discrimination, recession, nationality, ethnicity, labour market

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Introduction

A growing body of research shows that immigrants suffer multiple disadvantages in the Irish labour market, with lower employment, higher unemployment and lower wages than Irish natives (Barrett and Duffy, 2008; O'Connell and McGinnity, 2008). The deep recession, which has affected Ireland since 2008, has led to a dramatic deterioration in the labour market. In general, immigrants are more exposed to the consequences of economic downturns, and this is clearly the experience in Ireland (McGinnity et al., 2013). Against this backdrop of disadvantage experienced by immigrant groups, we investigate whether immigrants are more likely to report experience of discrimination in the labour market; whether such discrimination differs by nationality and ethnicity; and whether the incidence of discrimination has increased in the adverse labour market conditions of the recession.

Our analysis draws on two large-scale nationally representative surveys that collected self-reports of the experience of discrimination conducted by Ireland's Central Statistics Office (CSO). The first was conducted in 2004 in the midst of an economic and employment boom accompanied by substantial inward migration, then a novel episode in Irish demography. The second was conducted in 2010 in the midst of an economic, fiscal and employment crisis of unprecedented severity. In addition to self-reports of discrimination, both surveys collected detailed information on nationality, ethnicity and a range of labour market and socio demographic indicators (CSO, 2005, 2011).

Previous research shows that immigrants, in common with other groups that suffer disadvantage in the labour market, are more vulnerable during recession in Ireland (McGinnity et al., 2013) as elsewhere (Hoynes et al., 2012; Sierminska and Takhtamanova, 2010). However, little research has focused on the impact of the Great Recession on work-related discrimination. We recognise that self-reports, in common with other methods of measuring discrimination, are not without their limitations. Self reports may be biased upwards or downwards, and are unlikely to pick up indirect discrimination (OECD, 2013). However, we employ robust data in our analysis, we acknowledge that reports of discrimination on their own cannot unambiguously establish the prevalence of labour market disadvantage, and we argue that the analysis of discrimination complements the results of other approaches to discrimination, including field experiments and statistical analysis of ethnic penalties in labour market outcomes.

This paper contributes to the literature on discrimination in a number of ways. First, it assesses the extent of discrimination experienced by immigrants in the Irish labour market. Second, it develops a novel classification of national and ethnic groups in the Irish labour market and population, and examines the extent to which the experience of discrimination varies between these groups. This may contribute to more rigorous and nuanced approaches to the analysis of nationality and ethnicity in future Irish research. Third, this is the first paper, to our knowledge, to shed light on labour market discrimination and the business cycle, comparing the experience of discrimination in boom and recession, and complementing previous research on objective indicators of immigrants' experiences in tight and slack labour markets.

In the next section we outline the context for our research, focusing on recent trends in migration, the labour market and the economy in Ireland. We then discuss the theoretical framework that drives our research, and the research questions deriving from that framework. Then we discuss our data sources and the measurement of discrimination. The results of the analysis are then presented, followed by a discussion of the findings and their implications.

Changing Migration Patterns and Ireland's Boom and Bust

Ireland represents an interesting case because it combines large-scale immigration into a small labour market that was almost exclusively White and Irish, with a sudden and deep recession immediately following the peak of immigration.

Ireland, historically a country of net emigration, experienced significant inward migration between the mid-1990s and 2008, during a period of rapid growth in the economy and employment. The number of foreign residents increased from 6 percent of the total population in 2002 to 12.8 percent in 2008, before falling back to 12 percent in the wake of the economic crisis. Following EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007 there was substantial immigration from the New Member States (NMS)ⁱ so that by 2008, NMS nationals were the single largest group of immigrants, accounting for 5.5 percent of the total population. Nationals of the older EU statesⁱⁱ, including the UK, accounted for less than 4 percent of the population, and those from the rest of the world, accounted for another 3.5 percent (O'Connell and Joyce, 2013). So, about three quarters of all immigrants in the latter years of the last decade were Europeans, and mostly White, while about one in four were of more diverse nationality and ethnicity.

The Irish economy moved into a deep and prolonged recession in 2008, following two decades of rapid growth. The crisis was multi-dimensional, entailing the bursting of a property bubble; a banking collapse; contraction in economic activity (Gross National Product shrank by 3.5 percent in 2008, and almost 10 percent in 2009); state fiscal crisis; and mass unemployment (O'Connell, 2013). Total employment fell by 13 percent between the end of 2007 and 2011, but it fell by 21 percent among non-Irish nationals. The national unemployment rate increased from about 4 percent of the labour force in early 2007 to almost 15 percent at the end of 2012. In 2012 the unemployment rate was 14.5 percent among Irish nationals but 17.7 percent among non-Irish nationals. Unemployment varied between immigrant groups: UK nationals and NMS nationals were particularly hard hit, with unemployment rates of about 20 percent in 2012; nationals of the older EU countries, with an unemployment rate of less than 9 percent, fared better than the indigenous labour force (McGinnity et al., 2013). Economic collapse was accompanied by substantial migratory flows, but by a rather modest decline in the immigrant population because substantial outmigration of the non-national population was offset by substantial in-migration: those who had been displaced from the collapsing sectors/occupations appear to have been replaced by others with different, more marketable skills. As a result of these migrations, the non-national population declined by just 1 percentage point, from 13 percent to 12 percent between 2008 and 2012.

Theoretical Approaches and Research Questions

Theoretical perspectives on discrimination typically distinguish two perspectives. Becker (1957), in his groundbreaking theory of discrimination, postulates that some employers and economic agents have a 'taste for discrimination'; this taste or preference is associated with some persons or groups instead of others. Becker reasons that discrimination exists due to employers exercising a personal prejudice, or taste, against a particular group. Disadvantage can arise from taste-based discrimination when employers favour the population without a migration background. Taste based discrimination against minorities' stems from ethnic and/or racial prejudice (OECD, 2012); prejudices are a preconceived judgement of, or preference for a certain group. Some groups may experience higher rates of discrimination as they are more visibly and/or culturally different. Schneider (2008) finds that the non-western origin adds to the average level of perceived ethnic threat in European countries. European evidence suggests that immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa are most likely to perceive discrimination followed by immigrants from North Africa, Latin America and Asia (see OECD, 2012). Another variant of preference-based discrimination emphasises less conscious psychological processes of in-group favouritism which refers to a tendency to treat in-group and out-group members differently, which may be manifested in preferential treatment of the in-group in resource allocation (e.g. in recruitment or promotion decisions) (Brekke and Mastekaasa, 2008; McGinnity and Lunn, 2011; Quillian, 2006).

Statistical discrimination challenges the notion that prejudice is at the root of discrimination. This perspective posits that differential outcomes for immigrant groups are due to information problems. 'Statistical discrimination is based on rational decisions by maximising agents who are guided by empirically informed assessments of productivity and risk' (Baumle and Fossett, 2005: 1252). Decisions result from insufficient information on the part of employers about minority groups, and this informational deficiency can be expected to be most acute at labour market entry (Brekke and Mastekaasa, 2008). While preference-based discrimination relies on the presence of prejudice, statistical discrimination occurs due to employer's lack of information about a minority group: employers use race or migration as a heuristic guide to evaluate job applicants, and their potential productivity, in the absence of adequate information (Pager et al., 2009). Therefore when choosing a person for a role, employers will choose a candidate who they believe to be of the highest quality, or are of the least risk, which in a large pool of potential candidates tend to be people of similar background (Cornell and Welch, 1996). Discrimination may be reduced over time if employers gain more information about immigrant or other minority groups, and encounter such groups more often, and the groups gain labour market experience in a country.

Different perspectives on discrimination also differ in their understanding of the impact of social and economic context. From an intergroup contact perspective (Blau, 1977; Kanter, 1977), as the presence of minority groups in the workplace increases, workers will have more opportunities to interact with members of other racial and ethnic groups. Such interaction allows workers from all racial groups to acquire information about each other, and gain personal experience with them, making them less likely to indulge in racial stereotypes and biases. Whereas the former imposes a cost on prejudiced employers, the latter may be a rational strategy under imperfect information (OECD, 2013). Statistical

discrimination could also decline over time as employers gain information about groups that may over-ride previously-held expectations. Preference based approaches to discrimination may be less sanguine about the impact of a growth in the proportion of immigrants in a country. Researchers focusing on anti-immigrant attitudes of majority populations argue that an increase in the share of immigrants can lead to intensified perceptions of ethnic threat due to increased economic competition and identity-based cultural conflict (Manesvka and Achterberg, 2013; Schneider, 2008). Ethnic competition approaches would suggest that perceived competition between social groups for scarce resources such as jobs and housing, may lead to attempts at exclusion of one group by another, which could provide an underlying rationale for discriminatory behaviour (Coenders and Scheepers, 1998; Olzak, 1992).

There is little previous research on the impact of recession on discrimination in the labour market, although there is evidence that immigrants, in common with other groups that suffer disadvantage in the labour market were hit hard by the Great Recession and elsewhere (Hoynes et al., 2012; Sierminska and Takhtamanova, 2010) and in Ireland (McGinnity et al., 2013). In a deep recession, with increased competition for scarce resources, immigrants would be especially likely to be perceived as competing with members of the host society (Esses et al., 2001). Individuals may perceive more threat and competition from minorities particularly if the economic context entails competitive conditions (Schneider, 2008). Coenders et al., (2008) found that support for ethnic discrimination became more widespread in periods of high immigration and when the unemployment level had risen strongly. These findings suggest that recession, entailing greater scarcity of resources, especially jobs, particularly when it coincides with increased immigration, may give rise to increased perceived competition and to increased support for discrimination among the indigenous population. However, it should be noted that support for discrimination in the population in general does not necessarily translate into discriminatory behaviour on the part of employers.

Measuring Discrimination and Previous Research

Most definitions regard discrimination as differential or unequal treatment of the members of a group on the basis of their group membership (Levin and Levin, 1982; Pager and Shepherd, 2008). There is a substantial body of evidence pointing to persistent inequalities between immigrant or minority groups and natives in the labour market, though variation exists between immigrant groups. Unemployment has been shown to be consistently higher among immigrants than natives in Europe (Fleischmann and Dronkers, 2010) and in Ireland (McGinnity et al., 2013). Immigrants and other minorities also tend to be over-educated: employed at occupational levels below their skill level in the UK (Heath and Cheung, 2007; Rafferty, 2012) and in Ireland (Barrett et al., 2006; Barrett and Duffy, 2008, O'Connell and McGinnity, 2008; Turner, 2010). There is also evidence of substantial wage penalties, whereby immigrants earn less than Irish natives after taking account of other influential factors such as age, gender and education (Barrett and McCarthy, 2008; Barrett et al., 2012).

While much of the international research on unequal treatment among immigrants focuses on both nationality and ethnicity (Dustmann and Fabbri, 2005; Rafferty, 2012), most Irish research has focused on nationality. For example, Barrett and McCarthy (2008) show that the wage penalty in Ireland is substantially higher among NMS migrants than other migrant groups, and Barrett et al., (2006) and Turner (2010) show that occupational downgrading is particularly severe among NMS migrants. Irish evidence on the impact of ethnicity is more limited, although O'Connell and McGinnity (2008) show that Black immigrants are more likely to experience unemployment and lower level occupations, even when other factors are controlled for.

Most of these studies of unequal labour market outcomes among immigrants take account of differences in other factors, such as gender, education, age and experience. The question remains as to whether the unexplained residual differences in labour market outcomes between immigrant and natives can be attributed to discrimination. The difficulty with such residual approaches, however, is that other influential human capital differences may not be captured in the data, resulting in inaccurate, and potentially inflated, estimates of possible discrimination (Pager and Shepherd, 2008). One alternative strategy is to measure discrimination directly through field experiments. Field experiments of recruitment entail submitting job applications from fictitious applicants from the majority population and a minority group/s, matched across a range of relevant characteristics. A field experiment in Ireland found that candidates with Irish names were more than twice as likely to be called to interview than candidates with clearly non-Irish names but otherwise equivalent CVs, however there were no differences within the migrant group (McGinnity and Lunn, 2011). This method provides powerful evidence of discrimination but is limited to certain sectors and occupations, and the groups under study at a particular point in time.

Self-report studies ask respondents about their experience of discrimination and can be collected in large-scale representative surveys, which allow for comparison between the experience of minority and majority populations. This method has played an important part in tracking change and stability in discrimination over time (Bond et al., 2010). However, self-reports are subjective, relying on the assessment of the individual, which may vary depending on the perspective of the respondents, their expectations and the information available to them (Blank et al., 2004; Russell et al., 2008). Strong survey design can minimise this weakness. As discussed below, all questions relating to experiences of discrimination in the survey used in this article are designed to limit chances of bias in response, the questions focus on a specific time period and a specific situation.

Previous research using self-reports in Ireland found higher rates of reported discrimination among immigrants than among White Irish in 2004, in both looking for work and in the workplace- Black respondents reported particularly high levels of discrimination (O'Connell and McGinnity, 2008). This echoes findings by McGinnity et al., (2006) on the experience of racism and discrimination in a range of settings in 2005, including the workplace, where Black Africans reported the most discrimination of the immigrant groups studied.

Research Questions

A major advantage of this article is that it is based on two national surveys that collected detailed information about the experience of discrimination, as well as a range of relevant socio demographic indicators, during a booming economy and in the midst of a deep economic crisis. The data allow us to address a series of research questions comparing different types of discrimination experienced by Irish natives and immigrants at different phases of the business cycle.

A key first question is whether immigrants experience higher rates of discrimination in the labour market than Irish natives. In the light of the theoretical discussion and previous research on discrimination in Ireland and internationally, our first hypothesis is that immigrants experience higher rates of labour market discrimination than Irish natives both while looking for work and in the workplace. Secondly we expect to find variation in the extent of discrimination between groups. Preference based approaches to discrimination would suggest that visibly different immigrants, Black Africans and Asians, and non-White Europeans experience greater discrimination. However, approaches that emphasise economic competition and in-group favouritism might suggest that NMS nationals would also experience discrimination, particularly while looking for work, as they constituted the largest group of immigrants in the labour market during the period in question. Furthermore this group tend to have lower levels of educational attainment than other migrants, and many have been competing for low-skilled jobs.

Our third set of questions relates to change over time. Here we encounter uncertainty because, between 2004 and 2010, the number and proportion of immigrants in the labour market increased substantially and Ireland experienced a deep recession. Given the severity of the economic shock and the deterioration in the labour market, our first expectation is that discrimination against immigrants increased. With applications far exceeding vacancies, employers can 'afford' to select candidates on the basis of nationality/ethnicity. This would be consistent with in-group favouritism and economic competition approaches. It would also be consistent with a decline in openness to immigration and in willingness to accept immigrants of different race/ethnicity, and from poorer countries, observed in the Irish population between 2006 and 2010 (McGinnity et al., 2013). However, these negative tendencies might have been offset to the extent that, over time, employers became more familiar with immigrants – as suggested by statistical discrimination approaches. Whether such familiarity was sufficient to counteract the impact of in-group favouritism and increased conflict over resources is unclear. Moreover, it might be noted that discrimination does entail costs for employers: using ethnicity or nationality as a basis for recruiting or rewarding workers, rather than productivity differences, is an inefficient use of human resources - a luxury that employers may not be able to afford in an economic crisis.

Methodology

In this study we use self-reports of discrimination to measure the experience of discrimination while looking for work, and in the workplace in Ireland. We draw on two large-scale nationally representative surveys on the experiences of discrimination in Ireland, carried out by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in 2004 and 2010. These surveys were collected as special modules of the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS), which is the official source of labour market indicators for Ireland, and includes a wide range of measures of individual characteristics. The *Equality* modules asked individuals whether they had experienced discrimination across a range of life domains over the previous two years. Respondents were informed that when the term discrimination is used it refers to this legal definition only (CSO, 2011).

Our analysis focuses specifically on two questions relating to self-reports of work-based discrimination.

In the past two years, have you personally felt discriminated against in the workplace?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable (don't work, haven't been working in the past 2 years)
- Don't know.

And

In the past two years, have you personally felt discriminated against while looking for work?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable (don't work, haven't been looking for work in the past 2 years)
- Don't know.

We restrict the analysis to the working population aged 18-64. All analysis is based on the eligible population: we exclude respondents who answered 'not applicable' to the question in order to exclude those who were not at work, or had not been looking for work.

In 2012 the CSO released a more detailed nationality breakdown in the QNHS micro data than is typically available in standard releases. The more detailed nationality breakdown allows us to further disaggregate non-EU nationalities, an extremely heterogeneous group of countries whose populations would have very different labour market access and trajectories. Previous research on discrimination in the Irish labour market (e.g. O'Connell and McGinnity, 2008) has focused on a very broad nationality groups (Irish and English vs. non-English speaking countries). The new more detailed breakdown allows us to disentangle the experience of discrimination by looking more specifically at the experience of nationality groupings that were not previously identified. The *Equality* modules are particularly useful for our purposes because, unusually in Irish official statistics, they also collect information on ethnicity.ⁱⁱⁱ

This analysis combines nationality and ethnicity to form national-ethnic groups.^{iv} These groups were created on the grounds that they would be comparable, and had similar access to the Irish labour market and exhibited similar labour market trajectories.^v Merging ethnicity with nationality results in eight main national-ethnic groups: White Irish, White UK, White EU-13^{vi}, White New Member State (NMS), White non-EU, Black African, Asian, and Minority Ethnicity EU.^{vii} The ‘White non-EU’ category refers to people of White ethnicity from a range of countries outside the EU, including North America, Australia, New Zealand and Asia; this group are most are likely to be English-speaking, and can be expected to share similar labour market experiences. The ‘Minority Ethnicity EU’ group consists of all non-White Europeans, including Black, Asian and ‘Other’ Irish nationals.^{viii} Table 1 outlines the national-ethnic groups and their distribution across the two samples.

Table 1 National Ethnic Groups, 2004 and 2010

National-Ethnic Groups	2004		2010	
	n	%	n	%
White:				
Irish	23,047	93.6	15,095	89.7
UK	475	1.9	355	2.1
EU-13	188	0.8	147	0.9
EU NMS	161	0.7	644	3.8
Non-EU	275	1.1	150	0.9
Black African	97	0.4	111	0.7
Asian	100	0.4	104	0.6
Minority Ethnicity EU	144	0.6	119	0.7
Subtotal	24,487	99.5	16,725	99.4
Unallocated residual	114	0.5	82	0.5
Ethnicity Missing	9	0.0	14	0.1
Total	24,610	100	16,821	100

Source: QNHS Equality Module, 2004 and 2010.

Our primary objective in this study is to evaluate the association between discrimination and ethnicity, nationality, and recession. We examine whether if given the same characteristics as the White Irish group, immigrants report labour market discrimination at higher rates than natives. We use binary logistic regression models for our analysis, separate models are run for 2004 and 2010, and interaction models are used to test for significant differences over time.

Dependent Variables

Discrimination when looking for work and discrimination in the workplace are the dependent variables of our study. The dummy is coded 1 if the person has experienced discrimination in the said domain, and 0 if they have not. All analysis is based on the

population 'at risk' of discrimination. As such the population at risk of discrimination while looking for work is those aged 18-64 who are employed and unemployed, and those currently inactive. The analysis of discrimination in the workplace is confined to the smaller group who were employees at the time of the survey.^{ix}

Independent Variables

Our key focus is on differences in the experience of discrimination across national-ethnic groups. Our models control for gender, age, education, and duration of residence in country as they are all considered potentially influential covariates, and there is an extensive research literature indicating that these are key factors in labour market outcomes.

We expect newly arrived immigrants to experience higher unemployment rates regardless of the recession (Dustmann et al., 2003; Wheatley Price, 2001). This disadvantage is also expected to decline as immigrants gain more knowledge and experience of, and establish networks in, new labour markets (Brekke and Mastekaasa, 2008; Chiswick, 1997). However, we note that Irish research has not found evidence of occupational assimilation as a function of time spent in the country (Barrett and Duffy, 2008). We measure duration of residence in country by including a dummy variable coded 1 if the individual has been resident in Ireland for two years or less, and 0 if they have been resident for longer.^x

Aside from the control for duration, all control variables included are for the entire working population aged 18-64, so any effects in age, gender etc. will be based on the full sample, of whom the majority are White Irish nationals. In the models of discrimination in the workplace we control for sector employed in, as working conditions may affect the experiences of discrimination.^{xi}

Measuring Change over Time

An interaction model between the two years was run on pooled data, in order to test for significant differences over time. The interaction terms provide estimates of the effects of both underlying trends and original predictor variables. If we find significant interaction effects we know that discrimination has increased or decreased for a national-ethnic group between 2004 and 2010.

By controlling for certain characteristics we can evaluate how work based discrimination varies, and assess which groups are more vulnerable to discrimination. The models allow for us to investigate the effects of combinations of these characteristics, ensuring that some possible influences, net of discrimination, are controlled for. Crucially, they allow comparisons with Irish natives. However this is not a dedicated survey of migrants, so it does not include all relevant variables in the analyses like host language proficiency, ethnically constrained social networks and declining work motivation due to expectations of discrimination, all of which have been linked to migrants' experience in the labour market (Perreira et al., 2007). It is important to note that rates of discrimination reported in this module are based on the perception of the respondents, as discussed above.

Results

Table 2 shows rates of self-reported discrimination, when looking for work and in the workplace, for both 2004 and 2010. Overall, just 6 percent of respondents reported having experienced discrimination when looking for work in 2004 and 2010, and about 5 percent of workers reported having experienced discrimination in the workplace. Rates of discrimination were substantially higher among non-Irish nationals. In 2004 12.6 percent of non-Irish nationals experienced discrimination while looking for work, compared to 5.2 percent of Irish nationals. Rates of discrimination among non-Irish nationals fell between 2004 and 2010, particularly in looking for work, however in 2010 non-Irish nationals still report higher rates of labour market discrimination.

Table 2 Discrimination in the workplace and looking for work

	Looking for Work		In the Workplace	
	2004	2010	2004	2010
Non				
Irish	12.6	8.6	10.6	9.9
Irish	5.2	5.5	4.5	4.7
All	6.1	6	5	5.4

Source: QNHS Equality module, 2004 and 2010

These averages mask substantial variation by national ethnic group. Black Africans stand out as suffering extremely high rates of discrimination both looking for work (23 percent in 2010), and in the workplace (29 percent in 2010).

Regression Analysis of Discrimination When Looking for Work

Table 3a shows the results of a logistic regression model of discrimination when looking for work. The model controls for gender, age, education, unemployment, inactivity and duration of residence in Ireland. The results confirm that non-Irish nationals do indeed experience significant rates of discrimination compared with the Irish group, in both 2004 and 2010. The decrease in the coefficient for the non-Irish group indicates that discrimination has decreased in 2010, the interaction effect shows that this change over time is statistically significant. This finding does not support our expectation that discrimination would increase with the recession, although discrimination is still higher for the non-Irish group in 2010.

Table 3a Logistic Regression Discrimination When Looking for Work

	2004		2010		Δ 2004– 2010 Significant Difference
	Coefficient	S.E	Coefficient	S.E	
Ref: White Irish					
Non-Irish	1.15***	0.16	0.50***	0.16	Yes
Ref: Male					
Female	-0.30***	0.11	-0.02	0.12	No
Ref: Resident > 2 years					
Resident < 2 years	-0.20	0.23	0.64*	0.32	Yes
Ref: 25-44					
Under 25	0.06	0.15	-0.06	0.21	No
Age 45-64	0.01	0.12	0.54***	0.13	No
Ref: No formal/Primary education					
Lower Secondary	-0.53***	0.16	0.33	0.21	No
Upper Secondary	-0.71***	0.16	0.03	0.27	No
Post Secondary	-0.38**	0.14	0.14	0.19	No
Ref: Employed					
Unemployed	1.99***	0.13	1.61***	0.15	Yes
Inactive	0.79***	0.12	1.15***	0.16	No
Constant	-2.83***	0.15	-3.99***	0.23	
Nagelkerke R Square	0.12		0.09		
N of Cases	7,334		5,388		

Significance probabilities for the coefficients: *** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05

We also find that while current unemployment has a strong positive association with the experience of discrimination while looking for work, this has decreased slightly in 2010 and this change over time is significant. The Inactive group are also significantly more likely to experience discrimination when looking for work in 2004 and 2010. Females are less likely to experience discrimination in 2004 but not in 2010, the 45-64 age group are more likely to experience discrimination in 2010. Those who have been resident in Ireland for 2 years or less are more likely to experience discrimination in 2010, this change over time is significant. All education groups are significantly less likely to experience discrimination compared to the primary educated group in 2004.

Table 3b Discrimination when looking for work among national ethnic groups, summary

	2004		2010		Δ 2004– 2010
	Coefficients	S.E	Coefficient	S.E	Significant Difference
Ref: White Irish					
Minority EU	0.90**	0.41	1.58***	0.36	No
White EU13	1.07***	0.33	0.12	0.55	No
White NMS	0.68	0.38	0.24	0.23	No
White Non-EU	1.60***	0.26	0.03	0.48	Yes
Asian	0.79	0.52	0.00	0.63	No
Black African	1.59***	0.34	1.80***	0.31	No
White UK	0.85***	0.27	0.11	0.35	No
Ref: Resident > 2 years					
Resident < 2 years	-0.10	0.24	0.92**	0.33	Yes
Constant	-2.82***	0.15	-3.98***	0.23	
Nagelkerke R Squared					
	0.12		0.11		
N of Cases					
	7,334		5,388		

Significance probabilities for the coefficients: *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$
Other covariates reported in Table 3a are controlled for.

Table 3b shows summary results of discrimination when looking for work, the model confirms that Black Africans encountered very high rates of discrimination in both 2004 and 2010. While there was some increase in discrimination experienced by Black Africans over time, the increase is not statistically significant. EU nationals of minority ethnicity (including Black, Asian and other ethnicity) also reported high levels of discrimination while looking for work and this may have increased over time, although the increase is not statistically significant. These two groups vary in nationality but they share minority ethnicity, suggesting that ethnicity is the key common factor in their experience of discrimination.

White Non-EU nationals reported high rates of discrimination in 2004, but not in 2010. This could reflect a shift in the composition of non-EU migrants in the Irish labour market. Prior to EU enlargement in 2004, there was a significant group of migrants from outside the EU working under the Employment Permit system with a diversity of skill levels. Following enlargement, Irish policy was to meet labour shortages from within the EU, and to reserve the Employment Permit system to meet identified skill shortages. Accordingly, those Non-EU migrants working in Ireland in 2010 may have had higher skill levels and encountered less difficulty than non-EU nationals prior to 2004.^{xii}

White EU13 nationals, and UK nationals experienced higher discrimination than Irish nationals in 2004, but this appears to have declined by 2010. While this change is not statistically significant, it would be consistent with a statistical discrimination interpretation

in which employers become increasingly familiar with European workers and their qualifications and skills.

Duration of residence had no impact in 2004, but those who had been resident for less than 2 years in 2010 were more likely to report experiencing discrimination, the increase over time is significant. Given that those with less than 2 years residence in 2010 had arrived after the onset of the Recession, we know that there was substantial inward and outward migration in 2008-2010, so many of the new arrivals may have migrated to take jobs in relatively buoyant sectors, while those who had been displaced from contracting sectors, particularly construction, sales and hospitality, may have encountered greater difficulty in finding work and been more exposed to discrimination.

Table 4a Logistic Discrimination in the Workplace

	2004		2010		Δ 2004–2010
	Coefficients	S.E	Coefficients	S.E	Significant Difference
Non-Irish	0.82***	0.17	0.77***	0.15	No
Female	0.36***	0.10	0.52***	0.13	No
Resident >2 years Under 25	-0.05	0.27	-0.37	0.45	No
Age 45-64	-0.14	0.17	-0.18	0.27	No
Lower Secondary	-0.09	0.10	-0.01	0.12	No
Upper Secondary	-0.40**	0.20	0.01	0.27	No
Post Secondary	-0.17	0.17	-0.34	0.24	No
Constant	0.20	0.15	0.06	0.22	No
	-3.15***	0.19	-3.37***	0.26	
Nagelkerke R squared		0.03		0.06	
N of Cases		9,987		6,428	

Significance probabilities for the coefficients: *** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05

We now look at reports of discrimination in the workplace, table 4a confirms that non-Irish nationals are more likely to experience significant rates of discrimination in the workplace in 2004 and 2010. The coefficients for non-Irish nationals demonstrate that discrimination in the workplace has dropped marginally in 2010, but remains fairly constant over time and the change is not statistically significant. Again this does not support the expectation that discrimination among non-Irish nationals would increase with a recession. We also find that females experience high rates of discrimination at work throughout the period, and this has increased slightly over time, however the increase is not significant.

Table 4b Discrimination in workplace among national ethnic groups, summary

	2004		2010		Δ 2004–2010
	Coefficients	S.E	Coefficients	S.E	Significant Difference
Ref: White Irish					
Minority EU	1.23***	0.34	0.84	0.48	No
White EU13	0.65	0.36	0.13	0.54	No
White NMS	1.46***	0.35	0.83***	0.20	No
White Non-EU	0.90**	0.32	1.02**	0.39	No
Asian	1.18**	0.43	0.75	0.42	No
Black African	1.49**	0.57	1.52***	0.41	No
White					
UK	0.40	0.30	0.25	0.40	No
Ref: Resident > 2 years					
Resident > 2 years	-0.26	0.28	-0.28	0.46	No
Constant	-3.21***	0.19	-3.40***	0.27	
Nagelkerke R squared		0.03		0.03	
N of Cases		9,987		6,428	

Significance probabilities for the coefficients: *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$
Other covariates reported in Table 4a are controlled for.

Table 4b presents results for logistic regression analysis of discrimination in the workplace among minority ethnic groups. Discrimination in the workplace is quite pervasive and persistent. The Minority EU, Asian, White NMS, Black African and White Non-EU groups all experienced discrimination in the workplace in 2004. Discrimination persisted in 2010 for the White NMS, White Non-EU and Black African groups. There is some indication that rates of discrimination fell for some groups, but the decline is not statistically significant, so contrary to our expectations, there is no evidence to suggest that discrimination in the workplace increase over the course of the recession.

In 2004, The Black African group showed a rate of discrimination that was higher than that for White Irish higher, and this rate increased in 2010, however this change over time is not significant. Part of the issue here may be the small number of Black Africans who were working in 2004. First, the small number in the sample may have resulted in larger standard errors, rendering the effect non-significant. Second, however, we have already seen (Table 3b) that Black Africans reported extremely high rates of discrimination in looking for work throughout the period. So the small number of Black Africans at work may have been particularly highly skilled. More generally, it is clear from this study that the Black African group are faring particularly badly in the Irish labour market both when looking for work and in the workplace. At least part of their manifest disadvantage in the labour market may be attributed to the long-term effects of an asylum system that consigns asylum seekers to protracted periods of exclusion from Irish society and the labour market. This specific group

of immigrants usually has less favourable labour market outcomes due to a less positive selection processes, and greater difficulties in adapting to a new environment resulting from stressful experiences surrounding their migration (Fleischmann and Dronkers, 2010). Unfortunately, the QNHS does not provide information on the visa/residency status of non-Irish nationals, so we cannot measure how many Black African individuals are refugees, nor attribute the respondents' experience of discrimination to their residency status. It could also be however that employers assume that Black Africans were asylum seekers and had long periods out of the labour market, even if this is not the case, a process known as stereotyping.

The White UK and EU13 groups differ from the general trend insofar as they do not differ from the White Irish in reported experience of discrimination. These individuals have had access to the Irish labour market for a very long time and therefore may be less likely to experience discrimination in the workplace because they are more integrated. Moreover, while we cannot measure this, many of those classified as UK nationals may be from Northern Ireland, and might expect to receive similar treatment in the workplace as nationals of the Irish Republic.

We can reject the expectation that ethnic competition led to an increase in discrimination, as reports of discrimination in the workplace have remained relatively stable over time, or decreased for some groups. Discrimination in the workplace has increased for the Black African group, this supports the expectation that groups already facing labour market disadvantage would be more likely to face additional problems when the economy is unstable.

Discussion

In this article we examined the experience of discrimination in the labour market in Ireland. We examined the extent to which discrimination varies across different national ethnic groups, and whether discrimination increased between 2004, during an economic boom, and 2010, in the midst of a severe recession.

We find that overall immigrants do experience higher rates of discrimination in looking for work and in the workplace in both boom and recession. We find substantial variation in discrimination across national-ethnic groups. In looking for work, ethnicity is particularly important, and we find that Black Africans and EU nationals of minority ethnicity were particularly likely to experience this form of discrimination. In the workplace, we find that most national-ethnic groups, apart from the White UK, and White EU13 groups are more likely than White Irish to experience discrimination in 2004. By 2010 the Black African, White NMS and White Non-EU groups experience more discrimination than White Irish nationals. The finding that immigrants experience higher rates of discrimination than natives is consistent with previous research on immigrants experience of discrimination in Ireland (McGinnity et al., 2006; McGinnity and Lunn, 2011; O'Connell and McGinnity, 2008).

Contrary to our expectations we do not find that discrimination has increased significantly in a context of recession and a growing immigrant population. In looking for work, the gap between immigrants and White Irish actually falls between 2004 and 2010. In the workplace the gap between immigrants and White Irish remains stable. We can thus reject the hypothesis that a labour market crisis and an increase in the proportion of immigrants in the population, leads to an increase in perceived ethnic competition for jobs and thus to an increase in discrimination against immigrants. As far as we are aware, this is the first research to examine the impact of economic crisis on the experience of discrimination in the labour market.

Why do reports of discrimination in recruitment among most minority groups fall? In 2004 Ireland was a relatively new country of immigration, and employers may not have had experience with migrant groups. By 2010 this will have changed. The fall in discrimination while looking for work provides some support for a statistical discrimination approach. Over time, for most groups, discrimination while looking for has decreased, and this may be because employers are better able to identify the work-related characteristics of immigrant job applicants. As we are not using panel data we cannot tell, for example, if any patterns of improved outcomes are the result of integration, cohort effects, selective out-migration, or changing immigrant (self) selection (Barrett and Duffy, 2008).

However, this is not true of all groups: visibly different ethnic groups, Black African and Minority ethnicity EU groups report very high rates of discrimination when looking for work. Discrimination may have fallen for other groups, but not these two. This is consistent with discrimination based on racial prejudice, and a preference for White immigrants. It may also be that negative stereotypes of Black African migrants have developed in Ireland, linked to a large proportion of African migrants coming to Ireland as asylum seekers. Employers may assume that individuals have spent long periods of time out of work, whether or not this is true. Whatever the explanation this, combined with high rates of unemployment and low rates of employment among these groups suggest these groups are particularly vulnerable and of policy concern.

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ⁱ EU New Member States (NMS) refers to States that acceded in 2004 and 2007: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Bulgarians and Romanians were defined as the ‘Rest of Europe’ in 2004 and as EU NMS in 2010, following their accession in 2007.

ⁱⁱ ‘Older EU States refers to the ‘Old’ EU15 Member States including Ireland and the UK.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ethnicity has been collected in the Census since 2006, but it is not collected routinely in the QNHS.

^{iv} As a robustness check we ran all models with ethnicity and nationality as separate categories.

^v Some of the national-ethnic groups are still somewhat ethnically diverse, however the groups are comparable in terms of their labour market experience and cultural background.

^{vi} EU 13 refers to the ‘Old’ EU15 Member States excluding Ireland and the UK: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden.

^{vii} Bulgarians and Romanians, who tend to have lower skill levels, on average, were in the White Non-EU group in 2004 but the White NMS group in 2010.

^{viii} A small and diverse unallocated residual group of a combination of minority ethnicity that did not lend itself to a meaningful classification was excluded (0.5% sample).

^{ix} We exclude the self employed from the analysis.

^x Further analysis on duration spent in country was tested, results are available on request.

^{xi} The latter coefficients are not reported in the tables, results are available on request.

^{xii}Bulgarians and Romanians were in the White Non-EU group in 2004, and in the White NMS group in 2010.