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Oral Testimonies of Female Emigrants from Northern Ireland: Finding the the universal and unique stories of migration

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Abstract

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The purpose of this paper is to add a nuanced understanding to the study of women and migration. By using oral testimonies to conduct this narrative research study I was able to add to growing body of knowledge on women and migration. This study focused on women who arrived in the United States from Northern Ireland, for family the migration process started in Germany. The terms migration, emigration and immigration are used in the paper to describe people in movement within and across national borders. This narrative illustrates some of the consequences when nation states use their power to facilitate or obstruct this movement. My research supported and contradicted the findings of prior research. Supporting the argument that while there are common characteristics among people in movement, each journey is also unique.

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Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my late aunt Bridget Mary Scott (1938 – 2020) may she rest in peace. She was one of the nearly half a million Irish emigrants who left Ireland in the 1950s. She went to Scotland to study nursing, she settled in England where she worked as a nurse for several decades. Her story is the story of many Irish women and uniquely her own. She was a great supporter who never shied away from telling the truth. You are always loved and deeply missed.

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INTRODUCTION

On April 5, 2021 I attended a virtual roundtable discussion hosted by my congresswoman Catherine Clark. While the discussion offered minimal substance regarding actual immigration reform it was an opportunity to listen to the voices of people addressing migration at different levels. Mei Hung, a professor at Boston University, described the importance of cultural exchange and the work of the Chinese Cultural Connection. By learning about other cultures, we learn how we are similar and how the differences enrich us. A theme mentioned by Professor Hung and that is part of a growing body of literature is how these differences exist not just between ethnic groups but within them as well. This contrasts with early training as a social worker.

In my training as a clinical social worker, I was required to read Ethnicity and Family Therapy by Monica McGoldrick (1982). As an impressionable student I believed McGoldrick's work was the authority on ethnicity, until I read her description of Irish families. As a member of the immigrant generation McGoldrick's description of Irish families was completely foreign to my lived experience. While McGoldrick's research illuminated one facet of Irish culture, it was presented as a guide to understanding all Irish families. The Irish and the Irish diaspora are not a monolithic entity and while there is a considerable body of literature on the Irish especially in terms of famine emigration and 'the Troubles' there are areas in need of further exploration.

The goal of this qualitative research study is to add to the field of knowledge regarding women and migration. My focus was on the oral histories of women who immigrated from Northern Ireland to America prior to the signing of the Good Friday Peace accords on 10 April 1998, and currently reside in Worcester, Massachusetts. Prior research on Irish migration to the United States has mainly focused on the famine refugees, Catholics, and men (Nolan, 2005).

Feminist theory research has given voice to the experiences of the female migrants, but again the picture has been incomplete focusing on the role of the marginalized female. The experiences of skilled Irish women migrating to America has been less documented (Reeder, 2017). Prior to the invention of the world wide web the world was an interconnected place with events in one part of the globe changing dynamics in another. British colonization of Ireland helped to expand the British empire, it also created circumstances that led to Irish migration both voluntarily and involuntarily to the Americas. Which helped to expand the presence of an English-speaking population in the American territories. I am using the terms migration, emigration, and immigration as they relate to people and transit within and across geographic boundaries acknowledging that nation states have structures to permit or deny passage. The world is a highly connected organism events in one location can have consequences in another. The purpose of this paper is to add nuanced understanding of women and migration.

To better understand the nature of this study I would like to give a brief introduction to the history of the English occupation of Ireland, female labor, and migration to the United States.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Colonization

Ireland was the laboratory from where the British Empire extracted resources and perfected the system of colonization that allowed the small island nation to establish and rule a global empire. The English ignored the established indigenous legal and economic systems to justify the subjugation of the native population as necessary to civilize the Irish. Penal laws which granted privilege to the Anglican Church and denied Catholics and Protestant dissenters the right to own land, hold public office, or educate and raise their children as Catholics,

Presbyterians, or Methodists helped to suppress rebellion (Rahman et al., 2017). The Irish economy was transformed from a pastoral society with freedom of movement for men and women to a single crop plantation system that confined the role of women to the home (Meagher, 1986, Montaño, 2017; Rahman et al., 2017). England dictated the terms of trade and division of labor the north was predominantly Protestant, industrialized and exclusively produced linen and the south was predominantly Catholic and agricultural (Rahman et al. 2017, Burke, 2019). During the mid to late 1600s the English experimented with using the Irish as slave labor, Irish workers were sent to the British Caribbean and Chesapeake plantation as forced labor[1] (Donoghue, 2017). Sending prisoners to the English territories was an economical method of incarceration and helped to suppress rebellion (Rathobone, 2010). While the system was beneficial to the English economy it was damaging to the Irish economy.

The restrictions on trade and the destruction of subsistence farming created a cycle of struggle, hunger, and poverty, while the Americas offered the hope of opportunity. To secure passage workers could seek employers willing to sponsor their passage in exchange for a period of indentured servitude. There were two significant periods of emigration related to poor harvest, trade imbalance, and British indifference to Irish suffering. The first was in the north in the early 1700s, the wave was so significant that the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland began receiving letters concerned about the number of Protestants leaving Ulster in 1718. These emigrants helped to move the indigenous people off their fertile lands and establish an English-speaking population in the Americas (Mullen, 2016, Rindfleisch, 2016). In the south the hunger of 1845 – 1852 was caused by the trade imbalance with England, disease destroying the crops, Parliamentarians who blamed the Irish farmers for the famine and failed to provide aid (Rahman et al., 2017). During

[1] In the British Caribbean ended late 1650s, Chesapeake 1690.

the hunger, the English continued to extract the crops from Ireland to feed the British army in India and young women and girls orphaned by the famine to supply the Australian penal colony with domestic servants and brides (Gallego, 2017)[2]. Despite effort to suppress rebellion such as the penal laws introduced after the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, the Irish continued to demand the right to self-governance (Rahman et al., 2017).

In 1920 the island was partitioned 26 majority Catholic counties became the Republic of Ireland, 6 predominantly Protestant Ulster counties became Northern Ireland which remained part of the United Kingdom. Following partition, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) began a campaign to overthrow the unionist government in Northern Ireland. Their efforts were routinely suppressed by the police and had tepid support from the Catholic minority. The campaign for civil rights through violence was energized on October 5, 1968 when the unionist Minister of Home Affairs banned a civil rights protest march in Derry. Despite the ban protesters went ahead with the march, use of force by police against the peaceful protesters propelled a minor protest into a pivotal event that garnered public support for the IRA. Resulting in a thirty-year period of sectarian violence that is commonly referred to as 'The Troubles.' During this period thousands of people were killed and injured (Bosi & De Fozio, 2017). I would like to step back in time to discuss the roles assigned to women in Irish economic development. In response to the widespread hunger and poverty caused by the famine non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the British government, and the churches all attempted to use women as a means of generating economic prosperity and social control. Many of these programs continued well into the 20th century.

[2] From 1849 to 1850 4,414 girls aged 14 – 20 orphaned by the famine were shipped to the colony in Australia to work as domestic servants (Gallego, 2017).

The Role of Women

Industrial schools were an investment in women that was supposed to enable women to lift themselves and their families out of poverty through entrepreneurship. The investment was made not because it would benefit the women in the schools, but because it would benefit the state to increase the number of wage earners (Chant & Sweetman, 2012). The Irish craft industry grew from girls learning needle crafts such as knitting, sowing, and lace making which was the most popular industry (Burke, 2019). Irish lace was presented at the 1893 Chicago World's fair by Lady Aberdeen, wife of a former Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Irish lace was the 19th centuries fair trade industry made by poorly paid women at the bequest of wealthy patrons. The poor working conditions and poor wages were dismissed as the collective wages of several daughters represented a small fortune to "people as unfamiliar with money as the Donegal peasants (Burke, 2019, p. 34)." Lace continued to be a popular industry for several decades. During his 1963 visit President John F. Kennedy was given an Irish lace christening gown. That the gown was most likely made by inmates of a Magdalene laundry in Limerick was ignored by everyone. The laundries served as a tool of social control and division between women from the same religious community 'good' women stayed at home, remained chaste, attended industrial schools, or emigrated and sent remittances to support the family. 'Immoral' women were sent to the Magdalene laundries, also known as asylums[3], to work in for-profit industries like laundries or lace making without pay (McCarthy, 2010; Gallen & Gleeson, 2018). Emigration to the Americas has represented a refugee from the cycles of poverty and social immobility that have existed in Ireland. However, the

[3] The laundries first opened in 1765 and closed 1996, endorsed by the Catholic and Protestant churches they were run by four Catholic religious orders and located throughout Europe, North America, and Australia (Gallen & Gleeson, 2018; McCarthy, 2010).

perception of a nation of immigrants welcoming fellow emigrants is contradicted by the record of American immigration policy.

Immigration and America

American immigration policy has not always remembered the words on the Statue of Liberty about welcoming the poor huddled masses yearning to breathe free. In the 19th century Irish emigrants arriving by boat have been prevented from entering the United States because they were poor. During the same time, it was not uncommon to read employment advertisements proclaiming, 'Irish need not apply,' the Irish were held in suspicion based on their immigrant status, poverty, and Catholic faith (Klein, 2019). Arguments like those made against Irish emigrants in the past are now being applied to other immigrant groups, this form of policy does not actually protect national interests and undermines basic American principles (Bryant, 1993, Choi, 2018, Romero, 2018, Kerwin, 2017, Acer & Byrne, 2017). One of the concerns during the pandemic is that due to the increased use of detention and deportation immigrants experiencing violence or in need of medical or financial assistance are afraid to approach the appropriate authorities (Amuedo-Dorantes & Arena-Arroyo, 2019; Institute for Policy Studies,2020). When waves of Irish immigrants arrived in the U.S. they were economically and socially marginalized and feared because of their religious practices. There was a fear that an influx of Catholic emigrants would lead to mass conversion of the protestant population. These fears were baseless and today Irish emigrants, and their descendants are active in all levels of society. Unfortunately, policy makers are repeating the mistakes of the past attempting to exclude religious minorities rather than learning how to engage with recent immigrant groups (Mohamed, 2018, Pew Research Center, 2013). I hope to use the example of two women, who arrived during two different periods of high levels of Irish emigration, to help demonstrate that female emigrants

and immigrants in general have the potential to be engaged, contributing members of society if structural and/or systemic barriers are not placed in their way.

PROCESS

As I began this research project, I reviewed the literature on emigration from Ireland. While there is a growing body of literature on contemporary Irish emigration most of the focus is on emigration of Catholics during the great hunger in the 1850s, emigration from Ireland before and after the famine, by members of Protestant or non-Christian communities or by women is underrepresented in the literature. I was fortunate to find the transcripts of two women who immigrated to the U.S. from Northern Ireland in the Worcester Women's Oral History Project (WWOHP) archive. The WWOHP is focused on the themes of the 1850 Women's Convention: work, education, health, and politics, the project does not focus on migration. The two women I selected for this project were connected to their identities as Irish immigrants in America. While the WWOHP interviewers were not focused on migration the women were able to connect the issues of work, education, health, and politics to their experiences as Irish emigrants in America. Because the women arrived in the U.S. at different historical periods, at different ages, and with different types of visa status. And their interviews are filled with rich information about the contemporary migration experience of Northern Irish immigrant women. They provide a window into Irish emigration over an 80-year time frame and help to highlight the uniqueness of each immigrant story (Abrams, 2010, Buccitelli, 2016, Creswell, 2013, Jones, 2004, Nyha, 2015, Sheridan, 2013). The transcripts are available online through the WWOHP website. During the interviews, the participants discussed their childhood, education, emigration to America, employment, and experiences living as immigrants in America generally and Worcester specifically. To help structure my research I created a chart to divide the transcripts into smaller

sections, there are five columns: the first column contains the transcript, the second column asks which of the research questions is answered in that portion of the transcript, the third asks what concept is discussed, the fourth the code assigned to the material, and the fifth the theme identified. Breaking up the information helped to identify patterns and themes in the material, but also to reevaluate the research questions (Saldaña, 2012). I would like to introduce each participant and an outline of her emigration story. While the WWOHP archive is public domain, I have altered the women's identities.

Bea

Bea's story is the story of war, poverty, and survival migration. To fully appreciate her story, you need to understand her parent's stories. Her paternal grandmother was a widow raising young children on her own in 1930s Germany, given the political situation she worked to get all her children out of the country. When Bea's father was around 14 years old, he was sent to an orphanage in New York and eventually placed with a foster family in Philadelphia, his brother and sister were sent separately to Scotland. When her father graduated from high school World War II had begun, he enlisted in the air force. He was stationed at the U.S. airbase in Belfast, Northern Ireland, while serving in the military her father became a naturalized American citizen. Bea's mother was born and raised in a "fairly large" family in Belfast. Due to the limited work available (Ryan, 2002) and the trade imbalance with England (Rindfeisch, 2017) low-income families like her mother's struggled during the depression. Her parents met in Belfast, while her father was serving in the air force. They married and Bea was born in Belfast in 1945. The war ended and her father was sent back to the U.S. as the dependents of an American citizen Bea and her mother were able to come to the U.S. a few months later, they settled in the Philadelphia area.

In the post-world war II environment, the American political narrative had moved from a dominant theme of protectionist isolation to an inclusive, pro-peace, internationalism (Wilson, 2011). The open anti-Semitism expressed, by respected prominent figures such as Charles Lindbergh, prior to American entry into the war was still present but no longer expressed overtly (Shapiro, 1990). Among the female role models Bea was exposed to was Philadelphia native and the granddaughter of an Irish immigrant Grace Kelly. Kelly was a popular icon, known for her pose and pride in her Irish heritage. In 1956 MGM studiou seamstresses made the gown Kelly for her royal wedding with Prince Rainier. She insisted that Belgium not Irish lace be used for the dress. Perhaps this was her own form of boycott and divest to protest the unfair labor practices in the Irish lace industry (Burke, 2019). It was during this post war period in which nations were trying to make sure genocide and a world war never happened again and Bea arrived in America during this wave of post war Irish immigration.

Colleen

Colleen was born in Derry, Northern Ireland in 1967, she grew up in a divided society, dominated by the Troubles, and social inequality. Colleen was able to complete her primary and secondary education in her tight knit Catholic community. She had to travel outside this community to begin her college studies[4] in an integrated school. She describes a power imbalance in which all the positions of authority in the college were held by Protestants. The pattern of marginalization described by Colleen, reflects the power imbalance created through colonization (Rahman et al., 2017). Searching for an opportunity to improve her situation she followed a path of many young Irish women. Leaving her divided homeland and emigrating to the United States with a work visa provided by an agency that supplied Irish nannies to

[4] In America this would be referred to as High School.

American families in the 1980s[5](Almeida, 2011). She entered the U.S. labor market in a well-established labor niche for Irish women, nanny (Eickstein & Peri, 2018).

In the early 1980s the political and social attitudes towards the Troubles in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland were mixed. Former President Reagan reportedly a supporter of a united Ireland had a close working relationship with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (Cooper, 2017). Thatcher refused to negotiate with dying hunger strikers (Hennessey, 2014). Support for the IRA in the Irish American community was initially sparked by the 1972 'Bloody Sunday' killings of 13 unarmed marchers in Derry. The Irish Northern Aid (Noraid) a hardline republican organization, traveled around the country to build on this empathy. Noraid worked to establish a sense of connection to their cause with second and third generation Americans of Irish descent. They drew comparisons in the need for armed rebellion to gain independence from the English in 18th century America and 20th century Ireland. Irish consulate and embassy officials worked to counter the messaging efforts of Noraid by traveling to Irish American organizations including church breakfasts to deliver a different message from the Irish government. The Irish government's message was donations to Noraid funded terrorism which was destabilizing both the Republic of Ireland and Irish nationalism (Smyth, 2020). The Irish Americans were angered by the British government's indifference to the hunger strikes in British prisons by Irish political prisoners. The Irish American diaspora sought to use collective political influence to change U.S policy of non-interference in Northern Ireland. Congressman Ted Kennedy was among several American politicians whose constituents staged sit-ins in their offices to express their outrage at the lack of American intervention in Northern Ireland

[5] This is an estimate based on her approximate age when she left school in Ireland, the length of employment in New Hampshire and when she states when she moved to Worcester. The transcript does not give dates for arrival in the U.S.

(Dumbrell, 2018; Cooper, 2017). It was during this period of increased empathy for the IRA and during a wave of Irish emigration that Colleen arrived in the United States from Northern Ireland.

This paper is part of the growing body of literature addressing recent Irish emigration. While there are commonalities to the story of Irish emigration. There are unique characteristics of each cohort and the Ireland they left. I begin my literature review with immigration and America to illustrate the repeating cycle of rejection of emigrants who are perceived as a threat or burden due to their ethnic, racial, or religious identity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Immigration and America

While this study focused on Irish women, the history of Irish immigrants in America makes this story relevant to other recent immigrant groups. In 19th century New York City William Cullen Bryant, editor of the New York Post, advocated on behalf of Irish and German immigrants who were excluded from civic life based on their immigrant status and Catholic faith (Bryant, 1993, p. 29). Historically American migration policies designed to international workers at a lower wage, such as the provision of visas for foreign nannies or Filipino nurses who are paid less than domestic nurses, has caused resentment towards the emigrant workers instead of the policies. These policies harm the domestic skilled labor market and exploit the underpaid foreign worker living in the U.S. (Eckstein & Peri, 2018). When waves of Irish immigrants arrived in the U.S. they were economically and socially marginalized and feared because of their poverty and religious practices, today they are active in all levels of society. The economic and social contributions of emigrant women continued to be undervalued (Gray, 2002). Policy

makers can learn from the transformation in Irish identity to implement programs designed to help immigrant women to become engaged partners in building stronger, safer communities. I have divided the literature among four main themes: migration, identity, belonging, and narrative. I have divided migration into four subthemes under the category migration: motivators, women in migration, barriers to migration, and post migration.

MIGRATION

Motivations for Migration

Aslany et al. (2021) conducted a mixed methods study of peer reviewed articles on migration aspirations from around the world. The study examined both the quantitative survey data that has been widely collected along with a smaller sample of qualitative data to explain the complex nature of migration aspirations. In my own study of Irish female immigrants supported the finding that individuals were motivated by the perception they would gain a better quality of life for themselves and their children through migration. When the elder of the two participants was born in 1945 her mother wondered where she might be at age 20. And the nurse said to her, "Oh, well you're going to America. She'll be in college." There was a perception that global events like the depression and world war II had not disrupted life in America the way it had in Northern Ireland. However, in the U.S. less than 10 % of young adults aged 18 to 24 were enrolled in college or professional school, women represented less than 3% of the student population (census.gov., 1947)[6].

[6] According to the 1946 U.S. census the non-institutionalized civilian population age 6-29 was 51% female and 49% male, within this age group 47 % of females and 54 % of males were enrolled in school. 5% of females 18 – 24 were enrolled in college or professional school (census.gov, 1947).

My findings support Aslany et al. (2021) and Moynihan (2013) in that the belief that migration will lead to something better is a strong motivator for migration. The belief in a better life can conflict with the political reality. In the mid-1980s Irish university students protesting the health minister's proposal to withdraw free healthcare coverage to full time university students staged a protest in the health minister's office. When the police arrived, the students refused to be moved, despite a variety of threats on the part of the police. The students finally agreed to disperse after the police sergeant said, "If any of you get arrested today you will never be allowed into America (Moynihan, 2013)." America did not have free healthcare for full time students either, however the belief that life was better in the U.S. compelled the students to disband rather than risk losing the opportunity to emigrate. The belief life was better in America was tied to the perception there were greater opportunities and a wider social safety net. The reality was that post World War II globally with the exceptions of Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, developed and developing countries worked to create social safety nets and decrease inequality. By the mid1970s these efforts began to halt and reverse, the exceptions were Ireland and Italy both countries continued to work on decreasing inequality until 1992 (Cornia & Kiiski, 2001). In Northern Ireland post World War II, the British government introduced universal free secondary to children 11 and older, free transportation, free books, stationary, milk, and medical care in school. The total student population enrolled in secondary education doubled from 1947 – 1955 (bbc.co.uk, 2021). Despite the progress made in reducing inequality around the world governments began to move away from social welfare programs in favor of market deregulation, increased privatization, and laissez-faire government. The shift in the government and economic paradigm was the result of policy created according to the neoliberal economics of the 'Washington Consensus' (Cornia & Kiiski, 2001). If he were inclined to argue

such a point Thomas Kuhn (1970) would argue that this shift was premature as the social welfare state did answer the question it was asked 'how to improve the standard of living of all citizens and reduced inequality?' In contrast the 'Washington Consensus' has been unable to answer this question. My research found that participants did not attribute their success in life to working harder or responding better to market forces. Rather they acknowledge they had opportunities not offered to women around them. Globally, emigrants are aware that by migrating they could be facing danger or racial discrimination however, the belief that migration is the only opportunity for growth remains a strong motivator (Aslany et al. 2021). Irish who emigrated to England during the 20th century knew they would face racism and discrimination but felt it was the only opportunity for employment (Ryan, 2002, Sheridan, 2012). Aslany et al. (2021) found Mexican immigrants who were aware of the anti-Mexican hostilities in the U.S. still aspired to emigrate as they identified this as the only path for employment. One of my participants had a difficult initial employment situation because she was expected to work more than eight hours a day, seven days a week. Despite this negative experience she felt she had to take the risk to emigrate to America. "I mean, leaving home, because you're leaving the security of your family. And basically, when I came out here, I didn't know anybody. I think that was God protecting me. But no. No. No regrets." The study participant was fortunate she was able to leave her abusive employer and find new employers in her ethnic employment niche (Eickstein & Peri, 2018). She was also able to move out of the niche role and become a skilled professional. Next, I would like to speak about the role of women in migration there is a disconnect between the quantitative data and research agendas.

Women in Migration

There is a disconnect in what migration looks like and what it is believed to look like. In a comprehensive review of quantitative research Aslany et al. (2021) identified single men as more likely to have migration aspirations. Yet the actual data on humans in migration found a more even divide (IOM, 2020). Grey (2002) described a gender approach to migration discourse with migration being masculine and the homeland feminine. Kofman (2000) attributes the disproportionate representation of skilled male and unskilled female migration due to research agendas. Research focused on migration among corporate management which is heavily male yielded data mainly focused on men. While feminist agendas have been focused on unskilled women in the labor market, what is missing is the migration of skilled women. Vidal et al. (2017) focused on the impact family migration for a husband's career had on a woman's career. The study focused on families that migrated between Australia, Britain, Germany, and Sweden from 1990 to 2011. These countries are highly industrialized with well-functioning social welfare systems. The researchers concluded migration for a husband's career negatively impacted the wife's career. von Berlepsch et al. (2019) compared the current day development levels of communities that had high female immigrant populations in the late 1800s and early 1900s with the development levels with low female immigrant populations during the same period. The researchers stated that most female immigrants arrived as wives. According to von Berlepsch et al. (2019) these women were not part of the formal economy, dependent on the family to support them, and that the communities where they settled economically underperformed when compared to communities with low female immigration populations. The

von Berlepsch et al. (2019) is that because the immigrant mothers were not part of the formal economy they did not contribute to the economy and that their descendants also contribute to economic development. Zhou and Gonzales (2019) studied the children of immigrant families, they found the children followed divergent paths depending on the resources available to the family. For example, work visas are not evenly distributed throughout the United States. The uneven distribution of work visas is a more likely cause of uneven economic development than the presence of immigrant mothers (Ruiz & Wilson, 2015). While it is beyond the scope of this paper von Berlepsch et al. (2019) appear to be ignoring the ways women in these underdeveloped communities help to keep the economy moving.

While researchers over the past 40 years have given attention to the labor of women and the ways in which women ensure that dysfunctional systems continue to work (Chant, 2020). I need to point out that it is the focus of researchers that is new, not the behavior of women. For example, migration has been described as becoming more feminine, which negates the data showing women have always been a part of migration (Vause & Toma, 2015). The popular image of an Irish migrant in America is a male, who worked as a laborer (Gray, 2002). However, U.S. immigration laws required emigrants to be unmarried, by the end of the nineteenth century there were more unmarried female emigrants arriving than unmarried male emigrants (McCaffrey, 2004). Part of the reason these women went unseen is their labor did not help to build the railroads or the Brooklyn bridge. They were hired to be nannies and house maids (Meagher, 1986) the domestic nature of their work went unseen by men. And was belittled by their female employers (Phillips, 2013).

von Berlepsch et al.'s (2019) assertion that single, female immigration was rare contradicts the findings of Philips (2013) and Meaghar (1986) both of whom found historical

documents regarding the employment of Irish women as nannies and maids. Contrary to the assertion of von Berlepsch et al. (2019) that migration by single women was perilous and rare Meaghar (1986) found that migration for single women was common and liberating, single women had fewer restrictions placed on them than married women. Single women attended the functions at the Hibernian halls and county social clubs. My research was consistent with Meaghar (1986) while women were single, they had greater freedoms to explore different social, academic, and occupational paths. Once they married their opportunities revolved around what was best for their husbands and children. Women without a support system were limited in their ability to work outside of the home. I would like to move from barriers to work to discussing barriers to migration. These barriers harm people in migration and the native population.

Barriers to Migration

The United States has a history of detaining and deporting the huddle masses attempting to reach its shores. The use of detention and deportation by American immigration officials dates to the eighteenth century, a precursor to the exclusion of immigrants from China. In the late 18th century state and federal officials began to create barriers to immigration by destitute European emigrants. These efforts intensified after famine refugees began to arrive. European governments paid the passage of public workhouse inmates to go to America, the destitute emigrants hoped the young nation would provide economic opportunities unavailable in Europe. Immigration officials along the Atlantic coast, especially Massachusetts and New York, without the proper authority to do so prevented Irish immigrants who had been sponsored by the British government from disembarking and returned them to Ireland (Hirota, 2013). The rationale for preventing these emigrants from disembarking was they would become a public charge. So great was the concern that America would become responsible for poor immigrants, that in 1883 officials

deported an elderly man and his wife who was blind, despite the fact the husband was a civil war veteran and a naturalized American citizen. Because he and his wife were elderly and no longer able to work. The couple came to the attention of immigration officials when the husband went to Castle Garden, the immigration center, to request financial assistance for himself and his wife officials responded by deporting the couple (Hirota, 2013). It is beyond the scope of this paper but acts like the deportation of the elderly couple could be the antecedents to distrust of public officials among immigrant communities. I will address other areas of immigration reform and the negative impact it had on the Irish diaspora in other sections of the paper. I want to move forward to the immigration reform bill passed in 1996, as this policy has been used especially in 2017 to 2020 to deny entry to a diverse emigrant population.

In 1996 congress passed immigration legislation that created new obstacles for refugees and asylum seekers. Officially the bill is called the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act under the law asylum seekers and refugees who do not apply for asylum within one year of arriving in the United States are subject to detention and deportation. The bill mandates detention for broad categories of immigrants including asylum seekers. Implementation of the law has led to a fivefold increase in the daily number of immigrants in detention centers. In 2015 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights expressed concern about the mandatory use of detention prior to deportation of all immigrants including families with children and asylum seekers (Acer & Byrne, 2017).

Like the deportation of the elderly couple seeking assistance in the 19th century. The increased use of detention centers and deportation in recent years has made members of vulnerable populations afraid to seek assistance in the 21st century. Prior to congress allowing the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) to expire in 2018, women escaping domestic violence

could request asylum, once VAWA expired the former administration denied this category of protection. Prior to VAWA expiring the evidence indicated that while there was a decline in the number of women seeking permanent legal status under VAWA there was no decline in the number of women living with violence (Amuedo-Dorantes & Arenas-Arroyo, 2019). While it is beyond the scope of this paper to determine why fewer immigrant women were willing to report their abuse, it is known that threat of deportation is a tool that abusers use to control their partners (Amuedo-Dorantes & Arenas-Arroyo, 2019). The experience of emigrants in their country of origin and their migration path influences their post migration experience. And how they interact with the institutions in America. Irish emigrants arriving in the 1980s were leaving a country that had invested in healthcare and education. As a result, they arrived with different expectations than the post war cohort.

Post Migration

Almeida (2011) began her work with the Irish diaspora by engaging in conversation with the Irish nannies at her local New York City playground. By demonstrating to the nannies that she was listening to them, they opened a door for her to the world of Irish migration both documented and undocumented, exploitation by landlords and employers, the tensions within the 1980s immigrant cohort and tensions between the post-world war II immigrant cohort and the 1980s immigrant cohort. The post-world war II cohort and the 1980s cohort left Ireland for the same reason for lack of economic opportunity, but they left two different Irelands. As a result of the 1965 immigration reform, migration from Ireland declined (Kennedy, 2019). At the same time the Irish welfare state was producing a more highly educated workforce. Emigration to the United States or England had become a rite of passage (Ryan, 2015). The 1980s immigrant cohort Almeida interviewed was better educated than previous generations and arrived with high

expectations. Almeida remarked to her participants she found it bold that the 1980s cohort thought they could lobby congress to enact immigration reform. Group members discussed why they felt capable of influencing U.S. immigration reform and how they lobbied to increase visa opportunities for Irish nationals. Among the reasons they mentioned for their high expectations was that they were not raised 'to dig potatoes, they were meant for bigger things.' The 1980s cohort were pushing back on the image of poor potato famine emigrants (Almeida, 2011). The group's confidence in their ability to make changes was validated in 1990; congress passed legislation creating a visa program that was distributed by lottery for countries harmed by the 1965 immigration reform legislation, for three years Ireland was guaranteed 40% of the visas. The tensions described by Almeida within the 1980s cohort speak to the diversity of individual experiences. Ryan (2015) interviewed a cohort of post Celtic Tiger economic emigrants in England like the 1980s cohort they tended to describe themselves as better educated, with greater control over their destiny. They identified that they had left a different Ireland than previous cohorts as they experience over a decade of economic prosperity. As with prior emigrant cohorts they realized the Irish economy was still suffering and they would need to find a sense of connection or belonging in England. Ryan (2015) described pushing back with one of her participants as to how they defined themselves. As she pushed back on the general narrative presented by the post-Celtic tiger cohort in England, a window was opened into the participants identity creation.

IDENTITY

Identity is defined as "a cultural tool-kit that people use to construct an image and understanding of themselves (Inglis & Donnelly, 2011, p. 21)." In 1920 the newly independent Republic of Ireland was an impoverished nation with a large emigrant population. It was

understood that Irish identity was not limited to geographical borders (Gray, 2002). Seventy years later, Irish President Mary Robinson in her inaugural address acknowledged the large global Irish diaspora. President Robinson defined her primary role as to represent the Republic of Ireland and the vast community of Irish emigrants abroad. In her 1995 speech to the joint houses of the Oireachtas entitled "Cherishing the Diaspora" she stated that "Irishness was at its best when we could listen to and honor those whose way of thinking were more aligned with English identity than Irish." This was an effort to address the ongoing struggle for territory in Northern Ireland (Gray, 2002). It was also a reflection on the multifaceted nature of Irish identity. In the U.S. there was a significant wave of emigration from Ireland from 1945 to 1965, following immigration reform the number of immigrants from Ireland declined significantly. The wave immigrants who arrived in the 1980s were leaving a different Ireland from the country the post war cohort left. As Almeida (2011) began to work with the 1980s emigrant cohort she uncovered the ways U.S. immigration policy created a seen and unseen Irish diaspora. The Irish diaspora in America and England share similar roots with that they share with the global Irish diaspora. Sheridan (2012) interviewed three women and one man who had emigrated from Ireland to Northampton, England in the 1930s, 1950s, and 1960s. She compared the experience of these emigrants to the autobiography of Donall Mac Amhlaigh who emigrated to England in 1951, the book is about his first six years in England. He discusses in the book his discomfort in English society. Mac Amhlaigh described how he felt more comfortable living in a small, masculine world of Irish pubs and working in the construction industry surrounded by male, Irish coworkers than working in an English hospital working with English and Irish co-workers. Female Irish emigrants were unable to create a similar insulated working environment and when they eventually became mothers it was impossible to avoid the English establishments. This

meant there was no mechanism to avoid any anti-Irish sentiments. Sheridan (2012) argues the use of language such as the racial slur Paddy conceals the fact Irish women just like their male countrymen were subject to racism. The name Paddy is used in a derogatory manner to harass, Irish immigrants. According to Sheridan the masculine nature of the term conceals the level of racism directed at Irish women. I agree with the general statement made by Sheridan that along with neglecting the story of female migration, research has also forgotten the racial discrimination experienced by women. I disagree that the language has been exclusively male. The term Bridget was used in a derogatory manner to describe Irish women, generally Catholic, working in domestic service (Philips, 2013). Philips (2013) discusses how upper-class English and American women shared a common disdain for the women they refer to uniformly as the Bridget's who they felt were inferior servants to the white, Protestant women who were leaving domestic service to work in the factories. The participants Sheridan (2012) spoke with unlike Mac Amhlaigh were able to create a home in England, they remained rooted to Ireland through family not the land. Sheridan's work builds on research conducted by Ryan. Ryan (2002) who interviewed ten elderly women who emigrated from Ireland in the 1930s. The women left Ireland looking for work in England, some attempted to return to Ireland at different points in their lives, but all returned to England. The women in my study reflect Ryan and Sheridan's studies, America has become their home, they describe Ireland in terms of their family. Unlike the women who left during the 1930s (Ryan, 2002) the women in my study did not focus on the negatives in Northern Ireland, rather they acknowledged negatives but focused on the positives. The younger of the two remains politically aware of her local Worcester politics and the situation in Northern Ireland. She also had a strong attachment to her hometown. While Kennedy (2019) described the later generation immigrants in Chicago as out of step with social developments in

Ireland, first generation immigrants who are technologically adept are aware of the social changes (Ryan, 2015). Identity is malleable when properly fed knowledge about cultural changes communities adjust appropriately.

Culture identity is evolving constantly, both in the departure and receiving country (McCaffrey, 2004). In the past forty years the Irish population has become increasingly tolerant regarding social issues including sexuality while acknowledging greater ethnic and religious diversity (Almeida, 2011). As Kennedy (2019) observed the American diaspora has been slow to adapt to the new Irish identity as the number of immigrants arriving from Ireland following the 1965 immigration reform was insignificant to replenish the population loss. This meant the Irish American diaspora was insufficiently fed to help the community grow and evolve.

The weakened diaspora was unable to appropriately manage the cognitive process of identity formation. The varying levels of knowledge can be seen in the different ways emigrant cohorts define their place in the social order in relation to others. While the groups might all be Irish emigrants, different cohorts focused on different markers when encountering one another to determine if they are part of our group or not. Inglis and Donnelly (2011) studied the changes in social identity formation as Ireland has transformed from a predominantly rural country of emigration to a country of returning emigrants and newly arrived immigrants with a majority urban and suburban population. The study found that as a predominantly rural country, county affiliation had been an important part of Irish identity and belonging. As Ireland developed a suburban culture the importance of physical space and connection to community became increasingly important. Kennedy (2019) found reflections of the changes in Irish society in the Irish diaspora in Chicago. In the same way county used to be an important indicator of belonging, the value placed on county now provides a marker to identify cohorts of emigrants.

Older generations of emigrants held a stronger attachment to the county social clubs as a bridge to the 'then and there' while facilitating adjustment to the 'here and now (Nyhan, 2015).' Younger generations have technology and social media to help them remain connected to Ireland and learn about America (Kennedy, 2019). In the Chicago Irish community, the grandchildren of Irish immigrants were less interested in learning traditional Irish music. Membership in the Irish cultural centers and social clubs which were vital in creating public support for the American political intervention in the peace process (Smyth, 2020) failed to connect with recent emigrants and second-generation Irish Americans (Kennedy, 2019). Aside from technology replacing the social bridging previously provided by the Irish cultural organizations. Social phenomena such as Riverdance has elevated the popularity of Irish step dancing and helped Irish ethnicity to be sexy (Moynihan, 2013). Emigrants from the Republic of Ireland were able to access step dancing and soccer to create a bridge between Ireland and America. Emigrants from Northern Ireland had a unique identity issue not shared with emigrants from the Republic. Northerner Irish emigrants felt they were defined by "the Troubles" which were not properly understood by the diaspora living in the Republic or North America (Trew 2005, 2010). The discourse regarding Northern Ireland has focused on the two dominant Christian faiths, ignoring other faith groups and people of color. These ethnic and religious minorities in Northern Ireland have been ignored by the American diaspora and the English government. The two largest ethnic minority communities in Ulster have been the Chinese and South Asian communities. The population census has counted the Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh populations since 1937. And the government began to record the number of businesses in Belfast owned by Chinese immigrants in 1962. The government has dismissed discrimination complaints by both communities (Crackle, 2018). The North American diaspora has also failed to recognize Northern Irish Protestant emigrants (Trew, 2010). The result

is an image of an Irish diaspora that is white and Catholic this does not represent the population of Ulster. The Northern Irish emigrants in my study defined themselves by their lived experiences and created bridges to others through shared values. They graciously shared stories about experiences both personal and familial that helped shape their identity and how they found a sense of belonging and purpose in the United States.

BELONGING

I wish to discuss two forms of belonging the first is diaspora, belonging to the diaspora is open to the migrant generation and their descents. The second form of belonging is the sense of connection and the ability to function within the society of the host nation. Belonging in a host nation requires finding the bridge between 'then and there' and 'here and now.' I will start the discussion of belonging by discussing diaspora.

By including those who were born on the island nation and their descendants in the Irish diaspora the national identity is extended beyond the territorial borders (Grey, 2002). Belonging to the diaspora does not require a sense of cultural competency for instance over the past forty years the Irish population has become increasingly tolerant regarding social issues including sexuality and acknowledging greater ethnic and religious diversity (Almeida, 2011). More recent emigrants arriving the United States describe a disconnect with the American diaspora (Kennedy, 2019) as the elements within the diaspora have represented the worst of Irish culture and Christian beliefs promoting an agenda of sexual oppression, promoting anti-Semitism, endorsing the historic repression of African Americans and the forced displacement of Indigenous people (McCaffrey, 2004; Mullen, 2016). As the more attention is given to the cultural evolution in Ireland certain narratives of Irish diaspora identity remain dominant which

can mute the voices of diaspora members of the who do not fit the dominant narrative. While frustrating some emigrants used the false labeling to create a new 'here and now.'

Trew (2010) interviewed emigrants from Northern Ireland who went to Canada. They felt they were defined by "the Troubles" which were poorly understood by North Americans and by people in the Republic of Ireland however for some this was a benefit as they were labeled the worthy emigrants. Emigrants also found they could allow sectarian barriers to come down outside of Northern Ireland. A Protestant man from Northern Ireland described how he shared accommodations with two hardliner Provisional IRA supporters in Canada without issue (Trew, 2005). Neither of my participants identified fear of religious discrimination as an adult, but the older participant acknowledged difficulty finding a sense of belonging in her suburban Philadelphia neighborhood because was a religious minority. The other participant did feel the need to explain a misconception about the "the Troubles" at the start of her interview. She stated she is open about her faith at work and using prayers to Saint Anthony to find solutions to problems "and you know he's right out there." She went on to explain how other women at her work have adopted her coping style, "and she was saying how she goes to Saint Anthony's and she goes, 'And I'm not even Catholic!'" While today she can laugh about everyone praying to her Catholic saints, this participant has been able to find a way to connect with her workers through her Irish Catholic identity. When Catholic famine refugees arrived in the nineteenth century there was a fear, that they would convert the country making everyone swear allegiance to the Pope (Klein, 2019).

The push for migrants to assimilate to the American culture is in response to the fear that migrants will alter or dilute the American culture, this idea presumes that culture is a static entity (Waldinger, 2007). The focus on assimilation misses the opportunity to appreciate the ways the

migrant culture can enrich the society while also creating stress for the migrant. As Eckersley (2017) described the way pressure placed on migrants seeking a sense of belonging and identity in their new home to assimilate creates a tension "between the 'here and now' and the 'there and then' that shapes their heritage discourse (p.2)". The path of migration can also limit the tools available to manage this tension. Tschirhart et al. (2019) interviewed Thai women who emigrated to Norway as the wives of Norwegian men, they represent the greatest number of emigrants arriving in Norway on family migration visas. Globally marital visa migration is gendered with women traveling from low-income countries to be with husbands in middle to high income countries. The women in the study worked in massage shops in Oslo, Norway. The shops often owned by Thai entrepreneurs provided a bridge between the 'then and there' and the 'here and now.' Among the stresses identified were finances, adjusting to life in Norway, loneliness, and relationship stress. Relationship stress was identified as the most significant stressor. At the extreme women experienced physical and sexual abuse in their marriages, they felt ill equipped to seek help from the Norwegian healthcare or legal systems. To develop the tools necessary to manage the 'here and now' the women utilized Buddhist cognitive practices they learned in Thailand by using her traditional Buddhist practices one women was able to advocate for herself in the Norwegian legal system and divorce her abusive husband (Tschirhart, 2019). In my research the manner migrants negotiate the delicate balance between remembering the past and living in the present depending on their pre-migration experiences. One woman was able to identify with a cultural ethos that acted as a moral compass as she navigated the new country. The other's family had experienced significant trauma and needed to bury so much of the past that a great deal of their history was lost to the future generations. Pre-migration experiences and reception in the host country influences how emigrants identify themselves.

NARRATIVES

When presented without context or voice topics such as migration lose their humanity or become a political tool. For example, stating that 3.5% of the world's population migrated in 2019, is a dry fact implying migration impacts such a small percentage of the population it does not deserve attention. If phrased that 272 million people more than fifty percent of whom are working age males (IOM, 2019), the information can be used to create fear that our safety, our jobs, our way of life are under threat from the approaching mob. Narratives or storytelling gives the rich details of life that helps the reader to understand the experience and see the mob as humans (Prabhat, 2018). In this sense the term narrative is used to describe the way information is shared. Prabhat (2018) used the stories of immigrants in England traveling from one office to the next attempting to gain citizenship. I would argue that Prabhat's assertion that the law prefers a dispassionate voice filled with logic and reason, is true for the discipline of law globally. The focus on analytical reasoning creates a boundary and limits entry into the world of law or policy. Narratives break boundaries and invite the lay person into the arena (Prabhat, 2018). Narratives also help demonstrate there is no one story. As I mentioned in the introduction McGoldrick's book was presented as the authority on ethnicity. The Irish presented in the book were the only Irish in the world, later research has proven this to be incorrect.

Breda Gray directed Breaking the Silence which interviewed people from each county in Ireland aged 60-75 years old from 2000 to 2002, to ask why they chose not to emigrate during the 1950s. During this period nearly a half million people emigrated from Ireland (Trew, 2005). Narratives of Migration and Return was a two-year project that began in 2003 to collect the narratives of people who had emigrated to Canada and returned to Ireland (Trew, 2005). In the two studies the participants made decisions related to migration based on their personal

circumstances. The variety of responses help to illustrate how there is no single Irish or indeed emigrant identity. Nyhan (2015) collected oral testimonies from the counties societies in New York City to understand how the societies were a tool of assimilation, employment networking, and social support system. Kennedy (2019) described the Irish cultural centers filled with grey haired first- and second-generation immigrants having dinner at 4 pm, out of step with modern day America and Ireland. The narratives collected by Nyhan (2015) provide a textured picture in which emigrants would arrive at the airport and have an immediate connection to employment through the county social clubs. The individual county social clubs provided a social safety net to pay medical expenses of injured workers or the funeral expenses for deceased emigrants from their county even if they were never involved in the social club. The contrast between the disengaged Chicago cultural clubs and the social support services provided by the New York county societies are an indication of the variation within the Irish diaspora specifically and immigrant communities generally. Butticelli's work with a Chinese American immigrant family demonstrates the value in creating narratives to better understand these differences.

Butticelli (2016) used semi-structured interviews with a Chinese American immigrant mother and her American born daughter, to discuss the process of migration, defining one's identity, and a sense of belonging. As Butticelli traveled with his participants to co-create the narrative, the mother shared that prior to the interview she had only shared with her children the facts of when she moved from one place to another (Jones, 2004). In creating the narrative, she shared for the first time, stories of her feelings of isolation and otherness, she began to recognize the importance of what she had not shared. Without her mother's story her American born daughter had limited appreciation for her mother's journey. In the absence of personal narratives literature by immigrant authors could offer some insight into migration (van Amelsvoort, 2019).

While published immigrant authors have a public platform to open a dialogue. My research showed that the narrative serves another purpose between Butticelli's migrants who have not recognized the importance of what they withhold and van Amelsvoort's migrants who share their narrative with the world. Migrants are aware of the void created by lost narratives by creating personal narratives they can preserve their story.

The oral histories were collected by the researchers who were students in a women's studies class and the focus of the interviews were the experiences of women in Worcester. Colleen, a housing advocate, described herself in terms of her Catholic faith and family. Bea is currently retired during her working career she had taught for children with learning challenges and been a victim advocate for domestic abuse and sexual assault survivors. Migration was a part of the story for the two participants selected and each spoke about her experience as a female emigrant from Northern Ireland. While they were able to acknowledge ways they benefited from emigration generally and migration to Worcester specifically. The women were able to identify ways they also lost because of migration. Themes identified by Bea and Colleen supported and contradicted themes identified by other emigrants from Northern Ireland.

Neither of the participants in the WWOHP mentioned a sense of otherness from the Irish community in the U.S. nor did they express a sense of unease in visiting Northern Ireland. When Colleen was interviewed in 2016, she planned to visit her family in Northern Ireland with her two children, prior to 2016 the family had traveled to Northern Ireland in 2013. Bea was interviewed in 2019 she had visited the Republic of Ireland prior to the peace accords and Northern Ireland after peace was established. Bea described both trips as wonderful. When asked if she would return to Ireland, she expressed a stronger desire to visit Germany to uncover family history lost during the war and her father's forced migration.

In discussing the findings, I want to begin with the city of Worcester where they live then discuss their experience with migration, how they viewed themselves and how they found belonging, purpose and value in their lives.

FINDINGS

WORCESTER

> "I know during the summer they have the tours like in the Canal District, and I kind of wish there was more of that here to really educate people and do the tourist thing. Like some of the homes here are so beautiful, and the historical parts." (Colleen, 2016)
>
> "I love it. I think, I walk around, I see the architecture. It's so beautiful, and it's very different from Pennsylvania, but I really do like it here. I like being fairly close to the ocean." (Bea, 2019)

Bea and Colleen had been living in Worcester, Massachusetts for over twenty years at the time they were interviewed. They each acknowledged Worcester needs a physical update and hope that the city will develop more activities for families and visitors to enjoy. Bea retired shortly after she moved to Worcester, she has been an active adult student in retirement. When Colleen arrived, she was completing her bachelor's degree and embarking on her professional life. Worcester has provided each woman with a supportive network and resources to help meet their unique needs. When Colleen described her reason for emigrating, she talked about the systemic racism towards Catholics in Northern Ireland and how remaining would have limited her growth. Aside from missing her family she felt the decision to emigrate to America and settle in Worcester was beneficial. "I have to say, America has been really, really great to me. I've gotten a great education, I live in a great community, I'm filled—at my work—I'm filled with

people who are very supportive and nurturing." Colleen was an informal ambassador to Worcester describing the city's many achievements, "Shredded wheat, the first female college was here, Major Taylor, the cyclist. There's so much history here like Elm Park was the first state park in the United States." The shelter where she works was named after a Worcester woman who was a prominent abolitionist (wwohp.org, 2017). Abby Kelley Foster is just one of the female role models Colleen looks to for inspiration in her role as housing advocate.

Bea was grateful for the Worcester Institute for Senior Education (WISE) to nurture her personal growth.

> I always thought I'd go back and get a master's degree or something. I'd always planned to do that, and it never happened, so this is wonderful. It's better than getting a master's because I don't have the stress [laughter], and I just take courses for fun, and I can take whatever I want, and take interesting classes. I've met interesting people. We have such a diversity of people from all different backgrounds, which has been wonderful. So, that's been really good.

Historically civic engagement has helped to propel Irish immigrants from the disreputable papist coming to steal American jobs, to a welcome immigrant group. Irish Catholics helped to elect the first Irish mayors of New York City and Boston, which helped to elevate their social status above emigrants from China, Eastern and Southern Europe (Klein, 2019). On a local level both participants reported positive experiences engaging in Worcester politics.

> "I gotten involved in some political things and stuff in Worcester, and that's been really good." (Bea, 2019)

"I vote, everything, I think it's important, I really do. I've made Worcester my second home, so I want the best for it." (Colleen, 2016)

Both women describe Worcester as giving them the space to learn and grow. Colleen's work has created a situation that allows her to be an advocate for homeless women and a full-time mother. Her employer gave her the biggest office so she could bring her babies into the office with her. She appreciates that her work created a flexible work schedule so she can attend school activities. The shelter staff engage her children asking them to inspect the shelter toys, letting the staff know if something needs to be replaced or if there is a need being unmet. The children in return learn that not everyone has a secure home or consistent access to food. This symbiotic relationship resembles the community Colleen knew as a child in Derry. When she was growing up if her parents were not around, she had adults in her community to care for her. Through her work community her children have access to other trusted adults who will care for them.

Bea did admit that she was not excited when they first moved to Worcester. "When we first moved here, I thought, "Oh, Worcester is not that nice of a city," and it has grown on me, and it's changing also, but it has also grown on me, and I value it now." Worcester's geographical location allows her to visit her grandchildren or the beach with minimal driving. As she noted the city has made some improvements, but her change in attitude towards the city has more to do with her developing an appreciation for the city's charms which are not immediately obvious. One of the perks of living in Worcester for Bea is attending courses through WISE. As she explained above, she enjoys studying a variety of subjects that interests her. She described having some difficulty remaining focused when she was in college, she would see different

courses outside her major and think they also looked interesting. WISE gives her the opportunity to explore her intellectual interests.

Bea and Colleen are the embodiment of the best of Irish saying fáilte roimh chéad mile (one hundred thousand welcomes). Both women described themselves as not being a career woman, rather they have embraced the new world in which they live and created lives dedicated to help others. They describe mutually beneficial relationships in their careers as advocates and an appreciation for the supportive people in their lives. Both described family as the most important focus in their lives (Cassar &Meier, 2018). I would like to step back in time to discuss their migration paths, migration barriers, and the experience of women in migration.

MIGRATION

> "My father was sent to United States. He was all by himself. I think he was 13 when he came, maybe a little—oh not quite, 14 I believe when he came by himself…… when he got out of school World War II had just begun. And he volunteered…. he was stationed in Belfast Northern Ireland……He was in the Air Force and that's how he met my mother. And they had a kind of whirlwind courtship I guess [laughter] and were married there and I was born there and then my father was shipped back because the war had ended by then. I was born just about the end of the war. He was shipped back home, and my mother was able to come a few months later." (Bea, 2019)
>
> "The first time I came to America, the first thing I noticed was the freedom. Where I could go from "A" to "B" without being stopped, without having to go through detours or anything like that. Sometimes you don't realize where you come from until you're out of there," (Colleen, 2016)

Bea was born in Belfast, Ireland at the end of World War II, she emigrated with her mother as an infant to join her father a naturalized American citizen on a family visa. Bea is part of the 1.5 generation, technically she emigrated, but she has lived her life in America she is the 'here and now' and the 'then and there.' While she did not make the decision to leave, she can appreciate the benefits of her adopted homeland. In contrast to the voluntary migration path taken by her mother, her father was forced to leave Germany and emigrate to the first country that would accept him. The evacuation of children like her father meant escape from the Nazi's and death camps, but also the loss of parents which left invisible scars (Benz, 2004) the children of evacuees experienced as well. As Benz (2004) pointed out in hindsight it is easy to criticize the minimal support services given to children rescued from the Nazi regime. It is important to remember that there were 1.5 million people who were not rescued.

> It was a little difficult in some ways. I mean my father had ended up losing almost his entire family in the Holocaust, so there was a certain kind of sadness that pervaded in our family.

She is grateful that her father's forced migration saved his life, however after his death she discovered some of what he lost.

> after my father passed away, he left a shoebox full of letters from my grandmother in Germany, and I had those translated. It was a really interesting experience. I found out where the family lived, different relatives that I didn't even know that had existed. (Bea 2019)

The discovery of her grandmother's letters made Bea aware of another part of her lost family story due to the circumstances that led to her father's forced migration. She regretted this lost family history however, "Both my parents had very bad experiences in World War II."

While she wished she knew her paternal grandmothers' story she felt it would have harmed her father to probe his past. Like the mother in Butticelli's study her father may have understood that there was important information in what he did not say. Prior to his death her father left some clues about his family history in a brief memoir. Using the clues left by her father, the translations of her grandmother's letters and the internet she is trying to discover her family history. Bea is considering traveling to Germany to research her paternal family. Perhaps the discovery of her father's memoir helped Bea to start writing. In college she majored in English expecting to write professionally, in retirement she has started to write. She described this work as something she was doing for herself. It seems likely that Bea is trying to preserve her voice so her sons and grandchildren will understand her journey. In a way her life has been a series of migrations, starting at birth she followed her parents, once she was married, she followed her husband. After they married her husband's work led to a series of moves around the Continental United States and the Marshall Islands. She recounts how her parents responded to the news she would be moving to an island in the Pacific Ocean with two small children.

> We lived on this little island on the Pacific for a couple of years, my husband and I and our kids, and when we went I remember my mother and father being really upset that we were going because it was so far away and we had little babies and my mother said to me, she said, "I can't tell you not to go," she said, "Look how I left."

Bea felt her willingness to follow wherever her husband's work sent him was related to being the child of emigrants. When asked how many times she moved, Bea counted in total, six houses but thought one move might have been related to the house becoming too small for the family. In contrast she spoke about her parents having a three-bedroom house, three children and hosting family members as they made their way to America. As they emigrated to America all

her maternal and two remaining paternal relatives lived in her family home until they established a business and were ready to buy their own home. She recalls how over a period of several years the kids would be displaced by family members migrating to America. But no one seemed to think the house with the ever expanded and contracted numbers was too small.

Instead, what she recalled “My mother's family comes, and we get relegated to the sofa or the sleeping bags or something.” Aside from the inconvenience of her grandparents taking over a bedroom, Bea does not mention any tension related to religious or cultural differences within the extended family. Passage of legislation like the 1945 War Brides act helped Bea’s mother emigrate to the United States. Unlike prior legislation and government policies created obstacles to emigration, that exposed her father and his siblings faced danger and trauma while attempting to seek refuge from the Third Reich. The War Brides act passed at the end of the war made the process of traveling as the spouse of an American service member with an infant simple. History allows us to understand the impact of laws, policies, and other actions. For example, the world was able to witness how Jewish and other German refugee groups experienced pain and suffering as their path to safety was blocked by immigration policies. Which makes it difficult to understand how the European Union and the American government could enact immigration policies that leave refugees stranded between borders without regard for human rights and safety (Oxfam, 2017, Oxfam, 2019). Unfortunately, a full examination of international immigration policy is beyond the scope of this paper. However, both women in the study have experienced the negative consequences of immigration and social policy either directly or indirectly.

Barriers

> "When you fill out your applications, you know, you have your codes? You always had to put down Londonderry. I'm a true Irish person, I wouldn't do it. So, I have to say, I did not do well there because I would not obey the rules. That was another reason for me leaving Ireland as well. Just because I knew I was going to have these barriers and I would never sell myself. When I came to the states, I took the job as a nanny and I started taking classes." (Colleen, 2016)
>
> "And my mother also had a difficult childhood because first of all it was the **d**epression and bad as it was in United States it was even worse in Europe and Northern Ireland really suffered. So, our family was quite poor. Everybody in her family worked." (Bea, 2019)

The above quote from Bea speaks to a universal barrier to migration, money (Aslany et al. 2021). Her maternal family was without the financial means to consider migration. At the same time, her paternal family had means to migrate, but they were prevented by governmental policies to deny refuge to asylum seekers. Bea and her family lived with 'a certain kind of sadness' after losing almost everyone in her paternal family during the Holocaust. What she knows of her paternal family narrative is that prior to the official declaration of war in the 1930s an uncle was arrested by the Gestapo; he was brought to Dachau where he was killed. Her grandmother, a widow, fearing for the lives of her children she sought ways to get her children to safety. No one country would accept all three children at once, as children they had to leave their mother one by one. Anna Freud has written about the long-term psychological harm this caused (Benz, 2004). Bea's story provides a human face to that suffering. Efforts have been to reform immigration policy with the reported objective of correcting errors of previous legislation however, the results have been mixed.

The 1965 immigration reform bill was meant to open the door to immigrants from Asia, it also resulted in fewer opportunities for legal immigration from Ireland (Hatton, 2015). Colleen describes her family as not being wealthy, so finances created a barrier to migration. As a female Colleen was able to use the American preference at the time for white, English speaking, nannies from Ireland, to obtain a nanny visa.

Women in migration

> "Well, what happened was, I answered an ad in the newspaper back home in Derry even though Derry's a city, it's such a great city. It's a great musical city, everything, but it lacked opportunities. Especially being a Catholic growing up, and so, I kind of knew, even though I came from a close family, I would eventually have to leave." (Colleen, 2016)

> "Although my grandmother was a very strong independent woman with my mother which is funny because my mother is the one that left home to move 3000 miles away with a man that she'd only known for a couple of years. But my mother was never that independent." (Bea, 2019)

Bea laments that her mother never seemed to take chances after moving to the United States. Bea and her sister would encourage their mother to join activities, but her mother would only go somewhere if her father were coming as well. Married women of her mother's generation in Ireland and America did not go places without their husbands (Meagher, 1986). "And that's sad to say I guess I guess you know that their times were so different. It was just the way your family was, and it was the way you were." Her mother never held a job outside of the home, while her father did not discourage her mother, he did not encourage her. "Most my

friends' parents were the same. Not that many women worked. If they did as teachers or maybe a nurse."

Bea expressed at various points in the interview her regrets about choices she made such her career path, "What happened was, you know, in some ways I fell into the same thing my mother did in doing what my husband was good for him." Bea described the lack of role models not her immigrant background as the reason she did not take more risks in her career, "I mean we didn't have a lot of role models when I was growing up. You didn't know very many women that had done anything important or were very successful in careers when I was young." Colleen appeared to have fewer regrets than Bea, perhaps this was related to more of her choices being voluntary.

Like Bea's father, migration for Colleen appeared to be the path to survival. Colleen arrived as a nanny; she explains her rational in deciding to migrate this way.

> "So, I answered an ad in the newspaper said, "Nannies Abroad" and I said well, "If I do this, I'll have shelter." So, my mother wouldn't have to worry about me. So, I ended up, first of all, in Rye, New Hampshire."

Part of Colleen's rationale for leaving Derry was the systemic racism. As she mentioned in an earlier quote, she refused to write on applications the English name for her city Londonderry instead she insisted on using the Irish name Derry. She described herself as a "true Irish person" who refused to submit to English hegemony. Nannies from Ireland were popular among upper- and middle- class American families as they represented a white underprivileged class that could be economically exploited (Eickstein & Peri, 2018). While she laughs about the situation today, her initial employers' inability to find her at the airport was related to their stereotype of an Irish woman.

> Well, I answered an ad back home and it was supposed to be through an agency where they'd interviewed the family, they'd interviewed me, and it was kind of funny because when I arrived in Boston, I was looking for these people. Couldn't find them, the couple was looking for an Irish girl who was supposed to be five ten with blonde hair and I'm like [laughs] five one brown hair!

Colleen discussed how she had a hard time understanding this family.

> her first marriage, and I don't know if the baby came before or after, but she had three really nice kids, but she just didn't want anything to do with them. She was in one section of the house and I was here with the kids. No interaction. I did everything with the kids, their music, their homework, this, and that and for me, it was really sad because I come from a family of seven and, to me, my mother is everything, she's such a beautiful woman. And she was always there for me, and I couldn't understand, "Why's this mother [laughs] not there for her kids?" I mean it's not like she's working, you know what I mean? So, I stayed with them for about eight months.

Colleen described how the mother expected her to be with the children all day seven days a week. She described the home feeling like a prison, a metaphor enhanced by the parents of the children's friends passing her clandestine notes saying, "Hon, we know what it's like over there." When she would express her guilt about contemplating leaving the other parents would encourage her to think in terms of self-preservation. Colleen's experience of an employer expecting her to work unreasonable hours and tolerating potentially abusive behavior as a nanny in the 1980s continues today. In a national survey of domestic workers 35% reported working long hours without breaks during the past 12 months (NDWA & University of Chicago, 2012). While she does not mention verbal or physical threats or abuse. When comparing her first and

second employer families. She mentions how the second family was more relaxed and did not have titles. Implying the first family required her to use some form of title when addressing the parents. She worked for the second family for five years. Colleen eventually migrated to Worcester, Massachusetts with her husband.

She met her husband her first summer in New Hampshire. After dating for a few years, they married and moved back to her husband's hometown. They have been sedentary since coming to Worcester, they moved once from a rented house on one to street to their own home a few streets away.

The Good Friday peace accords created a safer and stable Northern Ireland, barriers have come down and people are more mobile. Colleen explained how her family in Northern Ireland is experiencing the same liberating sense of freedom she discovered when she arrived in America.

> Actually, my mother was here in October with my younger sister, Kay, and they spent ten days here which was awesome. Its good times. Before that, I think Liam[7] was two the last time she came to visit. My mom's been to the White House [laughs], she's been everywhere, she's in a choir so they travel everywhere.

As noted above both Bea and Colleen discussed how war was a presence in their lives growing up. In the two interviews they comment on how during the depression, world wars, and the British occupation their families in Northern Ireland were impoverished. Although Bea grew up in America her family lived with a sadness created by the exposure to violence, loss, and deprivation. Colleen grew up exposed to violence, the unpredictability of how the ongoing conflict would disrupt their lives. At the same time their families provided a sense of a stable

[7] Liam was almost 12 years old at the time of the interview.

home in where they felt safe. Later in the interview Bea is asked if she has any advice for young women today. She tells them to take chances.

> I think to follow your dreams, to take risks. I was never a risk taker as far as career. I was always afraid of failing, and I would take little baby steps. A couple times I would be offered a job that sounded wonderful but scary, and I didn't take the risk, and I'm sorry about that now. I think that's really important. I think that it was important to try new things and to grow and I think that's one of the good things about WISE. It helps you grow.

IDENTITY

> "I met more people like me naturally in college. There were a lot of Jewish kids. So, I got involved with them and that helped a lot." (Bea, 2019)

> "So just exposing my kids to that culture and what rituals we have. Like at Christmas time a symbol for candle and what that means. So, carrying on little traditions like that with the kids." (Colleen, 2016)

Colleen appeared to be a natural storyteller providing background and details without much prompting. She described her childhood in Derry with stories of Christmas feasts, neighbors looked out for one another, random violence, and systemic racism. Describing Derry as a great city with great music. During her interview she shared stories about growing up in Derry, the benefits of all female education, the Troubles, her migration path, the women at Abby's house, and the City of Worcester. Her pride in the mission, values, and community of Abby's house is evident. "And the value of really listening to a woman and her needs. And I think that's the most important thing." As Colleen explains, shelter staff do not tell the women

what they need, they ask them ‘how can we help?’ She is clearly proud to be one the people doing great work at the shelter. She described the women who founded the shelter as excellent role models. But she did make it clear that her most influential role model has been her mother. “It’s like my goal in life is if my children look at me the way I look at my mother, I’ve done a good job. That’s all I wanted.”

Bea was an infant when she left Ireland, by her early teens her Irish relatives began arriving in her home. Her understanding of Irish culture and identity is from the stories told by her mother and extended maternal family. Her mother’s family in Northern Ireland was poor and suffered during the depression and the world war. Bea knew her maternal grandfather left school early but did not know at what age. Despite his limited formal education, he was an avid reader. She was impressed with his knowledge of Irish poetry and Shakespeare. She described guilt as a common feature of both cultures. “I would say being Irish and Jewish makes you doubly guilty about everything, it's those two cultures with this burden of guilt.” When she spoke about things that made her feel proud of her cultures she talked about the rich Jewish culture, great Jewish food, Irish literature, and culture. Bea was given a strong connection to her Jewish and Irish identities, but also the message that Germany was something negative. This extended to not buying German made products and not discussing their German heritage. Bea’s family attempted to shield the children by not talking about the war or Germany. Suffering was a dominant part of her family narrative the way everyone in her mother’s family had to work during the depression. This meant Bea’s mother had to leave school to care for a younger brother. Bea did not identify which faith her mother’s family practiced, only that religion was not important to her mother. The experience of religious persecution made his Jewish faith important to her father. Her mother agreed to raise the children in the Jewish faith, they were the only Jewish family in her

suburban Philadelphia community. Bea attended the local public high school and Hebrew school. She enjoyed Hebrew school but concealed where she was going because she wanted to blend in. Learning in general was an important part of Bea's identity.

Bea described her lifelong interest in learning as connected to her father "I think my father's interest in learning and reading, that was always important to me." And her maternal grandfather, "You know, there's so many good Irish books my grandfather loved to read too on my Irish side." Despite the fact her father never attended college and her grandfather did not finish high school, they were well read individuals. Bea clearly proud of each of them. Literature is one of the ways Bea identifies with Irish culture.

War and persecution also helped to solidify the importance of religion for Colleen as part of her identity and daily life. The Troubles started shortly after Colleen was born, she left Northern Ireland as a young adult before the peace accords were negotiated and signed. Her identity as an Irish woman is connected to her faith as a Catholic, her connection to family, and an awareness of history. Like Bea's father in Germany Colleen's experience in Northern Ireland contributed to the level of importance her Catholic faith plays in her life, "my parents were very strong in their faith and stuff like that and growing up where I grew up in "the Troubles" too, I think it made it more important." She started the interview by explaining a misconception about the sectarian violence in Ulster county. "A lot of people think Northern Ireland is in a religious war. It's not. It's how the British government came in and divided the people, divide and conquer, you know?" Colleen's need to explain 'the Troubles' without prompting from the interviewers is consistent with testimony from other Northern Irish emigrants that people do not understand the situation (Trew, 2010). Colleen wanted to clarify the situation before the interview progressed. However, while other emigrants have complained that 'the Troubles' are

given too much attention, she acknowledges that her childhood and young adulthood was dominated by the conflict (Trew, 2005).

Colleen joked she was from a 'small Irish Catholic family' she is one of seven children; her mother was one of eight children, and her father one of ten. She grew up surrounded by a large nuclear and extended family. Both of her parents were practicing Catholics she felt their strong faith helped her and her siblings to develop a well-defined sense of right and wrong. Faith also served as a necessary shield from the violence, bombings, home invasions, and shootings that surrounded them. While she is proud of her Catholic identity and her family name. She explained how this had targeted her for discrimination.

> I had one teacher who wouldn't even look at my work because I was Catholic. And my name, McGilroy, it's a very political name, my great, great uncle was the leader of the Irish volunteers and how that happened was his sixteen-year-old son was riddled to death by the British army coming home from college, my uncle was bound up, my own brother was shot, there was a stigma especially with names**...**. (Colleen, 2016)

Colleen understood that the discrimination by her teacher was unacceptable and reported his behavior. When she emigrated to the United States, she appreciated the ability to travel without being randomly stopped or be forced to take a detour due to hostilities. Despite the daily threat of violence Colleen also describes feeling safe because neighbors knew each other. If something like a bombing occurred while her parents were not home, she could go to a neighbor's house for safety. Her primary and secondary schools were all female, Catholic schools in her local community. Colleen has a documented learning disability for which she received the educational support. She had to travel outside her community to attend the first integrated co-ed, Protestant-Catholic college. On the application forms she was expected to write

the English name for her city Londonderry she refused to do so, this act of defiance in addition to her surname identified her as a Catholic. The faculty were all Protestant as she says in the above quote, Colleen experienced was religiously based discrimination. She also felt that she might have allowed her pride to impede her success, "maybe it was a pride thing, I didn't want to let them know that I was dyslexic..." so no accommodations were made. Despite her negative experiences Colleen describes Derry as a great city. At the time of the interview, she was planning to travel with her family to Derry to introduce her children to her hometown and Irish culture. Colleen wanted her children to experience the festive meals her extended family made together to celebrate the holidays and listen to the traditional music. These family orientated experiences help create Colleen's sense of Irish identity that she wants to pass onto her children. "I'm very excited, this year we're going to Ireland for a month, which is great. I think it's really important for them to see their culture and where your mother came from, know that you're Irish." For Colleen, the identification as Irish is related to familial connection. It is not just about knowing the words to traditional songs or geographical landmarks, but an awareness of history. The participants expressed a sense of shared identity was an important consideration in selecting a husband.

Both women are married, when they spoke about their husbands, they remarked how it helped to share important identity traits. Bea concealed her Hebrew school attendance because she wanted to blend in her local community. Bea does not mention any experience of prejudice however, while post-World War II America was attempting to become a more pluralistic country there was still an undercurrent of anti-Semitism (Wilson, 2011). Perhaps she concealed her Jewish identity in her community to avoid harassment. In college she discovered a larger Jewish community through her involvement in this community she met her husband.

> My husband's Jewish although he was never very religious. In fact, when we met, I was probably more religious than he was. But his families were Jewish and everything, but I always think it was really good having these two backgrounds and two cultures.

Colleen described it as a bit comical that she left Ireland a country filled with Irishmen, to come to America and marry an Irish American man.

> Well, I have to say, I met him my first summer when I came over here and, the joke is, I came the whole way from Ireland to be married to an Irish American. Because his last name is McHugh. He is third generation Irish and he's Catholic, which I think, you know, really helps too because you have the same values, and stuff, and he works in Worcester. He's a great husband and he's a wonderful father as well.

For Bea it was helpful that her husband was Jewish, so he understood the holiday traditions and importance. It might have helped that he was not 'very religious' so if she blended Irish customs into their lives that conflicted with orthodox Jewish teachings, he did not object. Colleen described her husband as sharing the same values as herself. Although he came from a much smaller family, so his experiences of family gatherings were different they shared the same basic principles. Finding the sense of connection with others also helped the women find a sense of belonging.

BELONGING

> "Even though we all have different personalities, we may not like each other sometimes, but as long as you respect each other. And I think that's what makes it work, having respect and I think everyone knows that people are going through their own stuff." (Colleen, 2016)

> "We lived in town where everybody sort of had a similar background and both of my parents were from other countries, both of them had accents. It was difficult. We were also Jewish." (Bea, 2019)

Both women described how family and a supportive community helped to build the sense of belonging. As Bea mentioned in the quote above, she was aware of how different her family was from those around them. She also describes how being a small unit of unique individuals was hard as a child. Despite the disruption to family sleeping arrangements, she appreciated her growing family. "So, we did have eventually a large family. When I was younger before they came, we had no family other than my parents which was difficult." Growing up surrounded by her Irish diaspora she seems to have less need to return to Belfast. She visited Belfast for the first time since leaving a few years before the interview. "I'd been to Dublin and the rest of Ireland but never gone to the north partly because of the Troubles." The conflict was only part of her hesitation or lack of interest. Meanwhile, denial of her German history, "I grew up in a family where Germany was, it was a bad word." And discovering her grandmother's letters appears to have sparked more of an interest in visiting Germany and discovering her paternal story.

When Bea spoke about her father, she talked about how he had suffered and had limited opportunities. She is clearly proud of her father's accomplishments. Aside from his time in the military her father worked for a men's clothing factory since high school when the owner decided to retire, and the local business community offered him assistance in buying the factory. To help finance the sale her parents took a chance by mortgaged their home, they were around 50 years old at the time. Bea was impressed that her parents would take a financial risk in their middle years. The fact the local businessmen would assist her father in buying the factory was a

sign that he was accepted and respected in the business community. For Colleen, the lack of family surrounding her also made finding a sense of belonging in America difficult. Colleen is the only member of her extended family living outside of Northern Ireland. The loss of a large family surrounding her made the transition to life in America difficult.

> Christmastime was really really—the first couple Christmases were really hard. Because Sean, he just has his father and that's it. So, you go from Christmastime in a house full of people and all your aunts and your uncles, your cousins, the neighbors. Like we used to have one neighbor who used to make the sherry trifle, another one made the Christmas cake for us. So, it was like a big party, the door was always open.

Because she and her family, along with more recent emigrants, have embraced the use of smart phones she can have face to face conversations with her mother and siblings in Ireland (Ryan, 2015). While she enjoys listening to her mother and sister discuss their recent shopping adventure, she regrets not being physically present.

> I wish my family was here. That's the one thing I do miss. Its great having FaceTime and all that but you look and you're like—you know you see your sister's there with your mother and, "Oh we just went shopping," and all the stuff that a mother and daughter should be doing together.

As mentioned earlier part of the transformation in the social standing of the Irish immigrant population has been the active engagement in politics by the diaspora. The election of the first Irish mayors of New York City and Boston, coupled with the arrival of emigrants from China, Eastern and Southern Europe. Helped the Irish Catholic community to rise in stature above other immigrant populations (Klein, 2019). As mentioned earlier both women have

engaged in local politics. Given her prior history of discrimination Colleen was grateful for the opportunity to express her voice.

> Well, I do believe in voting, I hate to keep going back to Ireland, but Catholics were only allowed to vote in the 1970s. So, I think – and I encourage the women here to vote – your voice has to be heard, let people know, and make sure we're going in the right direction. I'll watch the city council, I vote, everything, (Colleen, 2016)

Worcester has offered a place to belong and have your voice heard. It has allowed them to continue to learn and grow. Colleen's work listened to what she needed and created a situation that allows her to parent and work. Despite missing her family, Worcester is Colleen's permanent home. This is in keeping with Trew's (2010) findings that emigrants often find it difficult to return home even if the situation has improved.

Trew (2010) interviewed Northern Irish emigrants some of whom returned post the peace accords and some who remained outside of Northern Ireland. Trew's Catholic participants described their feelings of separation from the Catholics in the Republic of Ireland, whom they described as materialistic and unaware of the situation in Northern Ireland. One Northern Irish Protestant emigrant in the study talked about forming good relationships with hardline pro-Irish Republican Army (IRA) Northern Irish Catholic co-workers in Canada. It was as if leaving the disputed territory allowed them to see the other as a person instead of a label. For emigrants who left before the peace accords were signed Northern Ireland remained a volatile country that was difficult to tolerate for short periods of time. One woman interviewed discussed having a panic attack thinking about past bombing, when a motorist parked her car in front of the café where she was sitting (Trew, 2010). Neither of the participants in the WWOHP mentioned a sense of otherness from the Irish community in the U.S. nor did they express a sense of unease in visiting

Northern Ireland. Colleen did express that she could not understand materialism, but this was discussed primarily about her initial employers in the U.S. When Colleen was interviewed in 2016, she planned to visit her family in Northern Ireland with her two children, it would be their first trip back in three years. Bea was interviewed in 2019 she had visited the Republic of Ireland prior to the peace accords and Northern Ireland after peace was established. Bea described both trips as wonderful. When asked if she would return to Ireland, she expressed a stronger desire to visit Germany to uncover what she could about her lost family history. In their working careers Bea and Colleen were drawn to careers in service to others.

Purpose and Value

> "Because with social services you make no money, but as I say, at the end of the day, who I look up to, I look up to my mother, the strong women at Abby's House, and if I can be half the woman, they are, I've done my job in life." (Colleen, 2016)

> "My father always said, "The only purpose in life was to make a change, and that hopefully the world would be better a little better in some way with you being there." (Bea, 2019)

Bea and Colleen choose careers with low financial rewards, but they appear to receive many rewards from their work and family life (Cassar &Meier, 2018). As mentioned earlier in 1996 congress passed legislation that has resulted in increased use of detention centers, barriers to asylum, and concern by the international community about commitment to humanitarian assistance. Colleen described how another piece of legislation passed in 1996 also focused on placing increased responsibility on the disadvantaged individual and created obstacles in her work. "We do make them apply for subsidized housing when they first come here, so when that does come in—which can take up to five to ten years—there is 16,000 women on the waiting list

for subsidized housing." In addition to the long wait for subsidized housing the women in the shelter have limited financial means, "a lot of women who are on SSDI [Social Security Disability Insurance] there's one person who only gets five hundred and thirty-eight dollars….. So, the person with five hundred, it's hard. And the food stamps are being cut and cut." Reform of the welfare system in 1996 has resulted in less direct financial assistance to families and over time fewer families receiving aid (Liebertz & Bunch, 2018). And prevents immigrants from receiving assistance for five years and gives states the right to extend this period (Kaushal, 2019). The American lack of commitment to helping the disadvantaged appears to be an internal as well as an external problem. Fortunately, there are people like Bea and Colleen who have devoted their lives to helping others.

Both thought the WWOHP was an excellent resource to educate the public on the contributions of women and to provide young women with role models. Bea reflected on the status of women in America. "There are more opportunities. There are still obstacles. There are still things that make it more difficult for women, and it's not a level playing field at all, I know that, but you do have more opportunities. (Bea, 2019)"

Bea described her gratitude to the American family that cared for her father as a motivator to adopt a child from Vietnam during the Vietnam war. She had the desire to rescue a child the way someone rescued her father.

> Part of it was during the Vietnam War we were seeing on TV every night about these things that were happening to the kids over there and I had two very healthy kids here and I had to say I felt a little guilty about it.

Colleen felt that her Catholic upbringing helps to guide her today. She emphasizes throughout her interview that material possessions are not important; it is family and community

connections that sustain her. When she is also asked what advice, she would give young women Colleen seems to be giving a similar message to Bea.

> Women of today? To believe in themselves. Don't carry pride with you. I think that's a lot of barriers with women here is the pride and the shame when their life doesn't go the way they want. But I say sometimes God puts you down this path to make you stronger. You know, to be able to focus on yourself, a new beginning for you. And to take chances knowing that you have the support behind you. Because we can only learn from our mistakes. You know what I mean? So, and just tell them to follow their gut, you know? And just to believe in themselves.

There is limited literature how individual experiences of war impact the family, but research indicates that social service interventions should be family focused (Devon & Shevell, 2019). Neither woman described receiving any form of social service interventions because of their personal and/or family exposure to war. While each described successful people as high earners or having a great deal of ambition, when they described themselves, they said, 'I am not successful.' They each have devoted themselves to helping others and training their children to be caring members of the community. Among the communities they have served are female survivors of domestic abuse and transnational human trafficking.

Bea and Colleen stated that people believe they know the sort of woman who would find herself in an abusive relationship or homeless, but from working the field they have learned these preconceived ideas are wrong. Bea described having conversations with two different women within days of each other and learning how close domestic violence had impacted people in her social circle. This prompted her to start working as a victim advocate.

> "I saw this article about this women's center that worked with victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, and I thought that that's something I want to find out more about, and that's how I got involved, and I learned so much and I met so many wonderful women over the years."

Colleen emphasized how the women at her work helped her to grow, "for me, they've been great mentors. Because they've taught you not to judge or anything like that", while also acknowledging that she is fortunate to have a supportive work environment. "These women are absolutely amazing people. And people say, "What do you like about your work?" and I say well where can you go and get nurtured every day?" I would like to discuss the overall experiences discussed by Colleen and Bea and how they relate to immigrants generally.

DISCUSSION

Bea and Colleen represent two different Irish emigrant diasporas. The post war cohort and the 1980s cohorts have certain differences in terms of the level of development, poverty, inequality, and violence they experienced in Ireland. Individually the women were in different stages of human development when they left Ulster. Bea was only an infant and Colleen was a young adult. What they share is leaving a country with little economic opportunity and the ability to emigrate to America because they fit a particular immigrant category. Bea's father was able to bring his wife and child on a war bride visa, while Colleen was able to travel on a nanny visa through an agency. Each spoke about how not family having close to them made it harder to find a sense of belonging in the United States. What is also important is what they did not say. As Buccitelli's Chinese immigrant mother realized her daughters did not understand her struggle because she had only shared the facts, not her full narrative. Bea and Colleen shared the facts, the positive messages, but the only hint at the possible negatives. Bea mentioned that it was hard

when her family was first living in her Philadelphia suburb. She shared that being the only Jewish family was a contributing factor. Wilson (2011) discussed how post-world war II America was attempting to be an inclusive society, cultural icon Jack Benny acted as an ambassador to the world. However, well-intentioned efforts were made to include a diverse ethnic array of immigrants. There are still American laws and systems that excluded certain groups from fully participating in society remained (Hswen, 2020). And while there has been progress research conducted during the global pandemic finds that including recent immigrants still feel a sense of exclusion (Institute for Policy Studies, 2020). Additionally, Colleen's original employers were able to demand she work an excessive number of hours, because there were no systems in place to protect domestic workers. Research conducted over twenty years later found that domestic workers are still being exploited (NDWA & Chicago U, 2011). Colleen and Bea are among the many women who are helping to keep dysfunctional systems operational (Chant, 2020). Each had joked their husbands wished she were more career oriented, but they were the one who had to figure out how to work and attend the school play at 3 pm. Professionally they have worked with women who have been the victims of violence navigate systems designed to protect the rights of the accused, creatively sought ways to help women with limited financial resources gain independence and contributed to their communities. They talked about how there is no one face of domestic violence, homelessness, and poverty there is no one face of women in migration. The women in this narrative recognized that there were struggles they had to overcome as immigrants, but that they also benefited from the decision to migrate.

As part of belonging in their home they have worked to help improve the lives of those around them. The narrative of the helpful everyday immigrant seldom receives the attention it deserves.

CONCLUSION

When immigration is discussed in the media either by pundits or politicians there are some main talking points (Kakenmaster, 2016). One thing that is frequently mentioned is the need to create criteria so the country will attract 'the right kind of immigrants.' The implication is the *right immigrants* will lead to innovation and job creation, while the *wrong immigrants* will lead to unemployment and falling wages for native born workers. In terms of innovation immigrants do perform higher than native born citizens in terms of patents and entrepreneurship. Since 1990 sixty-five percent of Nobel Prizes were awarded to researchers associated with American universities and institutions, however more than 50% of the recipients were emigrants (Kaushal, 2019). Immigrant entrepreneurs improved urban environments by establishing businesses that address deficiencies in the market the native population was not aware existed such as African hair salons, or Indian groceries. These businesses benefit the community while generating income in the local community (Kaushal, 2019). In terms of wages natural experiments such as a large wave of Cuban refugees arriving in Florida in 1980, Russian Jews emigrating to Israel (1989 -1994) or formerly East German citizens migrating to West Germany (1989 – 2005) have shown that there is a small decrease in wages at the start of the wave, but this corrects itself within five years. The workers most vulnerable to the decrease in wages were undereducated males. Data from Florida found that wages for local women increased (Kaushal, 2019). When economic arguments fail to convince the population that migration is a threat that opponents to migration argue emigrants threaten the national character.

The need for national unity and protecting the social fabric of society has been used as justification to reject immigrants. In the 19th century Irish famine refugees were rejected because they were poor and Catholic (Klein, 2019). In the 21st century the cycle of fear and rejection

continues with different ethnicities and religions. Emigrants are othered and feared due to their differences, this creates a barrier to obtaining work and acculturation (Kakenmaster, 2016). Work is one of the greatest tools to help immigrants learn about their host country and become American (Kaushal, 2019, Waldinger, 2007). However, many emigrants end up working in ethnic vocational niches such as agricultural labor, domestic workers, or taxi drivers because that is where they can find opportunity (Eickstein & Peri, 2018). If policy makers were truly concerned about integrating immigrants into society, they would develop policies help facilitate their participation in the primary workforce rather than ethnic niches. When the social fabric argument fails another tool to discourage migration is the need for security.

Data shows that poor governance, lack of economic opportunity and state sponsored terror have led to terrorism, not migration. Between 1989 and 2014 93% of all terrorist attacks occurred in countries with high levels of state sponsored terror, including extrajudicial death, imprisonment without trial, and torture. Longitudinal data has demonstrated that immigration was associated with decreased property damage and violent crime. One half of 1% of terror attacks occurred in countries that did not have state sponsored terror or conflict. These countries struggled with issues of governance and youth opportunities (Kaushal, 2019). Despite the data demonstrating that immigration does not contribute to violent crime or terrorism and that restrictive immigration policies do not increase security, the belief that restrictive immigration policies are necessary to maintain national security continues (Choi, 2018).

The women in this study were fortunate in that at the time of emigration they could travel under special designations. As Irish immigrants living in America, they provide the human face to the statistics. They have contributed to the labor force and volunteered in their children's schools. The elder of the two women had her entire family eventually emigrate to America all of

whom started their own businesses, going back to the point emigrants have higher levels of entrepreneurship than native born citizens. Nations resist migration not out of an abundance of caution for safety, but out of an awareness that the concept nation state is relatively new. The native-born person is rooted in the soil of this land while the emigrant is without roots in this land (Malkki, 1992). While the migrant is judged for being rootless, they are not allowed to fully root in the soil. In 2017, the U.S. Supreme Court narrowed the grounds that the government could use, while upholding the government's ability to revoke the citizenship of naturalized citizens (de Vogue & Diaz, 2017). It is unfortunate that migration is often seen as a problem or a crisis, instead of as a part of globalization. Barriers such as restricting the number of people from a country that can come to the United States or only allowing university educated emigrants limits the capacity for growth in the host country. If these were the requirements in place at the time, they emigrated neither of the participants would have been denied entry. One thing everyone on all sides of the immigration debate agree that the American immigration system needs reform. Policy reform should be made thru the lens of narrative to understand how it will impact the diverse group of people in movement.

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