Technical information

Life Histories and Social Change

The *Life Histories and Social Change* (LHSC) project was a three-year project that was co-directed by Professor Seán Ó Riain and Dr Jane Gray of the Department of Sociology at NUI Maynooth. The senior research associates on the project were Dr Aileen O'Carroll and Dr James Monagle. The project was based in the Department of Sociology and at the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) at Maynooth University. The project received funding from the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences in 2005. The research team carried out detailed life story interviews with respondents who had participated in the Living in Ireland Survey, carried out by the Irish Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), as part of the European Community Household Panel survey between 1994 and 2001. With the assistance of the ESRI, respondents from three birth cohorts within the national sample were invited to opt in to the LHSC study.

Interviews were conducted in 2007 and 2008. In the years following data collection, the life story interviews were archived at the Irish Qualitative Data Archive at Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland (www.iqda.ie) and made available to bona fide researchers through application to the IQDA. The complete LHSC project database comprises 113 life story interviews, life history calendars, and simple retrospective social network schedules. The archival collection comprises 100 life story interviews – the remainder of the material was judged by the research team unsuitable for archiving (most often because the material was too sensitive) or was withheld from archiving by the interviewee. In 2015/2016 the IQDA will make available the collection of 100 interviews, plus a collection of audio files from these interviews through the Digital Repository of Ireland (www.dri.ie) as part of a demonstrator project entitled *Irish Lifetimes*, funded through the Irish Government Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions, Wave 5. Ruth Geraghty is leading the project to develop *Irish Lifetimes* at Maynooth University.

LHSC respondents were interviewed from within three birth cohorts of people who participated in the *Living in Ireland* study in each year from 1994 to 2001, as follows: Cohort 1 were born before 1935; Cohort 2 were born 1945–1954; Cohort 3 were born 1965–1974. The objective of the research was to obtain in-depth information of how, in the course of their lives, individual Irish people experienced and shaped social change in the twentieth century. The interviews gathered in this research became part of a significant database available to researchers interested in all aspects of how Irish society has changed. More information on the *Life Histories and Social Change* project is available at: www.iqda.ie.¹

Growing Up in Ireland

Growing Up in Ireland: The National Longitudinal Study of Children was launched in 2006 and is being carried out by a consortium of researchers led by the ESRI and Trinity College Dublin. The principal investigator is Professor James Williams, Research Professor at the ESRI. The study is funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, in association with the Department of Social Protection and the Central Statistics Office. The main aim of the study is to describe the lives of two representative samples of children in Ireland and how they are developing in the current social, economic and cultural environment. The project involves studying two main cohorts of children longitudinally with a view to improving our understanding of their development across a range of domains. In this book data from the nine-year-old ‘child cohort’ are presented.

A total of 120 families from the nine-year cohort participated in the first wave of data-collection for the qualitative study between April and August 2008. During the quantitative study, the families were invited to sign a consent form to have their names put forward for selection into the qualitative sample. Almost two-thirds (65.9 per cent) of the families forming the nine-year-old cohort (8,500 in total) gave their consent to be put forward for selection. Of these families, 120 families participated in the qualitative study. Two of these families included nine-year-old twin siblings, both of whom were interviewed, bringing the total number of child respondents to 122. The qualitative interviews took place in the children’s homes within six months of the quantitative study. The children were aged between nine and ten when they were interviewed.

The qualitative sample was purposive and stratified according to socioeconomic status (high, medium, and low income), urban/rural location, and

1 Source: Life History and Social Change Project User Guide to Archived Files (2012). Available at: <http://na-srv-1.dv.nuim.ie/iqda/archive/eserv/iqda:10028/LifeHistoryUserGuideV2.pdf>. Accessed 30 March 2015.

family type (one or two resident parents). The largest category of children in the sample (17.2 per cent) corresponded to a two-parent family with high income in a rural area. A total of fifty-eight girls and sixty-four boys participated in the study. The qualitative sample included children from families with two resident parents (70.5 per cent) and one resident parent (29.5 per cent). Children from twenty-one of the twenty-six counties in the Republic of Ireland were represented, sixty-seven of whom were living in rural areas and fifty-five in urban areas. The areas explored in the qualitative study map onto the domains of the main quantitative study to provide a deeper understanding of the children's experiences of being nine years old in Ireland, and their parents' experiences of their parenting role. There were separate schedules for the child and the parents, each consisting of specific questions addressing the domains to be explored and probing questions which were used where appropriate to explore responses in more depth.²

Following data collection and analysis the qualitative collection were archived at the Irish Qualitative Data Archive at Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland (www.iqda.ie) and made available to bona fide researchers through application to the IQDA. The archival collection comprises all 120 family interviews, including interview transcripts, drawings and written materials from each child interview, transcripts from each parent interview, and interviewer field notes. More information on *Growing Up in Ireland* is available at: www.growingup.ie.

2 Source: Growing Up in Ireland: National Longitudinal Study of Children. Child Cohort – Qualitative Study. Technical Report on the 9-Year Qualitative Study. Technical Report Number 1. (2011). Available at: http://growingup.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/Qual_Docs_Child_Cohort/Growing_Up_in_Ireland_-_Technical_Report_on_the_9-Year_Qualitative_Study.pdf. Accessed 30 March 2015.