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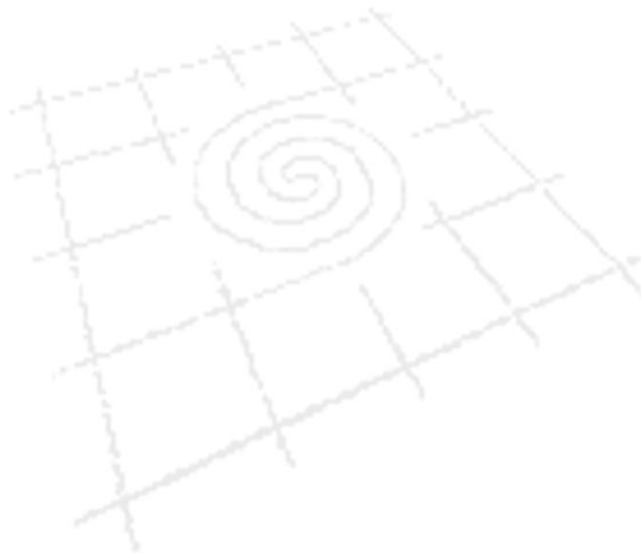
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# The changing landscape of Irish migration, 2000-2012

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**Abstract**

At the start of the twenty-first century there have been significant changes in patterns of migration to and from Ireland. This paper provides a comprehensive account of available statistics on these migration patterns, and assesses the quality of this information, highlighting issues with the measurement of migrant flow in particular. The paper also provides information on migrant stock in Ireland, drawing on detailed information from the 2002, 2006 and 2011 Censuses.

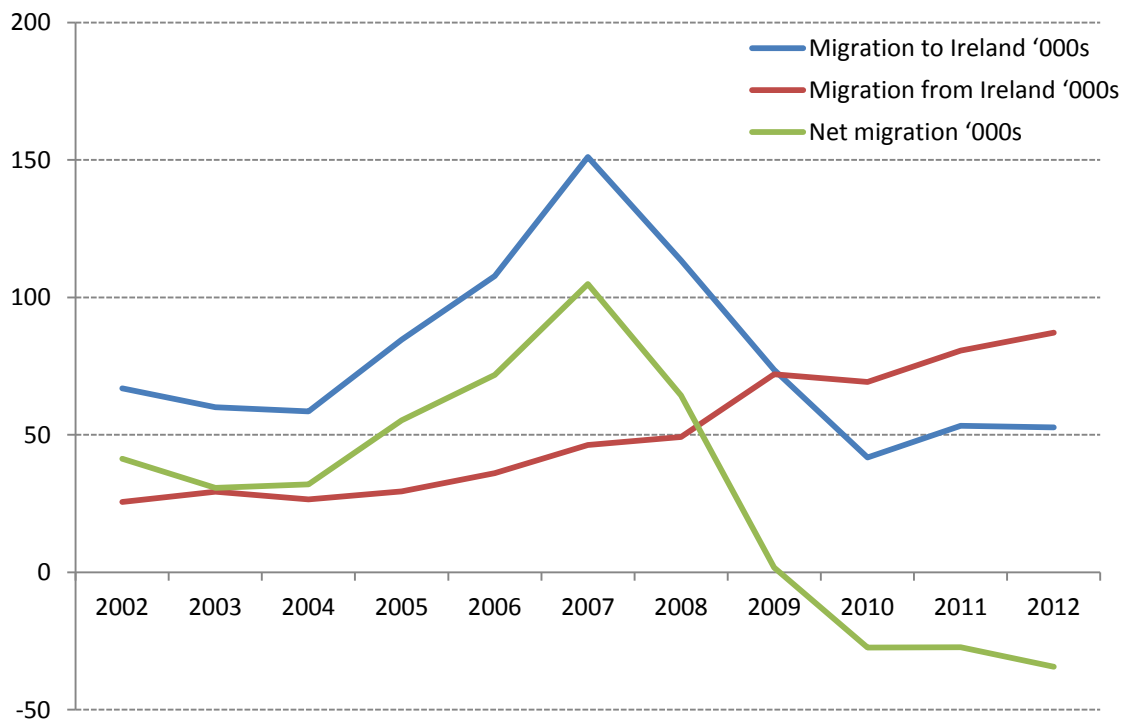
**Keywords:** Ireland, migration, immigration, emigration

## Introduction: the changing landscape of Irish migration

In Ireland today, migration ‘is one of the *the* topics under discussion’ (Gilmartin and White 2008, p.143). Though written in 2008, the statement remains true four years later. However, the way in which migration is being discussed has changed, fundamentally, in a very short period. In 2008, the emphasis was on migration to Ireland. The potent combination of economic growth, a property bubble, and a more relaxed immigration regime had led to a rapid increase in the numbers of migrants moving to Ireland. Since then, patterns of international migration have changed again, and Ireland is once more a country of net emigration. As a consequence, the topic of migration from Ireland receives significantly more attention in public discussions and discourses about people and mobility in the context of the ongoing recession.

Migration to and from Ireland, in the period from 2002 to 2012, is shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Migration to and from Ireland, 2002-2012**



Source: CSO 2012c, p.2 (Table 1)

Migration from Ireland has certainly increased significantly in recent years: the figure for 2012 represents over a 240% increase from the low of 2002, when less than 26,000 migrated. In contrast, the levels of migration to Ireland have decreased significantly: in 2010, this figure was at its lowest level since 1994, when around 30,100 people moved to the country. However, the focus on changes between years hides broader patterns of mobility. In the 11 year period shown in Table 1, over 860,000 people moved to Ireland, while over 550,000 people left Ireland. The net figure for in-migration is thus just over 310,000: averaged out over the 11 year period, this equates to around 28,400 more people moving to than leaving Ireland on an annual basis. Figure 1 is thus important for showing the concurrent movement of people both in and out of Ireland over an extended period. In this working paper, I look at these movements of people in more detail, focusing first on migration to Ireland, and next on migration from Ireland, in the period from 2002 to 2012.

### **Migration to Ireland<sup>1</sup>**

1996 marked the first year of a sustained period of net in-migration to Ireland, which lasted until 2009. Yet, despite the widespread belief that Ireland had become a nation of immigrants, it is a challenge to show this clearly. Charting the exact scale and form of net in-migration is difficult, since the Irish state does not keep comprehensive records of migration to the country. As a result, information about migration to Ireland relies on a range of sources, some of which are more comprehensive and more reliable than others.

The benchmark for understanding migration to Ireland is the Census of Population, which is generally held every five years. In the Census, three questions are of particular importance. The first is place of birth; the second is nationality; and the third is information about periods of time spent living outside Ireland. Nationality provides the best insight into individual identity, in that it marks the both the ways in which people identify attachment and identity, as well as the terms under which people living in Ireland

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<sup>1</sup> A note on terminology. Until 2004, EU referred to the 15 member states: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Portugal, UK. From 1 May 2004, the EU also includes the next 10 states to join: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia. From 1 January 2007, the EU also includes Bulgaria and Romania. From 1 May 2004, EU-15 is used to identify the original 15 member states, and EU-10 or EU-12 to identify the new member states.

can participate in Irish society. However, the three other questions all highlight different forms of migration, such as recent or longer-term, new or return.

The last three Censuses (2002, 2006 and 2011) provide important snapshots of the migration experience of residents of Ireland at the time the Census was taken. Table 1 provides information on place of birth, broadly categorized.

**Table 1: Population of Ireland, by place of birth**

<b>Place of birth</b>	<b>2002 (%)</b>	<b>2006 (%)</b>	<b>2011 (%)</b>
Republic of Ireland (RoI)	89.6	85.3	83.0
Northern Ireland	1.3	1.2	1.3
Britain	5.1	5.3	5.0
Rest of EU	0.9	4	5.9
Other European countries	0.7	0.7	0.7
USA	0.6	0.6	0.6
Africa	0.7	1	1.2
Asia	0.7	1.3	1.7
Elsewhere	0.4	0.6	0.6
<b>Total Population (millions)</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>4.17</b>	<b>4.53</b>

*Sources: CSO 2003, pp.104-5 (Table 29); CSO 2007, pp.104-5 (Table 28A); CSO 2012a (Theme 2 Table 1)*

Percentage figures show a consistent fall in the proportion of people born in and living in Ireland, as well as increases in the proportion of people born in the rest of the EU (excluding the UK), Asia and Africa. Despite the apparent decrease in the Irish-born population, the actual number of people born in and living in Ireland has increased across the 9 years. By 2011, over 770,000 people living in Ireland were born outside the country.

The Census asks people to self-record nationality, and aggregated responses to this question are shown in Table 2. In general, discussions of migration to Ireland tend to focus on nationality or place of birth as key markers. However, perhaps the best indication of migration comes from responses to a question about time spent outside Ireland (see Table 3). The question asks if a person has lived outside the Republic of Ireland for a continuous period of one year or more, and asks for information about year of migration and most recent place of residence. Working with an understanding of migration that is time-limited – in other words, living outside Ireland for less than a year

does not mark someone as a migrant – this provides a better sense of migration patterns over a longer period. The percentage of people who have lived outside Ireland has increased over the period, from 16.9% in 2002 to 19.4% in 2011.

**Table 2: Population of Ireland, by nationality**

<b>Place of birth</b>	<b>2002 (%)</b>	<b>2006 (%)</b>	<b>2011 (%)</b>
Irish	92.9	88.8	86.8
UK	2.7	2.7	2.5
Rest of EU	0.8	3.9	6.1
Other European	0.6	0.6	0.4
USA	0.3	0.3	0.2
African	0.5	0.8	0.9
Asian	0.6	1.1	1.4
Other	0.4	0.6	0.5
Not stated	1.3	1.1	1.2
<b>Total Population (millions)</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>4.17</b>	<b>4.53</b>

*Sources: CSO 2003, pp.136-7 (Table 36A); CSO 2007, pp.136-7 (Table 35A); CSO 2012a (Theme 2 Table 2)*

**Table 3: People who have lived outside Ireland for at least one year, by most recent place of residence**

<b>Place of residence</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>
UK	375,178	377,685	393,079
Other EU countries	51,752	139,151	205,506
USA	58,682	65,406	70,559
Elsewhere	158,832	196,335	223,226
<b>Total</b>	<b>644,444</b>	<b>778,577</b>	<b>892,370</b>
<b>% of total population</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>18.9</b>	<b>19.4</b>

*Sources: CSO 2003, p.92 (Table 24A); CSO 2007, p.91 (Table 23A); CSO 2012b, p.87 (Table 21)*

Taken together, these three measures provide a good snapshot of migrants living in Ireland at the times when the Census was taken. This is often referred to as ‘migrant stock’: people who have changed their country of residence at any point during their lives. However, people who return to their country of origin after a period living elsewhere are often not considered migrants in that country. So, while over 890,000 people living in Ireland in 2011 have lived in a country other than Ireland for at least a

year, many are Irish nationals who have returned to Ireland after a period abroad. The figures for time abroad, place of birth and nationality show this distinction clearly (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Indicators of migrant stock**

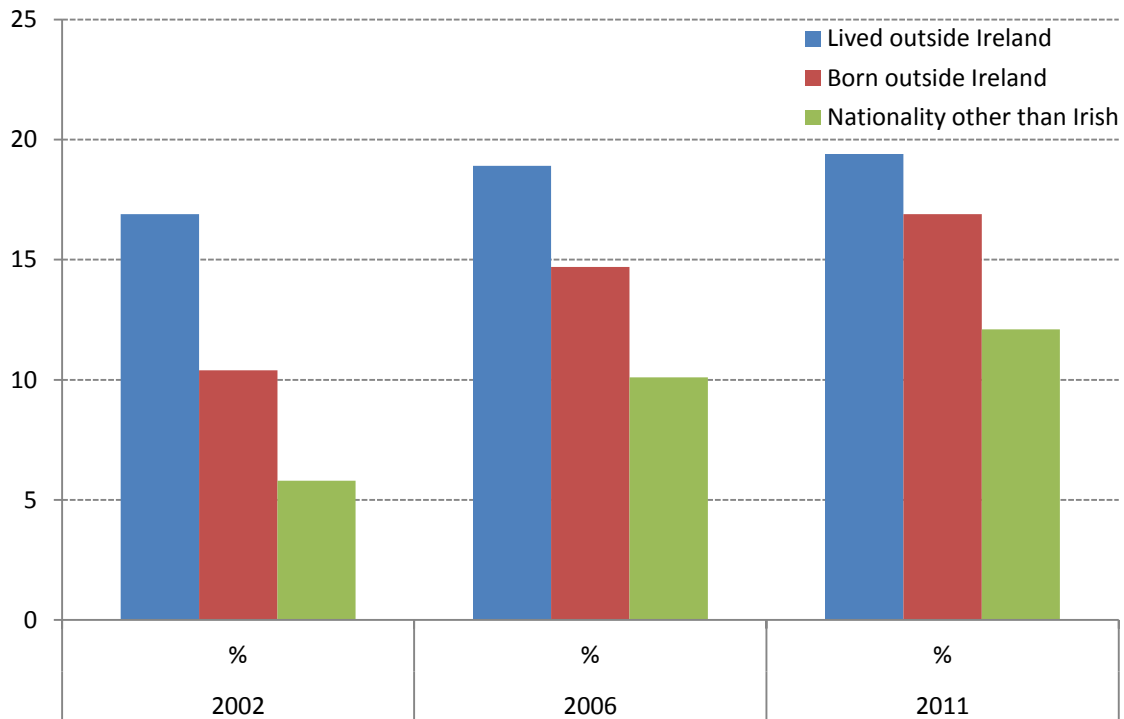


Figure 2 shows the difficulties with categorising people as migrants. For each of the three Censuses, the percentage of people who have lived outside Ireland is higher than both other measures. This is because the figure captures both immigrants to Ireland, as well as returning emigrants. However, from the perspective of the Irish state, the concern is with immigrants: with people from other countries who have moved to live in Ireland. In this instance, nationality is a more accurate guide. However, people who have moved to Ireland may well have assumed Irish nationality, so this figure could include immigrants from elsewhere. While being born outside Ireland is a clear indicator of immigration, it is not necessarily an indicator of nationality, since a significant number of people born outside Ireland self-identify as Irish. So, while close to 20% of the resident population of

Ireland in April 2011 is migrant stock, the proportion of immigrants in this figure is unclear.

The second important set of sources in relation to migration refers to migrant flow. Migrant flow is understood as the movement of people into and out of a country: this general information for Ireland is shown in Figure 1. People move to Ireland under a variety of schemes. A significant majority of migrants are EU/EEA nationals, and are free to move to, live in and work in Ireland. These migrants need no special permission, and are not required to register with Irish authorities, unlike in other European countries. For people who do not have EU or EEA nationality, options for moving to Ireland are much more restrictive. The main entry routes are through work and study. Other routes include the asylum system, or through marriage, civil partnership or close family relationship. Since no records of entry and exit of EU nationals are retained by the Irish state, the estimation of migrant flows uses a range of indicators. The most recent Census provides the base population profile, and this is supplemented by results from the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS), as well as information on work permits, PPS numbers and applications for asylum. Of the additional sources of information, just one – PPS numbers – covers EU nationals, even though EU nationals make up a significant majority of migrants to Ireland. Information on migrant flow by nationality, is provided in Table 4, which shows that around 80% of migrants to Ireland, each year, have EU nationality.

**Table 4: Migration to Ireland by nationality, 2006-2012 ('000s)**

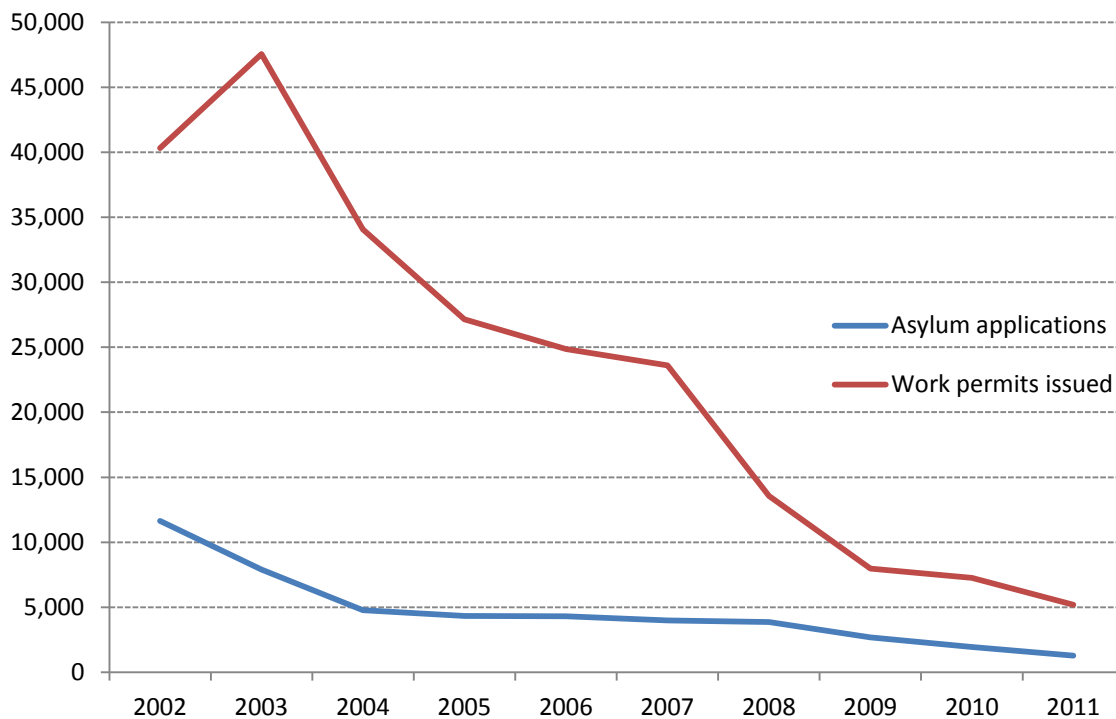
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
Irish	18.9	30.7	23.8	23.0	17.9	19.6	20.6
<i>(% of total migration)</i>	<i>17.5</i>	<i>20.3</i>	<i>21.0</i>	<i>31.3</i>	<i>42.7</i>	<i>36.8</i>	<i>39.0</i>
UK	9.9	4.3	6.8	3.9	2.5	4.1	2.2
<i>(% of total migration)</i>	<i>9.2</i>	<i>2.8</i>	<i>6.0</i>	<i>5.3</i>	<i>6.0</i>	<i>7.7</i>	<i>4.2</i>
Rest of EU-15	12.7	11.8	9.6	11.5	6.2	7.1	7.2
<i>(% of total migration)</i>	<i>11.8</i>	<i>7.8</i>	<i>8.5</i>	<i>15.6</i>	<i>14.8</i>	<i>13.3</i>	<i>13.6</i>
EU-12	49.9	85.3	54.7	21.1	9.3	10.1	10.4
<i>(% of total migration)</i>	<i>46.3</i>	<i>56.5</i>	<i>48.2</i>	<i>28.7</i>	<i>22.2</i>	<i>18.9</i>	<i>19.7</i>
Rest of world	16.4	19.0	18.6	14.1	6.0	12.4	12.4
<i>(% of total migration)</i>	<i>15.2</i>	<i>12.6</i>	<i>16.4</i>	<i>19.2</i>	<i>14.3</i>	<i>23.3</i>	<i>23.5</i>
Total	107.8	151.1	113.5	73.6	41.9	53.3	52.8

*Source: CSO 2012c (Table 2)*



In contrast to the lack of corroborating sources of information on intra-EU migrants, migrants from outside the EU are carefully monitored. The most comprehensive statistics relate to asylum seekers, followed by data on work permits issued. Yet, asylum seekers make up a very small proportion of migrant flows. Figure 3 shows the number of asylum applications and the number of work permits issued on an annual basis between 2002 and 2011.

**Figure 3: Asylum applications and work permits issued, 2002-2011**

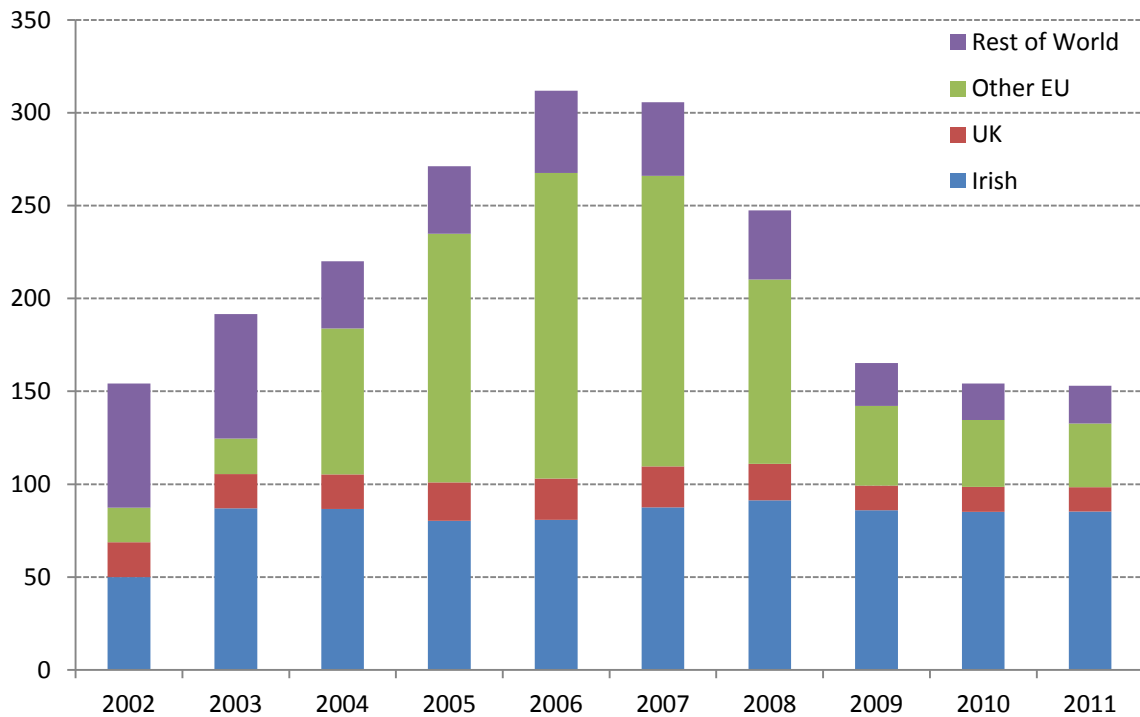


*Sources: ORAC 2012, p.65 (Table 15); Gilmartin 2008, p.241; Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation 2012.*

Yet these raw figures provide a misleading picture of migration flows. While asylum applicants live in Ireland as their application is being processed, a very small percentage – around 10 per cent – are granted asylum or leave to remain in Ireland in the longer term. In relation to work permits issued, many are renewals rather than new permits, so they relate to people already living in the country. These figures are perhaps more interesting for the insights they provide into the broader context for migration – specifically a drop in asylum applications across Europe, the impacts of EU enlargement

in 2004 on intra-EU migration patterns, and the rise in unemployment as a consequence of the recession in Ireland – rather than as an accurate measure of migration flows in their own right. In some instances, such as the case of student migration, information is limited. A recent audit of non-EEA students in Ireland, in March 2009, suggested that there were over 34,000 attending Irish higher and further education institutes and language schools, but this audit has not yet been repeated (Department of Justice and Equality 2009). One source of information that covers both EU and non-EU migrants is statistics on PPS numbers, which are allocated to Irish, EU and other nationals. The PPS number is used by state agencies for identification purposes, so it is needed, for example, to pay tax, avail of social welfare payments, or to use public health facilities. Figure 4 provides details of PPS numbers issued between 2002 and 2011.

**Figure 4: PPS numbers issued by nationality, 2002-2011 ('000s)**



*Source: Department of Social Protection 2012<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>2</sup> Data on PPS numbers is provided by nationality. From 2004 onwards, I have included nationals of EU-10 countries in the 'Other EU' category; from 2007 onwards, I have included nationals of Bulgaria and Romania in the 'Other EU' category.

It is not easily possible to use PPS numbers issued as a basis for credible statistics on about the number of people moving to Ireland. PPS numbers issued certainly illustrate changing patterns over time, and show the relative importance of migration to Ireland by particular nationalities, information which is corroborated by lists of migrant groups by nationalities (see Table 5). However, they do not indicate temporary or circular migration, or return migration, and they do not show if people remain resident in Ireland.

**Table 5: Top Ten National Groups in Ireland, 2002, 2006, 2011**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>
1	UK (101,257)	UK (112,548)	Poland (122,585)
2	USA (11,135)	Poland (63,276)	UK (112,259)
3	Nigeria (8,650)	Lithuania (24,628)	Lithuania (36,683)
4	Germany (7,033)	Nigeria (16,300)	Latvia (20,593)
5	France (6,231)	Latvia (13,319)	Nigeria (17,642)
6	China (5,766)	USA (12,475)	Romania (17,304)
7	Romania (4,910)	China (11,161)	India (16,986)
8	Spain (4,347)	Germany (10,289)	Philippines (12,791)
9	South Africa (4,113)	Philippines (9,548)	Germany (11,305)
10	Philippines (3,742)	France (9,064)	USA (11,015)

*Sources: CSO 2003, p.146 (Table 39A); CSO 2012b, p.89 (Table 23)*

Measures of migrant stock in Ireland are generally robust. The Census provides useful and detailed information about people who have lived outside Ireland, people who were born outside Ireland, and the self-identification of nationality. However, measures of migrant flows are patchy. Unlike many other countries, who record all arrivals and departures, figures for annual migration to Ireland are estimates, and are only corroborated when the next Census is taken. From 2012 to 2016, measures of migrant flows, generally issued in September for the year to the previous April, will be estimates.

### **Migration from Ireland**

Table 1 shows the significant increase in general levels of migration from Ireland: from just over 45,000 in 2008, prior to the bank bailout and the start of the economic crisis, to over 87,000 in 2012. In January 2011, the ESRI forecast that 100,000 people would leave Ireland in the two years to April 2012. Their predictions were translated into dramatic

headlines such as ‘1,000 a week forced to emigrate’ (Molloy and Sheehan 2011). However, such evocative headlines mask two key points about migration from Ireland. The first is the make up of migration flows out of the country. While headlines imply that all migrants are Irish nationals, this is not the case. Additionally, there are differences in the gender and age profiles of migrants from Ireland. The second is the extent to which migration from Ireland during the recession represents a new pattern of mobility. These two points are discussed in turn.

Details of migration from Ireland are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Migration from Ireland by nationality, 2006-2012 ('000s)**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Irish	15.3	12.9	13.1	19.2	28.9	42	46.5
<i>(% of total migration)</i>	<i>42.5</i>	<i>27.9</i>	<i>26.6</i>	<i>26.7</i>	<i>41.8</i>	<i>52.1</i>	<i>53.4</i>
UK	2.2	3.7	3.7	3.9	3.0	4.6	3.5
<i>(% of total migration)</i>	<i>6.1</i>	<i>8.0</i>	<i>7.5</i>	<i>5.4</i>	<i>4.3</i>	<i>5.7</i>	<i>4.0</i>
Rest of EU-15	5.1	8.9	6.0	7.4	9.0	10.2	11.2
<i>(% of total migration)</i>	<i>14.2</i>	<i>19.2</i>	<i>12.2</i>	<i>10.3</i>	<i>13.0</i>	<i>12.7</i>	<i>12.9</i>
EU-12	7.2	12.6	17.2	30.5	19	13.9	14.8
<i>(% of total migration)</i>	<i>20.0</i>	<i>27.2</i>	<i>35.0</i>	<i>42.4</i>	<i>27.5</i>	<i>17.2</i>	<i>17.0</i>
Rest of World	6.2	8.2	9.0	11.0	9.3	9.9	11.1
<i>(% of total migration)</i>	<i>17.2</i>	<i>17.7</i>	<i>18.3</i>	<i>15.3</i>	<i>13.4</i>	<i>12.3</i>	<i>12.7</i>
Total	36	46.3	49.2	72	69.2	80.6	87.1

*Source: CSO 2012c, Table 3*

While both the number and proportion of migrants with Irish nationality have increased each year since 2009, it is also worth noting changes in the migration patterns of other national groups. In particular, there was a sharp increase in the number of migrants with EU-12 nationality in 2009, but this fell again each year from 2010 to 2012. Over the seven year period shown here, between 55% and 70% of all migrants from Ireland each year had either an Irish or an EU-12 nationality.

Changes in the gender and age profiles of migrants from Ireland tell another story about recent migration from the country. Table 7 provides an overview, showing the predominance of migrants aged between 15 and 44 in all years.

**Table 7: Migration from Ireland by gender and age, 2006-2012 ('000s)**

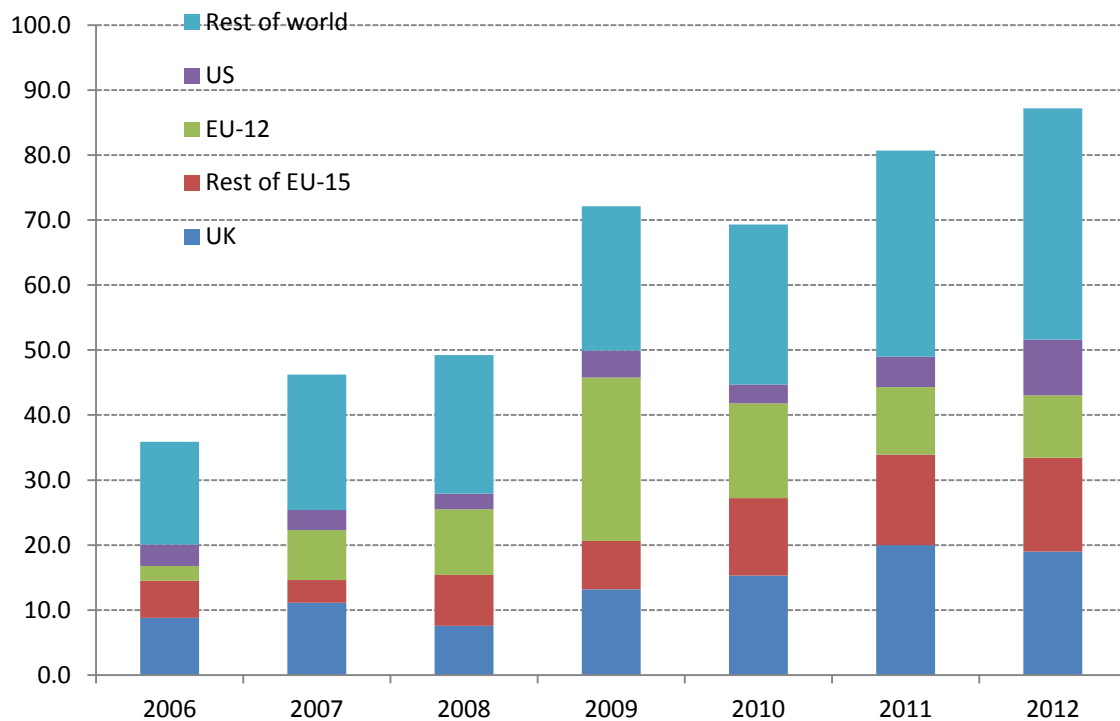
		0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total
2006	Male	1.1	8	7.6	1.2	0.8	18.7
	Female	1.1	7.9	6.5	0.9	0.9	17.3
	<i>% of total annual migration</i>	<i>6.1</i>	<i>44.2</i>	<i>39.2</i>	<i>5.8</i>	<i>4.7</i>	
2007	Male	0.6	8.9	12.8	2	1.5	25.8
	Female	0.8	9.3	8.4	1.1	1.0	20.6
	<i>% of total annual migration</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>39.2</i>	<i>45.7</i>	<i>6.7</i>	<i>5.4</i>	
2008	Male	0.8	9.7	14.9	2.2	2.0	29.6
	Female	0.8	8.1	9.1	0.6	1.0	19.6
	<i>% of total annual migration</i>	<i>3.3</i>	<i>36.2</i>	<i>48.8</i>	<i>5.7</i>	<i>6.1</i>	
2009	Male	1.1	17.1	22	1.2	0.4	41.8
	Female	1.3	10.8	15.5	1.8	0.8	30.2
	<i>% of total annual migration</i>	<i>3.3</i>	<i>38.8</i>	<i>52.1</i>	<i>4.2</i>	<i>1.7</i>	
2010	Male	1.0	13.7	23	2.4	0.5	40.6
	Female	1.1	13	13.5	0.5	0.6	28.7
	<i>% of total annual migration</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>38.5</i>	<i>52.7</i>	<i>4.2</i>	<i>1.6</i>	
2011	Male	2.5	15.9	17.9	3.1	2.4	41.8
	Female	2.7	18.6	13.3	3.1	1.0	38.7
	<i>% of total annual migration</i>	<i>6.5</i>	<i>42.9</i>	<i>38.8</i>	<i>7.7</i>	<i>4.2</i>	
2012	Male	2.3	17.4	24.7	3.8	0.6	48.8
	Female	2.6	18.4	14.8	1.8	0.6	38.2
	<i>% of total annual migration</i>	<i>5.6</i>	<i>41.1</i>	<i>45.4</i>	<i>6.4</i>	<i>1.4</i>	

*Source: CSO 2012c, Table 5*

The percentage of migrants from Ireland aged between 15 and 44 has varied between 80% and 90% over the seven year period, while the percentage of migrants aged under 15 began to increase in 2011, following a drop in earlier years. While the level of migration of men from Ireland rose very rapidly between 2008 and 2009, this increase has now flattened out. Between 2010 and 2011, the most significant increase was in the level of out-migration of women.

Again, there is not one obvious source of information about migration from Ireland, such as departure records gathered at ports and airports. Instead, figures for migration from Ireland now come from the Quarterly National Household Survey. Figure 5 provides information on migration from Ireland by destination, and shows important increases in the numbers of people moving to the UK, the EU and the Rest of the World though, following a large rise in 2009, the numbers moving to the EU-12 have dropped sharply again.

**Figure 5: Migration from Ireland by destination, 2006-2012 ('000s)**



*Source: CSO 2012c, Table 4*

It is possible to triangulate the information shown in Figure 5 with other sources, such as records from immigration authorities in other countries. However, since immigration authorities tend to gather details based on nationality rather than on place of previous residence, this is most useful for understanding the migration from Ireland of Irish nationals.

In the Rest of World category, Australia is the main destination for Irish nationals. The key route of access to Australia for Irish nationals is through the Working Holiday Visa programme, which facilitates temporary migration. The annual number of Australian working holiday visas issued to Irish nationals has remained consistently over 10,000 for a decade (see Table 8). Apart from a decline in the year to June 2010, the number of visas issued has increased each year since the year to June 2006. At the end of 2011, there were 15,874 Irish working holiday visa holders in Australia (Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2012). There has also been an increase in migration of Irish nationals to Canada – again, many on temporary working

holiday visas – and to other places, most notably the Middle East. Permanent migration to Australia and Canada, among other places, has also increased, but remains at relatively low levels.

**Table 8: Australian Working Holiday Visas issued to Irish nationals, 2002-2011**

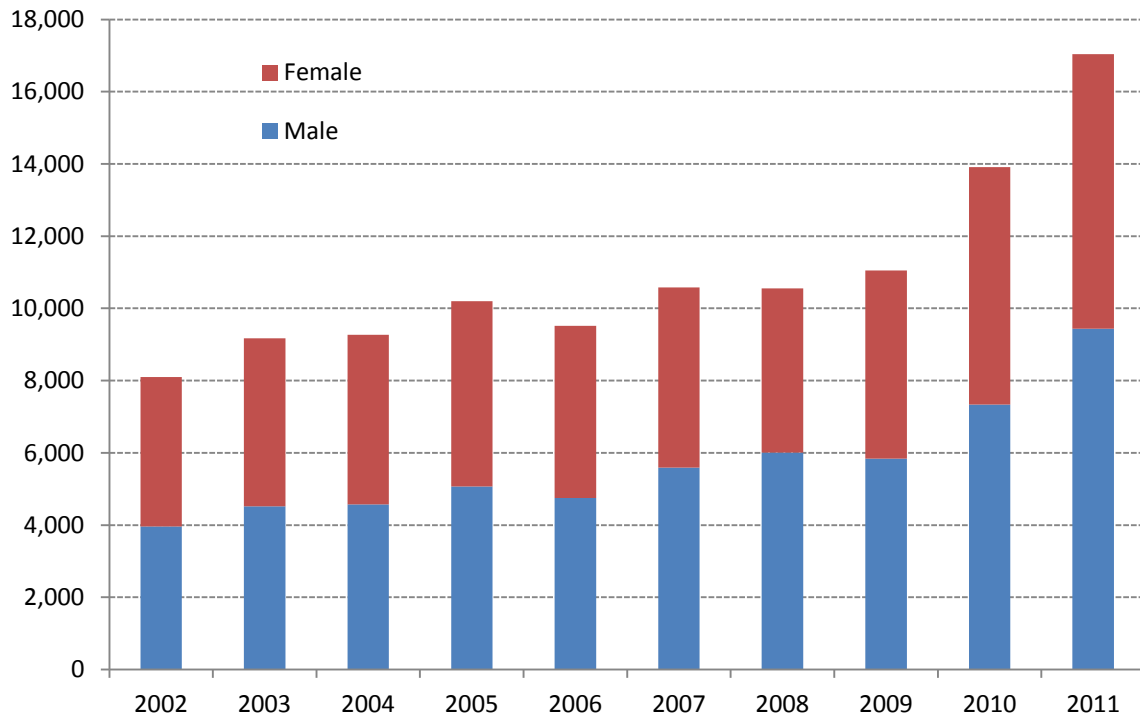
<b>Year</b>	<b>No of visas issued</b>
2002	11,000 (est)
2003	11,500 (est)
2004	12,260
2005	12,585
2006	12,554
2007	13,554
2008	17,133
2009	22,759
2010	14,790
2011	21,753

*Sources: Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2011, p.12 (Table 1.05)*

The UK has also retained its importance as a destination for migration from Ireland. The Common Travel Area between Ireland and the UK means that Irish nationals are not subject to the same immigration controls in the UK as many other nationalities. Therefore, records of Irish nationals migrating to the UK are limited, and do not include people who maintain a residence in Ireland and commute for the purposes of work. The UK Office of National Statistics reported that over 360,000 people living in Britain in 2011 had Ireland as their place of birth, and around 320,000 had Irish nationality (Office for National Statistics 2012). However, information on migrant flows is more limited, and publicly available data on Irish nationals is often aggregated into the broader EU category. Given this, National Insurance Numbers issued to Irish nationals provide an immediate insight into movement to the UK: this information is shown in Figure 6. There are obvious difficulties with using National Insurance numbers to show flow. This does not capture circular migration: people from Ireland who have previously lived in the UK and already have a National Insurance number. It also does not show where people have moved from, rather using the implicit assumption that people have moved directly from their country of nationality. Similarly, this measure does not show temporary migration,

such as seasonal migration, and so may over-estimate the number of migrants from Ireland in the UK. However, Figure 6 offers further support for the patterns suggested in Figure 5, specifically a marked increase in migration from Ireland to the UK in 2011.

**Figure 6: UK National Insurance Numbers issued to Irish nationals, 2002-2011**



*Source: Department for Work and Pensions 2012*

Migration from Ireland has clearly increased since the start of the prolonged recession in 2008. Yet, changes in patterns of migration are less marked and less significant than is suggested by banner headlines. It is clear, particularly from Figure 5, that much movement represents a continuation of patterns of migration that were established during the Celtic Tiger era, particularly the Irish version of the Gap Year in Australia. However, a focus on nationality in statistics from destination countries masks the extent to which migrant flows from Ireland include both Irish nationals and others. While Table 6 and Figure 5 suggest that there is some return migration by recent migrants to Ireland, equally these tables suggest some onward migration, highlighting that our knowledge of migrant flows from Ireland is partial. Similarly, the extent to which



official statistics can pick up newer and less clearly defined forms of migration, such as ‘extreme commuting’ or circular migration, is limited. This and the previous section represent the best available information on migration to and from Ireland, but the limits must be acknowledged. The 2011 Census of Population highlighted this clearly. There were close to 100,000 more people living in Ireland in April 2011 than had been predicted. While there are many possible explanations for this, inaccuracies in estimating both migrant stock and migrant flow is likely to be a key factor.

### **Conclusion: the state of migration**

Limitations in measures of migrant stock and flow need to be acknowledged, as they highlight the difficulties in fully capturing the complexity of migrant experiences. However, these limitations do not undermine the importance of measures of migrant stock, particularly the Census, as a way of capturing differences in people's participation in society. In particular, the recent Census indicates strong links between nationality, un/employment and residence in Ireland, and suggests that processes of sectoral employment clustering and residential clustering are well underway (for earlier discussions of this, see Barrett and Kelly 2012 and Goodwin-White forthcoming on un/employment, and Duffy 2007 and Vang 2010 on housing)<sup>3</sup>.

Despite the clear indication of issues of concern that are evident in the more robust measures of migrant stock, the focus in public discourse is on less easily verified measures of migrant flow. While the extent of migration of Irish citizens has certainly increased, not all such migration is problem or forced migration. Rather, some is voluntary migration, and a continuation of patterns of migration that were evident during the Celtic Tiger era. The recent focus on raw numbers of migrants, without an acknowledgement of the diversity of migration from Ireland - in terms of motivation, background and intention - detracts from a broader understanding of migration and its impacts, in Ireland and elsewhere.

The changing patterns of migration to and from Ireland are imperfectly identified by the Irish state in terms of data collection. While the experiences of migrants living in

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<sup>3</sup> Linked to housing, there is an emerging literature on inequality in access to education on the basis of nationality, as discussed by Byrne et al 2011, and Ledwith and Reilly 2012.

Ireland are charted more methodically, the selective use of the information gathered has broader implications in a time of recession. In particular, we see the emergence of a 'hierarchy of acceptability' (McDowell 2009, p.29) in relation to the presence of migrants in Ireland, and the role of particular, selective statistics in suggesting and supporting that hierarchy. The ongoing release of results from the 2011 Census, at an expanded range of spatial scales, offers one way of challenging the incomplete picture of migration and migrant experiences that currently dominates. However geographers also need to be aware of the politics of data collection and data interpretation, and to look beyond the superficial spatial patterns to uncover broader geographies and structures of inequality both within and beyond the borders of the nation-state (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002).

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