

Emigration again
Ireland 1980s, Poland 2000s, Ireland
2010s: Notes towards a research agenda

James Wickham

ESRI/Policy Institute / ERC Conference
Employment and the Crisis

11 March 2011

Trinity College Dublin



Time to go...?

“1,000 emigrating every week”

Repeated almost daily by Irish media

“Spain's unemployed rush to fill jobs in Germany...”

BBC News 4 Feb 2011

“The telephones to the European employment service Eures have been ringing off the hook this week. The calls are from unemployed Spaniards urgently seeking jobs - in Germany. Eures' German branch has requested applications from Spanish engineers, medics, teachers and tourism professionals. Other skilled workers, who speak German, can also apply.”

“Going abroad is just what I'm looking for, I'd definitely take this offer up,” says Joaquin Toubes Tova, who will graduate later this year. **‘Maybe the language is not a huge problem, as Germans speak English like I do. But if not, I can learn - it's not a problem!’** he says.

A moral panic?

	Emigration (‘000s)	Immigration (‘000s)	Net Migration (‘000s)
1989	70.6	26.7	-43.9
2007	42.2	109.5	67.3
2010	65.3	30.8	-34.5

Source: CSO Population and Migration Estimates, 21 September 2010
(Derived from Quarterly National Household Survey/ Labour Force Survey)

1989 Highest gross emigration year 1987-2010

2007 Highest gross immigration year 1987-2010

The 2010 emigration figure is the source given for ‘more than 1,000 people leaving every week’ claims.

But let's look closer

Immigration and nationality (citizenship)

	Total ('000s)	Irish ('000s)	EU12 ('000s)	Irish (%)
2007	109.5	20.0	52.7	18.3%
2010	30.8	13.3	5.8	43.2%

Even at the height of the immigration boom, nearly one in five of those 'immigrating' were Irish citizens.

Emigration and nationality (citizenship)

	Total	Irish	EU12	Irish (%)
2007	42.2	13.1	14.4	31.0%
2010	65.3	27.7	19.1	42.4%

Emigration is certainly rising, but last year, only a minority of those 'emigrating' were Irish citizens (though this may change in 2011).



We urgently need to update how we think about migration....

Overview

New directions in migration studies

From migration to mobility?

From labour migration to lifestyle migration?

A new European mobility space?

Global graduate labour markets?

From brain drain to brain circulation?

1980s Emigration

- » The turnaround
 - Expansion higher education
 - Education now linked to emigration
 - Graduates begin to see emigration as a normal option
 - Emigration as cultural resistance
- » ‘European’ welfare levels curb unskilled emigration

The new migration studies

- Multiple forms of migration:
 - » Especially but not only amongst skilled
- Multiple motivations:
 - » Migration as walkabout, love miles...
- New regulatory structures, new territorial barriers:
 - » Reassertion of national identity and national controls
 - » Competition for the 'best and brightest'
 - » An open European labour market
- New migrations
 - » Especially relevant: from New Member States
- Research gaps
 - » Little linkage to changes in education, employment and the labour market (McGovern, 2007)
- Yet discussion in Ireland today is like the 1950s!

Recent Irish emigration

- Background
 - Changed educational profile
- Extensive return migration
 - » Actually this always existed amongst emigrants to Britain
 - » Novelty was returning graduates from USA
 - » So by mid 2000s, education and living abroad closely related amongst resident Irish
- During 2000s emigration continued
 - » Directly related to level of education

From labour migration to...

- People go to places where they can get jobs!
- BUT
 - » Initial motivations may be 'non-economic' (self-development, lifestyle, adventure or even long-term career plans)
 - » Growing 'deliberate indeterminacy' (Eade, 2008)
 - » Change over time towards life style issues
 - » Initial destination may become jumping off point for further movement
- Irish emigration today
 - » Appears as shift from choice to constraint
 - (From 'I want to go' in 2000s to 'I have to go' now)
 - » BUT should not assume that this new motivation is stable

New European mobility space

- UK and especially Ireland in 2000s
 - » Mass immigration within a common legal framework
Combined with relatively robust anti-discrimination legislation and culture
 - (Compare 1950s Britain: 'No dogs, blacks or Irish')
 - » Flexible labour markets with easy recruitment
 - Some flexibilisation of continental labour markets
- New sudden waves of migration
 - Poland 2000s, Spain now, Greece tomorrow?
 - Young educated at start of career
 - Highly individualised societies (weak kinship ties)
 - Extensive virtual travel and of course cheap physical travel
 - English as lingua franca (so little advantage for native English speakers!)
- BUT Irish emigration today
 - To traditional Anglophone destinations – staying in the Angloworld?

New 'graduate' labour market

- Expansion of third level education but...
 - In Ireland recently growth largest in 'generalist' third level (Arts, Business)
 - » Irish graduates today may have lower comparative advantage than in the 1980s
- Expansion of graduate employment
 - » Both in 'non-graduate' jobs and specialised S&T areas
 - » Global competition for specialists
 - » Escalator cities in Europe for non-specialists (Favell, 2008)
 - » Growing (?) casualised graduate labour market – “Generation Intern”

Coming back

- » From brain drain to brain circulation
 - Now a European labour market issue
- » New diaspora politics and policies
 - Learning from abroad
 - Emigrants as national resource
 - But careful: national conflicts can re-emerge!
- » Ireland of the Welcomes
 - Flexible recruitment
 - Now long experience of mobility
 - No tradition of stigmatising emigrants (Poland as negative role model)

Thankyou!

- <http://www.tcd.ie/immigration/careers/index.php>

