

Contemporary Irish Migration to Australia: Pathways to Permanence

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Notes

1. Whilst acknowledging that return migrants are usually referred to as 'returnees' and not 'departed' in the discipline of geography and in migration studies, this term is not appropriate in this study as many of those surveyed did not return to Ireland but migrated elsewhere. The two surveys constructed to collect data for this project were the Irish in Australia survey and the Departed Australia survey.
2. The government department responsible for the administration of Australia's immigration policy and administration has had numerous names. The full account of departmental name changes can be found in *A History of the Department of Immigration* (DIBP 2015g, p.92). In this thesis 'the Department' refers to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection which was the nomenclature in use during the period of this study as noted in the list of abbreviations below.
3. Some Australian Immigration reports on the various visas denote 'program', yet others spell 'programme'. I have chosen the latter for consistency.
4. Throughout this thesis the term 'Ireland' refers to the Republic of Ireland.
5. Northern Ireland-born figures are conservatively estimated at 1.5% of the UK immigrant population despite the population of Northern Ireland comprising 3% of the total United Kingdom population. Northern Ireland-born figures are available in DIBP statistics for the years 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03. The Northern Ireland-born totals for these years are 1.49%, 1.41% and 1.38% respectively of the UK-born immigrants. Estimated Resident Population (ERP) figures available at <http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/> show that the Northern Ireland population is between 1.95 per cent and 2.5 per cent of the United Kingdom total

(Calculations carried out using the ERP for all United Kingdom constituent parts in the years 2000 and 2015 and dividing by listed Northern Ireland ERP).

6. The research output was analysed using SPSS Statistics 24 and NVivo 11.
7. This study was approved by the Low Risk Human Research Ethics Review Group (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and Faculty of the Professions) of University of Adelaide and was deemed to meet the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The approval number was H-2014-234. Continuing to participate in the online survey was deemed giving informed consent to participate in the study.

Abstract

This thesis investigates the experiences of contemporary Irish migrants in Australia by exploring migration, settlement and return migration amongst the research project's respondents. The recent period is important because it encompassed both a technological revolution in the growth, availability and affordability of travel and communications technology and because it saw an increase in the Irish population in Australia, of 39 per cent, from 2006 to 2014. Since the mid-1990s there has been a major shift in immigration policy whereby concentration on permanent migration, particularly the family unit, has been replaced with a proliferation of visa classes that promote temporary entry in line with global trends. Significant changes, such as the introduction of the 457 visa and the extension of the Working Holiday Maker (WHM) visa, have meant that the temporary intake has become more prominent. These changes also encouraged an investigation of the migration experiences of Irish people to Australia as these visas, despite being elements of the temporary visa programme, permitted a pathway to permanent residency in Australia.

This mixed methods study was conducted through two surveys ($n=1,560$) disseminated through social media platforms and in-depth participant interviews ($n=67$). Findings were benchmarked against secondary data from national data agencies and the Émigré study, University College Cork, Ireland. The surveys allowed Irish people resident in Australia and those who had left to describe their visa use, migration motivation and settlement experience.

Results found that the majority of immigrants entered Australia on a temporary, long-stay visa, and most did not intend to settle permanently in Australia. This intention changed quite rapidly after arrival and most WHMs transitioned to a 457 visa as the most typical 'next step' on the pathway to permanent residency. New Irish arrivals tended to seek out Irish friendship groups or socialise with other migrants and this was ascribed to three things: cultural comfort provided by other Irish people, experiential similarities with other migrants and the perception that Australians had long-established friendship groups which were difficult to penetrate. Contemporary Irish migrants were a 'good fit' for Australia's labour market and career progression was one of the most notable benefits of migration. However, increased satisfaction with job, salary and career prospects post-migration did not prevent some respondents choosing to leave Australia. The majority of those who departed returned to Ireland, with departure usually family motivated: migrants either wanted to be nearer ageing parents or wanted their children to experience a childhood similar to their own close to extended family members. Analysis showed a high level of engagement during migration through mobile technology with family, local community and with regional and national political, economic and social developments in Ireland.

Methodologically, this study contributes to the emerging and growing field of research using and investigating social media. Theoretically, this research demonstrates two migration theory threads at play for the recent Irish immigrant cohort in Australia – one related to the process of migration which

adheres closely, but not perfectly, to Neoclassical II economic theory and another, a cultural migration process, related to transnationalism. This thesis expands our understanding of transnationalism amongst the Irish in Australia where more recent migrants have enacted a strong trend towards 'transnationalism from the ground up' in their use of multi-level connections to Ireland locally, regionally and nationally through electronic media and other online fora. Exploration of the empirical data demonstrates a strong need to participate even virtually in life in Ireland and further, a keen awareness of everyday happenings which was not available to migrants in pre-internet times. In this context, transnationalism and transnational practice has the potential to become more prevalent for first and deeper generations of the Irish diaspora.

Overall, since 2000, the contemporary Irish migrant experience in Australia has been a strongly positive one. The significance of the findings lies predominantly in the visa used to enter Australia. The rapid transition to a longer-term visa and ultimately to permanent residency suggests that visa use was dictated by expediency rather than design. Even those who entered on a permanent visa did not always intend to settle in Australia. Recent changes to Australia's temporary visa programme, namely the replacement of the 457 visa with the Temporary Skills Shortage (TSS) visa will likely lead to different outcomes in the future.

Declaration

Parts of this thesis are published in Breen, F. 'Emigration in the age of electronic media: Personal perspectives of Irish migrants to Australia between 1969 and 2013'. *Ireland in the World*. McCarthy, Angela (ed.), Routledge, London, 2015 (Appendix 10) and in Breen, F. "Australian immigration policy in practice: a case study of skill recognition and qualification transferability amongst Irish 457 visa holders." *Australian Geographer* Vol 47 (4) November 2016 (Appendix 11).

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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I acknowledge the support I have received for my research through the provision of an Australian Government Research Training Programme Scholarship.

Dedication and Acknowledgements

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An honourable mention is reserved for the tireless welfare workers and volunteers around Australia who assist Irish migrants in need – the Claddagh Association, Perth, the Irish Australian Resource and Support Bureau, Melbourne, the Irish Australian Support Association of Queensland, and the Irish Support Agency, Sydney. Their work is supported through the Emigrant Support Programme administered by the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Dublin and the Irish Embassy in Canberra. Acknowledgement of the Irish Australian Chamber of Commerce in their support of Irish business migrants and professionals and the Irish Studies Association of Australia and New Zealand which encourages all aspects of Irish Studies is also necessary.

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Abbreviations

457	Temporary Work (Skilled) (subclass 457) visa (formerly the Business Long Stay Temporary (subclass 457) visa)
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
ANZSCO	Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations
CSO	Central Statistics Office (Ireland)
DHA	Department of Home Affairs (2017- current)
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship (Australia, 2007-2013)
DIBP	Department of Immigration and Border Protection (Australia, 2013-2017) (the 'Department')
DIMA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (Australia, 1996-2001 and 2006-2007)
DIMIA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs and Indigenous Affairs (Australia, 2001-2006)
GICF	Global Irish Civic Forum
GIEF	Global Irish Economic Forum
HRC/T	Habitual Residence Conditions/Test
IAU	Irish Abroad Unit
IDA	Industrial Development Authority
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
ONS	Office of National Statistics (UK)
USC	Universal Social Charge
RSSM	Regional State Sponsored Migration visa
™	Trademark
WHM	Working Holiday Maker (subclass 417) visa. (Note there is also a subclass 462 WHM visa but Irish applicants receive the subclass 417 visa)

Glossary

Celtic Tiger. Oxford Dictionary definition: The Irish economy, or Ireland itself, as regarded during the period of rapid economic growth that characterised the 1990s and early 21st century.

https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/celtic_tiger

FIFO refers to a Fly In, Fly Out worker, usually employed in a remote location in mining or an associated industry. Partners and dependents usually lived in the capital city of the state to which the family migrated.

Flow data – information on incoming and outgoing persons provided by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

Gaelic Athletic Association – formed in 1884 as part of the Gaelic Revival to promote specifically Irish sports of Gaelic Football, Hurling and Camogie. The GAA has affiliated clubs all over the world and is increasingly promoted as a mainstay of diaspora activity.

Irish Abroad Unit – a unit in the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade charged with communication with the diaspora and between diaspora communities. The IAU manages the Emigrant Support Programme (ESP) which funds Irish cultural activity including sports, academic activity and business activity although its main concern is welfare support in diaspora communities worldwide.

Permanent Migration Programme – Australia’s permanent entry programme. This is highly regulated and capped at around 190,000 persons per year currently.

Stock data - information provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on the resident population at any point in time e.g. at the enumeration of the population in the census.

Temporary Migration Programme - this programme allows temporary entry to Australia. The most used visas in this category by Irish migrants are the Working Holiday Maker (subclass 417) visas (WHM) and the Temporary Work (Skilled) (subclass 457) visa which both allow residency and work rights. The WHM visa permits a stay of between one day and two years and the 457 allows the holder to stay in Australia for up to four years. These two visas are uncapped and the 457 is employer demand-driven.¹

Working Holiday Maker or backpacker – Young adults, aged 18 – 30², who come to Australia on the Working Holiday Maker (subclass 417) visa or the Work and Holiday visa (subclass 462). This visa allows an extended holiday in Australia with short term work and study rights. Australia currently has reciprocal working holiday arrangements with 39 nations. Note, when referring to Irish WHMs, the reference is to Irish people using Working Holiday Maker (subclass 417) visas.

¹ Note: it is proposed that the 457 be replaced with two new visas, two year and four year Temporary Skills Shortage visas. This thesis deals with the state of the law prior to these amendments.

² In June 2017, it was proposed that the upper age limit for the Working Holiday Maker visa be raised to 35 years of age. Commonwealth (2017). Migration Legislation Amendment (2017 Measures No. 3) Regulations 2017. [F2017L00816](#). C. o. Australia. Canberra, ACT.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND SIGNIFICANCE

.....

...The impact of migration on the lives of individual migrants can easily be overlooked. [Researchers should] focus on outcomes for migrants themselves and on how their lives have been affected in positive or negative ways, as a result of migrating... Instead of being the passive subjects of enquiry, migrants should be given the opportunity to tell their stories. It is hoped that this emphasis on the experiential dimension, as opposed to the usual focus on disembodied socioeconomic dynamics, will open the door to policymaking that is more attuned to human needs.

IOM World Migration Report 2013, p.24

.....

1.1 Introduction

Between 2006 and 2014 Australia's Irish-born population grew by 39 per cent as a result of increased migration, largely due to the Global Financial Crisis (GFC). The total population, comprised of dual Irish-Australian citizens, permanent residents and temporary visa holders, stood at approximately 119,000 people at the end of June 2015. From within that population, this study focusses specifically on the migration and settlement experiences of contemporary migrants. Although a number of Irish people enter Australia through the permanent migration programme, this study largely focussed on those who came as temporary migrants. It explores the status transition of immigrants who used temporary visas such as the Working Holiday Maker (subclass 417) visa (hereafter WHM or backpacker visa) or the Temporary Work (Skilled) (subclass 457) visa (hereafter 457 visa) to enter Australia. Specifically, it looks at the pathways that some of these temporary visa holders took to permanent residency and Australian citizenship and considers the factors that influenced some to settle in Australia while others left.

The hypothesis for this study is that, in recent years, young Irish people were using the Working Holiday Maker visa to gain entry to Australia as a matter of convenience despite being highly-skilled and being able to access other visas, such as Skilled Independent visas and others aligned with the permanent migration programme. As migrants possessing both skill and agency, Irish Working Holiday Makers (WHMs) had choice in how their migration occurred (Bandura 2001). The over-representation of graduates amongst Irish migrants (Glynn et al. 2013), and the phenomenal increase in the numbers of Irish people granted WHM visas in recent years, raised questions about drivers of Irish migration to Australia.

In 2011-12, 4,938 Irish people entered Australia through the permanent programme while 27,040 came as long-term temporary migrants (DIAC 2012a, 2012b). Since 2009, Ireland has been one of the top source countries of 457 visas (DIBP 2010, 2013d, 2014e, 2015i, 2016d) and between 2008 and 2013, the number of Irish 457 visa-holders increased by 242 per cent (DIBP 2014d, p.13). The comparatively high number of Irish applications for this four year working visa, is perhaps more easily explained in the context of economic migration from a depressed economy such as Ireland's post-2007/8. The 457 visa, though temporary, is a long-term employment visa. The WHM visa on the other hand is intended to be a shorter-term cultural experience with limited working rights permitted in order to sustain extensive travel and simultaneously bolster the Australian tourism sector (Tan and Lester 2012). As this research illustrates, for many Irish WHMs, or backpackers, a journey which was undertaken primarily as an adventure became a pivotal life-changing experience as these temporary arrivals became 'accidental' immigrants who, not long after arrival, sought a pathway to permanent settlement and Australian citizenship. The uptake of Australian citizenship by Irish migrants is investigated in this thesis within the context of transnational theory. The analysis draws out answers to three questions: are these newest Irish migrants living transnational lives; is their migration a linear project which ends with permanent settlement or is return migration likely? Given the longevity of Irish chain migration to Australia and the recent increase in the Irish population it is hypothesised that Irish networks played some part in the growing trend of both WHM and 457 visa applications, and in the conversion of temporary stays to permanent residence. Before exploring the use of the WHM visa specifically, it is necessary to briefly consider the development of Australia's immigration policy in order to appreciate the shift from a family-oriented intake to a highly-skilled one.

1.2 Australian Immigration Policy

International migration has been core to the development of Australia since white settlement. Along with the United States, Canada and New Zealand, Australia is one of the world's traditional immigration countries. A notable feature of its post-war development was an expansive planned immigration programme profoundly shaped by government policy. Hugo (2014a, p.869) states that while

there have been elements of continuity in Australia's post-war immigration policy, there has also been a readiness of governments to change that policy in response to evidence of global, regional and national developments.

Numerous policy changes have been made in recent years which have shifted the immigration focus firmly in favour of skilled migration in response to economic data which showed that skilled migrants had better employment outcomes than other types of migrants. In addition to this, smoother pathways from temporary to permanent visa status were pursued by the Australian Government in these years. A government research paper notes that,

The Department has been creating more efficient avenues to permanent residence for temporary skilled visa holders with 'streamlined', 'simplified' and 'fast-tracked' options now available (Parliament of Australia 2013, p.5).

The Australian Government's Intergenerational Report of 2015 notes that Australia's population projection is based on patterns of migration, fertility and life expectancy, and that the growth projection of 1.3 per cent per year would see the population reach 39.7 million in 2054-55, up from 23.9 million today (Commonwealth of Australia 2015a, p.viii). The three long-term drivers of economic growth are cited as 'population, participation in the workforce and improved productivity' (Commonwealth of Australia 2015a, p.vii). The report states that the

permanent migration intake is reviewed each year in the context of the budget to reflect evolving economic and social circumstances. Temporary migration (including temporary skilled and students) has also been an important driver of increases in net overseas migration over the past decade (Commonwealth of Australia 2015a, p.ix).

In March 2015, Louise Markus, Liberal Member for Macquarie (NSW), in delivering the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration to the House of Representatives stated that

The goal of Australia's migration programme is to meet Australia's economic and social needs through building the economy, shaping society, supporting the labour market and reuniting families (Commonwealth of Australia 2015b, p.3248).

These goals have been present, though unequally at times, throughout the historical development of the country's immigration policy.

1.2.1. The evolution of Australian immigration policy

From Federation in 1901 to the close of the Second World War, a protectionist attitude towards market regulation and trade fostered a tight, race-restricted immigration control, known as the White Australia Policy, which continued the largely Anglo-Saxon immigration trend that had characterised the country's population expansion since European settlement (Tavan 2005). The debunking of race theory (Barkan 1992), and the ascendancy of assimilation in the post-war period, aided a change in immigration policy priority which determined that the country must 'populate or perish'. The government aimed to increase the population through immigration by one per cent per annum (DIBP 2015g, p.26). Various changes (from the revision of the Migration Act in 1958, which abolished the dictation test, to the reforms under Harold Holt and Gough Whitlam in 1966 and 1973) respectively dismantled the White Australia policy (Meaney 1995, Oakman 2002). It took almost thirty years and many timid, piecemeal steps to remove the concept of White Australia from the lexicon of Australian government. However, the concept of Australia as a white, westernised country, despite its proximity to Asia, relates directly to its attractiveness as a destination for Irish emigrants. The longevity of Irish immigration in Australia fuelled the acceptance of Australia as an historical place of settlement and a prime destination hotspot. Castles et al. (2014, p.57) claim that the Irish there are an ethnic community

rather than an ethnic minority. Although the White Australia policy was officially dead, the Department's report, *A History of the Department of Immigration*, notes that,

The United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland) ...remained the largest single component of the annual immigration intake until 1995–96 when the intake of New Zealand-born migrants became greater (DIBP 2015g, p.93).

However, the fact that the largest source country was now New Zealand did not affect the racial composition of the intake since New Zealand's largest ethnicity was also European. It was only in the last New Zealand census in 2013 that the most numerous birthplace for the overseas-born there was recorded as being from Asia rather than the United Kingdom and Ireland (Statistics New Zealand 2014, p.19).

1.2.2 Transition from family migration to skilled migration

Population augmentation was the main focus of Australian immigration policy until the late 1970s. More targeted skilled migration became the focus with the introduction of the Numerical Multi-Factor Assessment System (NUMAS) in 1979 (Davis et al. 1980). This assessed migrants on occupation, skills, English language competence and other factors such as family ties, which meant that non-English-speaking applicants with low skills had little chance of passing. In 1985, the then Labor Government increased immigration and introduced a new selection system that favoured the most skilled of sponsored relatives and gave generous family concessions. Opposition to increasing Asian immigration and multiculturalism in general found a voice in a wide-ranging public enquiry held in 1987 and chaired by Dr Stephen Fitzgerald. The Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies (CAAIP) was assigned the task of investigating public opinion on immigration and was charged with making recommendations to guide future immigration policy. The CAAIP used Hugo's research, which had shown that family reunion pathways were generating a relatively low-skilled intake, to support their new rationale for increased immigration on economic grounds (Birrell and Betts 1988, CAAIP 1988, Hugo 1988). However, it should be noted that Hugo's (1988, p.17) report stated,

In 1986/87 the highest workforce participation rates (in excess of 50 per cent) were in the independent, skilled labour, concessional and 'other' categories *although those of the Family 1C and 1A and refugees were also high (between 40 and 49 per cent)*. On the other hand, the rates for the Family 1B (18 per cent), Special Eligibility (29.2) and Business (31.9) categories are relatively low (emphasis added).

The CAAIP appealed to Australians for support by emphasising the fiscal benefits higher skilled immigration could bring in terms of international competitiveness and strengthening the economy (CAAIP 1988). Selection processes then turned away from extended family sponsorship towards applicants with business and labour skills.

There appeared to be no discernible decrease in the Irish population in Australia from the time of the introduction of this new policy, however, it was at this point that the first barriers to relatively

unimpeded Irish immigration to Australia were erected since family migration was a strong feature of Irish immigration. Hugo (1988) reported that the mix of regions of origin of incoming migrants changed substantially during the 1980s. The intake from the United Kingdom, Ireland and Northern Europe declined from 44.6 per cent to 25.8 per cent from 1982/83 to 1986/87. More tellingly, the share of UK and Ireland migrants in the Family 1C category for non-dependent children and siblings (the only one of three family categories that was points-tested) 'fell more dramatically than it did in the intake as a whole' (Hugo 1988, p.24). Simultaneously, the number of skilled labour applicants (also points-tested) almost halved although migrants from UK/Ireland made up around 40 per cent of this category (Hugo 1988, p.26). Those who previously may have used these visas to emigrate from Ireland, depending on eligibility, particularly in the age criterion, may have taken the Working Holiday Maker visa option at this point instead. Emigration culture in Ireland was such that having a family member in Australia reinforced immigration there as an option.

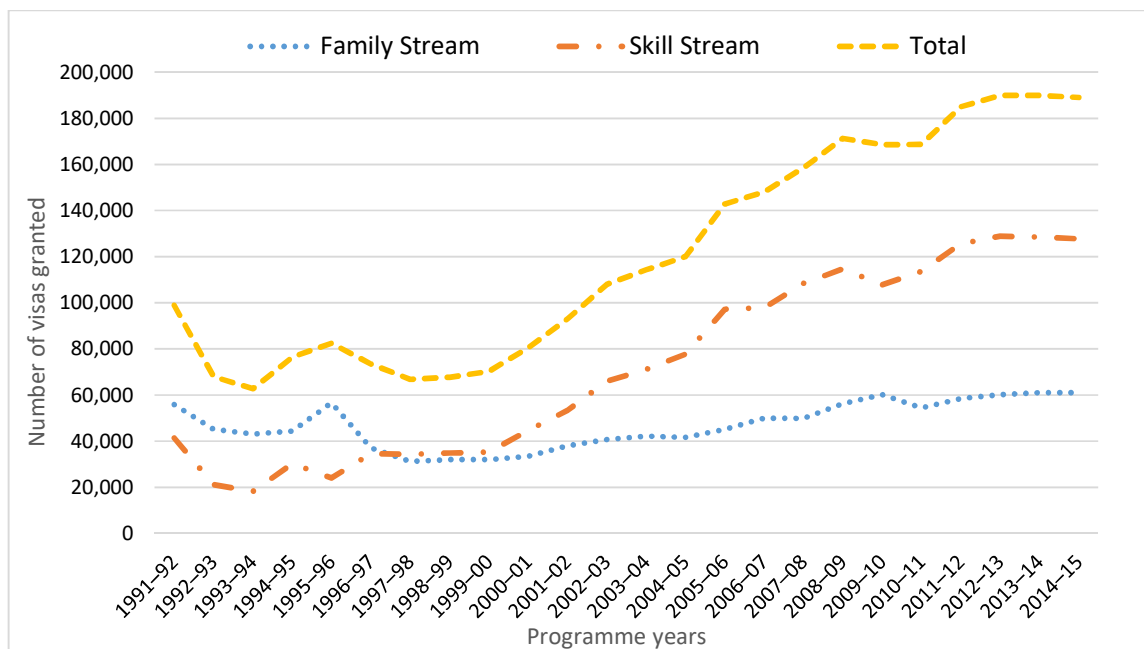
A points system – the Structured Selection Assessment System (SSAS) (Mackellar 1979) – had been in place since 1973 but it was the introduction of a Canadian-style 'points test' system (Shachar and Hirschl 2013) in 1989 that consolidated the expectation that migrants be self-reliant upon arrival. The SSAS was the first step towards a structured migrant assessment protocol. Immigration officers had to complete a two-part interview report – Part A related to economic factors and Part B required the interviewing officer to make an 'Assessment of Personal and Social Factors' regarding the applicant. NUMAS was an amalgamation of the Canadian points system and the SSAS which preserved the two-part assessment format but added numerical weightings to a total of 100 (Hawkins 1991). Opposition to it lay in the widely-held perception that it indicated a return to the White Australia policy. The Canadian system did not require family migrants to be assessed under the points system and for other migrants, 90 of the 100 points focussed on economic factors with only 10 points awarded for 'personal suitability'. From 1989, applicants were allocated visas on the attainment of points related to their age, health and character criteria, English language proficiency, skill level and the possession of credentials recognised in Australia (Miller 1999, Boucher 2013). The rule-based system made rational selection easier but the end result was a minefield of visa classes and permit types (Jupp 2007). While Labor laid the foundations for some of the harshest financial aspects of the new economically rationalist immigration policy – introducing a six-month waiting period for social welfare and charging for visa applications, appeals and English tuition – these were all to become lengthier and more expensive under the 1996 Liberal-National Coalition Government of John Howard. Social welfare assistance for example, was denied to new arrivals for a period of two years, despite research showing that this period was the most crucial in terms of securing stable employment and housing (Jupp 2007).

Immigration policy-makers were necessarily circumspect of the domestic situation. Immigration policy was balanced, after all, on the combined support of social and organised business interests and presented an electoral vulnerability. When the Howard government came into power in 1996, deliberate moves were made to rebalance the immigration system in favour of targeted, skilled

immigration while the value of family ties was concurrently reduced. Changes to the Points Test in 1999 demonstrated this new focus: the pass mark was raised by ten points; the required International English Language Testing System (IELTS) scores were raised; points were given for pre-arranged employment and removed for familial links; the age for which maximum points could be attained was halved to 30 years; and the 80 points previously given for general occupational skills was replaced by a maximum 60 points for targeted skills which were listed in the Migrant on Demand List (MODL). These elements remain the basic structure of the entry system to Australia to the present day although the addition of the 457 pathway and sponsor visas, through either the Employer or State/Regional sponsorship, has increased the entry options available to skilled workers. These two routes are now the most popular pathways to permanence and employers have played an increasing role in the selection of both permanent and temporary migrants.

As a result of this changed focus, the composition of Australia’s immigration intake has changed dramatically over recent decades. From 1984 to 1995 the Family percentages of the total permanent intake ranged from 81 per cent to 69 per cent with the Skill stream making up 19 to 29 per cent of the total (see Appendix 8 for more detail). Figure 1.1 shows the increasing trend towards skilled migration. From a 51/47 per cent division in 1996, the permanent migration programme is now comprised of 68 per cent skill and 32 per cent family visa grants (DIBP 2015b). Most importantly, the proportion of migrants entering Australia through the ‘skill’ and ‘family’ components have diverged significantly since the tightening of the points system in 1999.

Figure 1.1: The trends in family and skill entry streams of migration, 1991-2014



Source: DIBP (2015h)

This section has focused on the development of immigration policy as it relates to permanent migration but concurrent with these changes, after 1996, was the expansion of the temporary migration programme largely made up of student visas, WHM visa arrangements and long-stay business visas.

1.2.3. Current temporary and permanent migration

Currently, temporary migration considerably outstrips the permanent migration numbers associated with the migration programme. The largest components of the temporary migration programme of most interest here are the WHM and 457 visas as they can provide a pathway to a permanent visa. For all the policy changes and the stricture on permanent migration, the temporary programme offers an alternative to those willing to invest in another visa. WHMs who have attained work experience in the field of their qualification are often eligible for a 457 visa, and then use the 457 visa to transition to a permanent visa based on their skills and experience in the Australian labour market.

To demonstrate the scale of the temporary migration programme against the permanent intake: in the 2014-2015 year, 51,125 visas were granted under the 457 programme, alongside 214,830 WHM visas, totalling 265,955 temporary visas against the 189,097 places in the permanent programme (DIBP 2015b). Many of the permanent places are granted on-shore meaning that they are assigned to a temporary entrant who applies for a permanent visa from within Australia, rather than off-shore (i.e. from outside the country). In the 2014-15 year, the largest onshore grants were made to the Employer Sponsored (41,374 onshore places out of 48,000 visas), Partner (19,057 onshore places) and Skilled Independent (18,988 onshore places) visas (DIBP 2015a). While onshore family grants (usually marriage-related) represented 65.6 per cent of family visas granted in the 2012-2013 programme year and only 33.5 per cent in the 2014-2015 year, the number of onshore grants for the Employer Sponsored category grew in this period from 23 per cent in 2012-2013 to 85.7 per cent in 2014-2015 (DIAC 2013a, p.19, DIBP 2015a, p.19).

The Working Holiday Maker visa programme was introduced in 1975 with Canada, Ireland and the United Kingdom the first countries with whom a reciprocal arrangement was made. In 1980, Japan joined, followed by Korea and Malta in 1995 and 1996 respectively (DIAC 2011, p.5). The last uncapped Working Holiday Maker arrangement was made with the Netherlands in 2006. In the last decade or so only Work and Holiday (subclass 462) visas have been negotiated and these are with countries in Asia

or South America excepting the 2007 agreement made with the United States.³ In addition, all except the US entries are capped at relatively low numbers (DIAC 2011, p.5).⁴ The long-standing and relatively simple arrangement between Ireland and Australia means that a year in Australia after secondary school or college is almost a rite of passage as evinced by the numbers of young Irish people who have availed of a WHM visa in the past few years – almost a quarter of a million since 2000.

The usual 'next step' for respondents who were still in Australia but who had entered on a WHM visa some years before was the 457 visa. The Temporary Work (Skilled) (subclass 457) visa was introduced in 1996 under the Howard government. It was initially called the Business Long Stay (Subclass 457) Visa but renamed in November 2012. The visa allowed skilled persons to come to Australia to work for an approved employer, accompanied by their immediate families, for up to four years. The application involved a three-stage process whereby an employer applied to become an approved sponsor and then nominated a skilled overseas worker to fill a specific position. The skilled overseas worker completed the process by lodging a temporary work skilled visa application linked to that nomination. SkillSelect has been in operation since 2012. This allows prospective migrants to submit an Expression of Interest indicating their willingness to be considered for a skilled visa and is essentially a 'matching' service for Australian employers seeking staff.⁵ The Department states that

the Temporary Work (Skilled) (subclass 457) visa is designed to enable employers to address labour shortages by bringing in genuinely skilled workers where they cannot find an appropriately skilled Australian (DIBP 2016f).

The 457 visa was an uncapped visa driven by employer demand. Management of the programme was difficult and concerns about the scheme led to an independent review in 2014. In April 2017, the Turnbull Government proposed its abolition and by March 2018 intend that the 457 will be replaced by a two-year and four-year Temporary Skills Shortage (TSS) visa. The number of eligible occupations will be reduced from 651 to 435, with caveats on a further 59, and the threshold to qualify will be raised (DIBP 2017a).

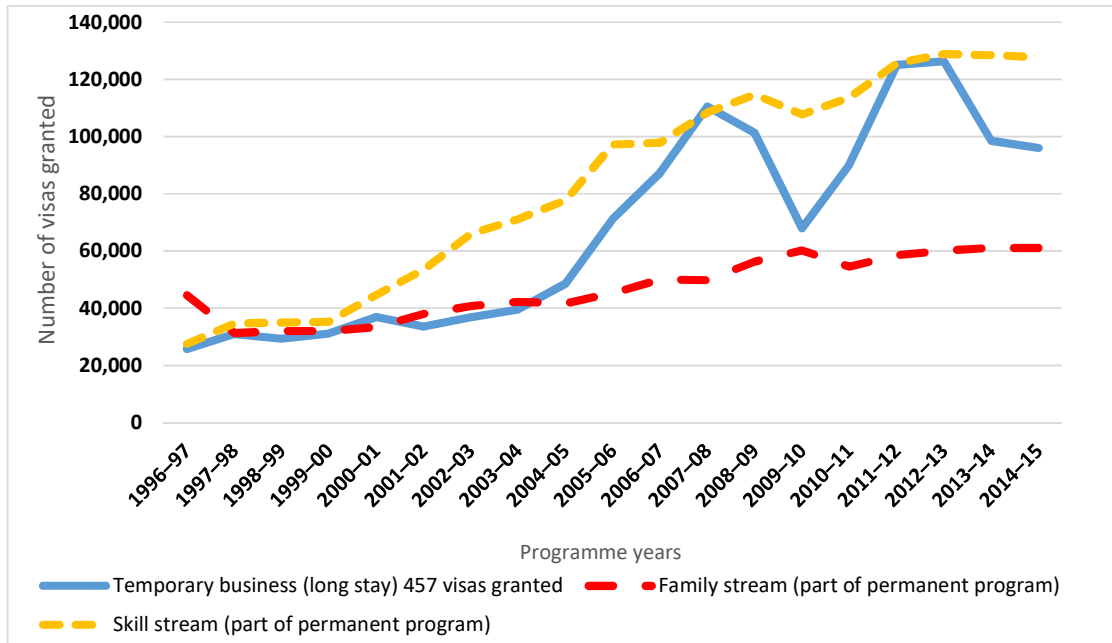
Figure 1.2 illustrates the flexible and uncapped nature of the 457 visa against the family and skill components of the permanent migration programme. The sharp increase in its use from 2009 to 2012 follows the increased migration of skilled workers seeking escape from the GFC.

³ Work and Holiday (Subclass 462) visas have higher requirements than the Subclass 417. Applicants must demonstrate achievement of a certain level of education (this varies between countries) and evidence of functional English as well as provide a letter of government support (excludes United States applicants).

⁴ Most Subclass 462 visas are capped at between 100 and 500 applicants except for Chile which has a quota of 1500 people per year.

⁵ More information on SkillSelect can be found here: <https://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Work/Skil#>

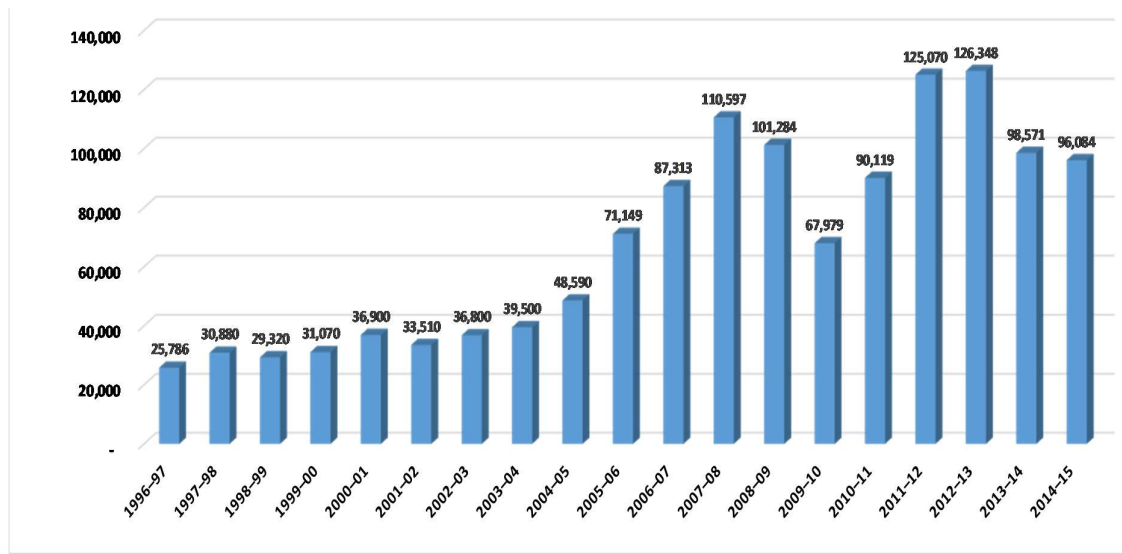
Figure 1.2: 457 visa intake shown against Family and Skill streams, 1996 - 2015



Source: Constructed from data in Phillips and Simon-Davies (2016)

Figure 1.3 shows the 457 visa programme intake since its inception and highlights the increasing use of this visa option, especially since 2005. In the five years following December 2010, the number of 457 visa holders in Australia rose dramatically, largely because Australia was viewed as having escaped the worst effects of the Global Financial Crisis (DIBP 2013b). In this period, temporary 457s from India increased by 155.5 per cent, those from China (excluding special administrative regions of China) increased by 115.4 per cent, and from Ireland by 59.1 per cent (DIBP 2016e, p.13). Recent decline is mostly due to the improvement of economic conditions in source countries (Kenny 2015a). Ireland slipped from sixth place in the top ten source countries in the 2013-14 programme year to last place in 2016-2017 (DIBP 2014a, Affairs 2017).

Figure 1.3: 457 visas granted, 1996 -2015



Source: Constructed from data in Phillips and Simon-Davies (2016)

The policy focus on skilled migration has not diminished any since the turn of the century. New visa classes and subclasses have been introduced and permanent settlement mechanisms have been overtaken by the temporary migration stream. It is the nexus between the two that is of the greatest significance to this study since the shift has allowed skilled Irish workers to undertake a 'scoping migration' without the initial expense of a permanent visa application. Despite originating from such a small country, the Irish comprised 3.6 per cent of WHM visas and 4.2 per cent of 457 visas in 2015-16 to 30 September 2015 (DIBP, 2015). Detailed discussion of the use of these visas by Irish migrants follows in Chapter Five.

Australia's immigration levels are relatively low in the global context (Migration Policy Institute 2015) in absolute terms, but immigrants represent almost 28 per cent of the total Australian population. Concerns about the intake levels of the migration programme come from various sections of the community and arise mainly over the economic impacts, especially in low-skill job markets and in youth employment which are often congruent, and in relation to what some perceive as the detrimental cultural and racial effects of immigration (Birrell and Healy 2012). In addition to economic and cultural anxieties, there are ethical concerns around the vulnerability of some temporary migrants, particularly WHMs, who, while legally covered by Australia's extensive workplace and employment legislation, often face poor enforcement of workplace responsibilities by employers. This reflects the precarious labour market position of temporary workers, their disenfranchisement and the coercive relationships that often exist between these workers and their employers (Boese et al. 2013, Campbell and Tham 2013, Howe 2013, Velayutham 2013, Costello and Freedland 2014, Berg 2015). Howe and Reilly (2014, 2015) argue for a new explicit low and semi-skilled visa pathway so that working conditions are more appropriately monitored. Reilly (2015a) believes the WHM programme requires

reform to divorce the original intention of the scheme from the programme's metamorphosis into a low or unskilled labour migration programme. The empirical data suggest that such a visa would only impact a minority of current Irish WHMs since the majority are skilled.

Australian immigration policy has undergone similar changes to that of Canada and New Zealand in implementing a shift away from family oriented migration to economic-based policy. According to Akbari and MacDonald (2014, p.801), elements of the policy changes include

...a shift away from a human capital focus toward more targeted selection based on labour market demand for specific skills, increased emphasis on temporary foreign worker programmes, attraction of international students, an overhauling of the refugee system, and regionalization of immigration.

Hugo (2005, p.207) noted the overwhelming focus in Australia on skill in migrant selection and 'searching for talent'. This was occurring despite the fact that the demographic and economic change occurring in Australia, like other Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) nations, means that there is growing demand for both unskilled and skilled workers. He summed it up:

There may be a growing mismatch between immigration policies focused on skill and a tightening labour market with demand for labour across a broader skill spectrum (Hugo 2005, p.207).

Such an observation helps us to make sense of the 'backdoor' pathways to permanent visa status that exist in Australia even in the face of tight border controls and an emphasis on skilled migrants. Australia must compete for a share of the world's skilled migrants whilst maintaining border sovereignty. The pathways to permanence that the temporary migration programmes offer allow a degree of flexibility disallowed by the policy decisions that frame the permanent migration programme. It appears Australia is keeping its options open by operating a structured, controlled permanent programme alongside an open, market-responsive, temporary migration programme.

The strong economic focus of Australia's immigration policy, its entry requirements and high costs may have contributed to the increasing importance of alternative destinations for the Irish in recent years. Canada is noted as a new favourite destination for Irish emigrants. Many Irish WHMs in Australia consider it the next step if a further Australian visa cannot be secured. Only 1,100 Irish people immigrated to Canada in 2008 and 2009 but this increased to around 5,300 in 2013 and reached almost 14,000 by 2014. Demand for working holiday visas under the International Experience Canada (IEC) programme was so high that a split allocation of 7,700 visas for Irish people was depleted within minutes of being released online in March 2014 (Kenny 2014b). One advantage that the Canadian working holiday visa has over the Australian one is the ability of the visa holder to have a partner and dependents accompany them. Uptake of the young professional visa, which those with a job offer can access, was much slower and the quota was unfulfilled. Table 1.4 shows that, in 2015, the United Kingdom returned to its primacy as a destination for the Irish and Australia attracted less than half the

number of Irish migrants it did in 2013. Canada represents the largest increase in attraction for Irish emigrants in the period to April 2015.

Table 1.4: Estimated Irish Migration classified by Country of Destination, 2010 – 2015

Year ending April / Destination	Irish Emigrants					
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
	'000					
UK	15.3	20	19	21.9	17.9	19.2
Rest of EU 15	11.9	13.9	14.4	11.5	16.2	15.3
EU 13	14.6	10.4	9.6	14.2	8.7	6.8
Australia	10.4	13.4	18.2	15.4	10	7.5
Canada	2.4	2.1	3	5.3	4.7	7.7
USA	2.9	4.7	8.6	6.2	6.9	5.9
Rest of world	11.7	16.2	14.4	14.4	17.5	18.4
Total persons	69.2	80.6	87.1	89	81.9	80.9

Source: CSO (2015b)

Despite Australia's preoccupation with attracting skilled migrants, it should be noted that it currently only attracts five per cent of the world's skilled migration (UN-DESA and OECD 2013, p.5). Policy amendments or reformulations should be mindful of the willingness of emigrants from places other than the Asia Pacific region to continue to travel there given the rising costs and increasing difficulty of getting a visa. Australia's population growth rate has slowed to a rate of 1.4 per cent last seen nearly ten years ago (ABS 2015). The high rate of transference from temporary to permanent migration demonstrated by Irish temporary visa holders suggests that the temporary migration programme is having two effects: it is providing Australia with an enlarged labour force and is supplementing the population augmentation afforded by its permanent programme.

1.3 Working Holiday Makers

The stated purpose of the Working Holiday Maker programme is 'to foster closer ties and cultural exchanges between Australia and partner countries, with particular emphasis on young adults' (DIBP 2016h, p.3). In the 42 years since its establishment, the WHM visa has been a point of entry to Australia for thousands of young Irish people. Since 2000, over 232,000 visas have been granted to Irish applicants along with approximately 9,000 to people from Northern Ireland (Table 1.5). The peak year for applications was the 2011-12 programme year. It is notable that WHM visa applications remained steady throughout the early 2000s, and even increased, at a time when Ireland was economically buoyant. This supports the hypothesis that WHMs were migrating, not simply to earn money temporarily while Ireland's economy was in recession, but for a range of reasons.

The twelve-month WHM visa allows holders to apply for a second year if they complete 88 days of 'specified work' in a regional place. 'Specified work' includes work in the agriculture, mining and construction industries. For the purposes of this visa, the entire states and territories of Tasmania, the Northern Territory and South Australia are considered regional. This means, for example, that backpackers can do construction work in metropolitan Adelaide to get a second year visa.⁶ It is clear that the Department is well aware that the temporary migration programme feeds the permanent one (DIBP 2014b, p.54). Since the Department enables the visa churn, one must assume the outcomes are viewed favourably by the Australian government.

Table 1.5: Working Holiday Maker visas granted to applicants from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, 2000-2015

	Republic of Ireland - No. of subclass 417 visas granted	Northern Ireland - No. of subclass 417 visas granted	Total WHMs	UK - No of subclass 417 visas granted (used to calculate Northern Ireland total at 1.5%)
1999-2000	10,940	508	11,448	33,850
2000-2001	11,426	593	12,019	39,558
2001-2002*	0	0	0	0
2002-2003	11,539	599	12,138	39,941
2003-2004	12,260	526	12,786	35,061
2004-2005	12,585	451	13,036	30,092
2005-2006	12,655	435	13,090	29,029
2006-2007	13,554	468	14,022	31,218
2007-2008	17,133	513	17,646	34,168
2008-2009	22,759	602	23,361	40,108
2009-2010	14,790	555	15,345	36,995
2010-2011	21,753	585	22,338	38,974
2011-2012	25,827	626	26,453	41,712
2012-2013	19,117	692	19,809	46,131
2013-2014	11,996	678	12,674	45,208
2014-2015	7,793	671	8,464	44,730
2015-2016	6,743	633	7,376	42,175
	232,870	9,135	242,005	

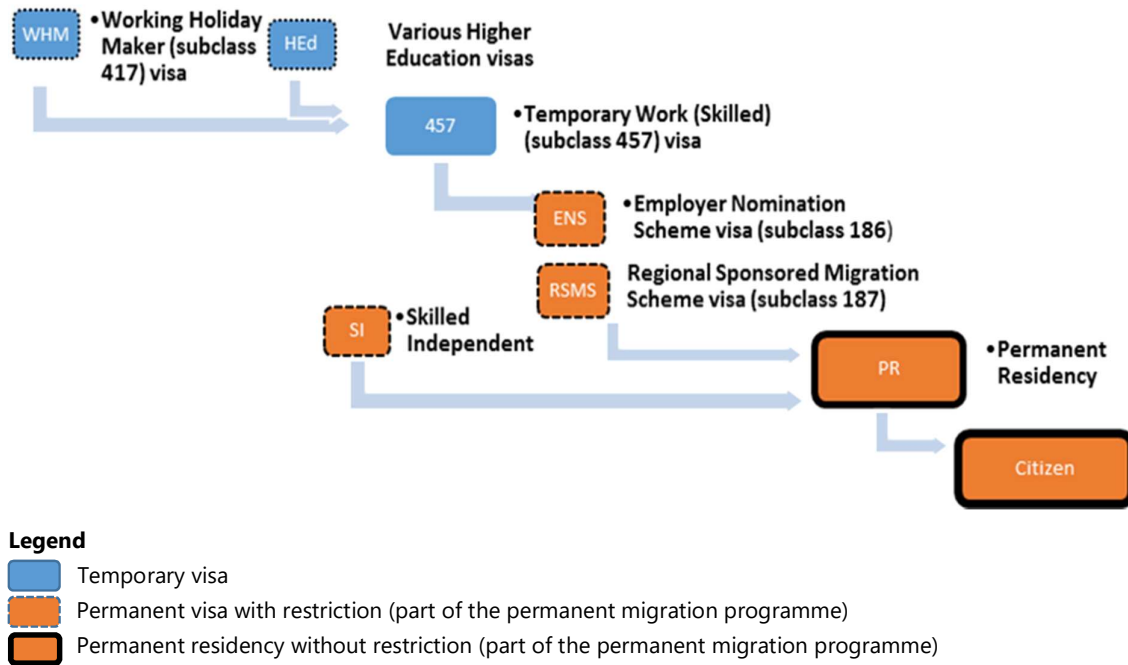
*Data unavailable for this year

Source: Compiled from published DIBP statistics

A temporary visa such as the WHM or 457 visa was the first visa on a stepped visa path to permanency for many immigrants. Figure 1.4 represents the common pathways to permanency for temporary entrants in this study.

⁶ See <http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa-1/417-#> for excluded postcodes.

Figure 1.4: Pathway from temporary entry visas to Australian citizenship



Australia has permanent and temporary visa programmes. There are three pathways to permanent migration – Economic (Skilled), Family and Humanitarian. There are also Economic (Skilled), Family and Humanitarian pathways for temporary migration as well as a range of visitor visa pathways. The Working Holiday Maker visa is categorised as a visitor visa. As an element of the temporary migration programme, the WHM visa is not capped, meaning the number of visas granted is determined by demand and supply. In contrast, the permanent migration intake is carefully planned with 189,770 permanent residency visas issued in the 2015-2016 programme year (DIBP 2016a, p.1). This number can rise and fall in line with Australia’s domestic needs. The permanent programme consists of Skill stream and Family stream places with a small number of places (approximately 300) given in the special eligibility visa allocation. Applicants from the Skill stream make up approximately 68 per cent of the visas granted in the permanent migration programme (DIBP 2016a, p.7).⁷ Thus, while an element of chain migration amongst the Irish remains, as shown by the number of respondents who knew someone at their Australian destination, earlier migration pathways afforded by family sponsorship no longer predominate (Hugo 1988).

The marked increase in Irish applications for the Australian Working Holiday Maker visa was part of a trend which has also affected Canada and New Zealand. According to the World Migration Report

⁷ Note that within the ‘Skilled’ category, the numbers are made up of principal applicants and often spouse/partner and dependents so ‘family’ applicants are part of the skilled intake.

2015, Australia accounted for half of the flow of working holiday makers in the OECD area. Of the 485,000 people who migrated as working holiday makers 93 per cent went to Australia, Canada, New Zealand or the United States. Table 1.6 shows that Australia's share of this migrating cohort increased by 62 per cent over the period 2008-13.

Table 1.6: Migration flows of working holiday makers, 2008-13

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2012-13	2008-13
	000's						Change (%)	
OECD (22 countries)	430	403	419	414	435	485	11	13
Australia	154	188	176	185	215	249	16	62
United States	153	116	118	98	80	86	8	-43
Canada	41	45	50	55	59	59	0	44
New Zealand	40	41	45	45	51	58	13	43
United Kingdom	34	5	21	21	20	21	6	-39

Source: OECD (2015 p.26)

The Department acknowledged the increase in Irish temporary arrivals in its 2012 report stating that,

Over the eight years ending June 2012, the largest change to Working Holiday Maker net overseas migration arrivals was by citizens of Ireland, where arrivals increased from a low of 1,976 persons for the year ending June 2005 to 11,364 persons for the year ending June 2012 (DIBP 2012, p.61).

It is important to note here that the majority of Irish migrants to Australia, even those who come on a temporary WHM visa, are skilled migrants in search of employment. Although there is a substantial body of literature on migrant workers in tourism literature, there is little on migration and labour studies in Australia. However, work on social rights and citizenship and aspects of temporary economic migration, such as precarious employment and social protections for WHMs and 457 workers, continues to grow. The concerns articulated by Hugo and other leading scholars (Hugo 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006b, Howe 2013, Howe and Reilly 2014, Robertson 2014) about Australia's temporary labour schemes, are mirrored in this study. Reilly (2015b) writes convincingly on reform options for Australia's temporary migration programme arguing that the WHM programme should return to its original purpose as a cultural exchange programme. Citing Uriely's (2001) typology of labour-oriented tourists, Reilly (2015b, p.477) argues that 'the profile of Working Holiday Makers in Australia has shifted from the more leisure-oriented working holiday tourist to the more employment-oriented working tourist'. This was not a user-driven change. Working Holiday Makers, like any other visa-holder are constrained by the specifications of their visa status. Policy changes by the Australian government allowed the profile of WHMs to change. Irish WHMs mostly do come as working-holiday tourists. Many travel extensively and work intermittently to fund further travel. They become travelling workers, and later, stationary workers, when their intentions around staying in Australia change. The

evolution of the WHM visa to a possible two-year stay certainly helps those who want to extend their time in the country but many Irish WHMs transfer to another visa with few making use of the second year extension. Of those who take a second year on the WHM visa, the majority progress to a 457 visa.

Robertson's (2014) article on WHMs and holders of the Temporary Graduate Worker visa highlights migrant vulnerabilities and their differential inclusion in the labour market. While it is argued that Australia's workplace legislation affords all employees the same protections regardless of visa status, Robertson (2014, p.1923) states that the 'temporal constraints of these visa categories can affect migrants' labour market participation, even though technically, temporary migrants have the same rights once in the workplace as permanent residents and citizens'. Howe and Reilly (2014, p.8) state that 'The working holiday visa is now better conceived as a labour market programme, used to fill perceived labour shortages in specified industries' than the cultural exchange programme it was originally. They cite the sheer number of Working Holiday Makers, consistently over 150,000 per year in the last few years with a high of 239,592 in 2013–14 (DIBP 2014f, p.16) and the extension of work rights as proof of the evolution of the visa pathway.

1.4 A temporal research gap: the change in Irish migration to Australia since 2008

Taking account of migrants from both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, this study investigates settlement patterns and experiences, including trends in return migration, by different visa categories of Irish migrants. Of particular interest are the settlement intentions of migrants who arrive under the Working Holiday Maker (subclass 417) and Temporary Work (Skilled) (subclass 457) visas. In part, this is an investigation of the synchronicity or dissonance between immigrant intentions and Australian federal and state governments' objectives. Khoo et al's (2008) study of migrant settlement intentions reported that respondents from the UK and Ireland were second only to the Japanese in intention to apply for permanent residency. The change in the nature of Irish migration to Australia, particularly since 2008, is evident. Australian officials recognise that there has been 'a recent shift in motivation for these visa holders, from a tourism and/or life experience to an employment opportunity' (DIBP 2013b, p.1) and the Department has acknowledged that the WHM visa in particular is often seen as a pathway to permanent residence. This is confirmed by Glynn et al's (2013) *Émigré Project* report which found that less than 10 per cent of its 3,000 Irish informants intended to return to Ireland.

Given the discernible change in nature and increase in migration from Ireland since 2008 it is timely that a study of this group be undertaken. While Khoo et al. (2008) state that migrants from Europe usually indicated that they wanted permanent residency because they liked the Australian lifestyle and not because they 'can get better jobs or higher salaries in Australia', data from a pilot study carried out

in 2012 suggests that career prospects are important factors for current Irish migrants (Breen 2012). Khoo et al. concluded that the temporary migration programme facilitated permanent migration to Australia. Given that 'push' factors (less than favourable origin country conditions) were important for those who used a temporary visa with permanent intent (Khoo et al. 2008, CSO 2013), the collapse of the Irish economy since 2008 may have influenced recent migrants in this regard.

Of importance is the number of Irish migrants, particularly graduates, who move to Australia using the WHM visa to seek some experience in their chosen career. They are not the traditional backpackers yet visa policy takes little account of the changing aspirations of this group. The increasing proportion of migrants from this category who apply for and are granted permanent residency affects the future demography of Australia and Ireland and the labour markets of both places.

Despite the high cost, longer trip and visa restrictions associated with immigrating to Australia compared with United Kingdom, Canada or the United States, Australia remained a popular choice for emigrating Irish In 2013, as shown in Table 1.7. In 2008 Australia emerged as the favoured destination for Irish emigrants and in the period 2009 to 2014 was topped only by the United Kingdom in this regard. The marked increase in emigration to Australia was likely a result of traditional destinations such as the United Kingdom and America being deeply affected by the GFC and alternative destinations such as Canada not yet increasing their immigration quotas for the Irish to current levels (Brennan 2012, Burns 2013, Canada 2016).⁸

While application numbers may have fallen in more recent years, tracking the visa journey and settlement prospects of contemporary migrants in order to profile visa use and reveal the complex nature of the Irish cohort in Australia remains an important endeavour. If Irish immigration is 'returning to normal' then this is an optimum time to research the recent period of increased movement from Ireland to Australia.

Table 1.7: Top destinations of emigrants from Ireland, 2013.

UK	21, 900
Rest of EU	25, 700
Australia	15, 400
USA	6, 200
Canada	5, 300
Rest of world	14, 400
TOTAL	88,900

Source: CSO (2013)

⁸ Canada increased the International Experience Canada (IEC) visas from 5,350 in 2011 to 7,700 in 2015. These two-year open work visas are available to Irish citizens between the ages of 18 and 36 and, unlike the Australian WHM Visa, applicants may be accompanied by a partner and dependents. In addition 3,000 Federal Skilled Visas were also available. 3,850 first round IEC visas were allocated in just twelve minutes on 14 April, 2015. Canada, G. o. (2016). "International Experience Canada." 30 August 2016, from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/work/iec/>.

There has been a steep decline in the Irish population in Australia since Federation but there has been a gradual increase in the post-World War II period and a sharp rise since 2006. It appears there is both a temporal and a spatial research gap since the most recent studies on the Irish in Australia were conducted in 2002 (Chetkovich 2003, O'Connor 2005b) and these were limited to two area studies – one of the Melbourne Irish and one of the Irish community in Perth. Chapter Three considers these studies in some detail but, at this juncture, it is sufficient to note that there are differences in focus, methodology and scale between earlier studies and the current one.

As well as providing a snapshot of the latest cohort of Irish arrivals, notable points of differentiation between this study and the two previously mentioned are that this research was conducted on an Australia-wide basis and is therefore spatially more comprehensive, and the analysis considers visa use by temporary Irish migrants, cyclical migration amongst the Irish and a consideration of return migration factors. Neither of the previous studies specifically investigate visa use amongst Irish WHMs as one is concerned primarily with Irish commitment to Australia and the other with Irish identity in Australia. The temporal distance between these studies and this thesis is therefore extended due to the unprecedented rise in long-term temporary visa use by Irish migrants from 2008 onwards.

1.5 Overall Research Objective

The main research question is 'What are the trends and patterns of contemporary Irish immigration to Australia?' Through an assessment of migrants' experiences of arrival and their integration in social and employment settings, the thesis seeks to determine how recent Irish migrants transitioned from visitor and temporary visas to permanent residency and citizenship, and how they settled in terms of social and employment opportunities. This study investigates the use of visitor and temporary visas as a pathway to permanent residency status. Given the fact that many temporary visa holders sought visa extension and transition, the specific objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the migration patterns and characteristics of contemporary Irish migrants to Australia and, to establish trends in visa use and the drivers of migration;
2. To investigate the settlement experiences and labour market engagement of recent Irish migrants taking into account the migration context and life stage of the migrants;
3. To explore how Irish settlers maintain transnational lives and a connection with Ireland.
4. To ascertain the drivers of further migration which entailed either return to Ireland or an onward journey to a new destination.

The research questions are thus:

1. What are the migration motivators and defining demographic characteristics of this post-2000 migrant cohort and did these determine the entry visa used?
2. How well do migrants in the current era settle into work and social life?
3. How do return visits and technology assist Irish settlers to maintain social links with Ireland and how strong is transnationalism within this cohort?
4. What are the drivers of further migration from Australia, to Ireland or elsewhere, by these respondents?

1.6 Study Outline

This first chapter provides an introduction to the topic of Irish migration to Australia and background information needed to formulate the research question. This provides context for the increasing numbers of Irish immigrants who find a place in Australia's labour market and become part of Australian society. It reveals a temporal gap in the study of the Irish in Australia and concludes with the study's aims and specific research questions.

Chapter Two examines trends in contemporary Irish migration to Australia. Here, the currently available immigration and census data are analysed to reveal the characteristics of previous Irish migrants. It then looks in detail at the most popular visas used by recent Irish immigrants.

Chapter Three reviews relevant literature and migration theory surrounding the main themes of this thesis. It considers significant literature on the Irish globally before exploring recent studies concerned with the Irish in Australia specifically. Academic research concerned with Working Holiday Makers is briefly considered. The literature review contains some thoughts on transnationalism which is the theoretical framework most applicable to this study despite its limitations. The chapter concludes with a declaration of the research 'gap' this project aims to fill.

Chapter Four outlines the methodology used in this study and considers the literature around qualitative and quantitative methods, survey methodology, online research and the use of social media in population studies. It highlights the improvements that could be made in data collection and research design, and identifies potential shortcomings of the study.

Chapter Five examines the theme of migration motivations and decisions using the results of the surveys and concludes that few respondents had clear settlement intentions at the outset of their migration. This chapter discusses the widespread phenomenon of 'category-jumping' from temporary visas to permanent visas which is exhibited amongst this cohort.

Chapter Six examines the settlement experiences of those surveyed and examines the extent to which settlement 'succeeds' through the migrant's ability to construct new social networks through employment, community activity, host community immersion and/or semi-cultural exclusion.

Chapter Seven investigates the ability of migrants to maintain family connections with Ireland through visits and new technology. It also explores Irish emigrants' economic participation in Ireland as members of the diaspora and their political and social connection to Ireland as a geopolitical space. Transnationalism and the extension of transnational practice through new media technology is also considered in this chapter.

Chapter Eight examines the Irish who have left Australia and their reasons for departure despite their success in both work and social life there. This chapter explores initial visa use and declared settlement intentions as well as investigating the demographic characteristics of this cohort. It considers emigrant return to Ireland and instances of repeat migration.

Chapter Nine offers the thesis' conclusion and determines if the study obtained its declared aim to answer the question 'What characterises contemporary Irish immigration to Australia?' The consideration of possible future avenues of research and a consolidated discussion of the study's research questions and objectives brings this work to a close.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a short introduction to Irish migration to Australia. It has demonstrated the shift in balance from family-centred migration to skilled migration through a brief exploration of the development of Australia's immigration policy and the expansion of the WHM visa programme and its importance as an entry visa to Australia for Irish people. It has introduced the research objectives and aims and described the structure of the thesis by outlining the contents of the chapters which follow.

CHAPTER 2

TRENDS IN IRISH MIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

2.1 Irish emigration

In the twelve months to April 2015 approximately 35,300 Irish migrants left the island of Ireland to seek employment, adventure and advancement in other parts of the globe (CSO 2016).⁹ Their journeys continue the lengthy tradition of Irish emigration to places other than Europe, since the period just after the Napoleonic Wars. Large numbers of soldiers, merchants and clergy emigrated to Catholic Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries and there was a mass Protestant emigration from Ulster to North America during most of the 18th century (Walker 2007).

Researching the migration decisions and the emigration experiences of the latest Irish arrivals in Australia reveals differences between contemporary Irish migrants and migrants in the post-1980s period, when Ireland last experienced a large wave of emigration (Glynn et al. 2015). These are largely due to advances in communication technology and travel affordability (Breen 2012) and the increasing affluence of Irish migrants; however, many elements of migration remain unchanged between these cohorts.

Although the push-pull dichotomy is arguably reductionist (De Haas 2011), and even a single migration impulse can be propelled by a complex myriad of factors, some of the most recent emigrants are seeking escape from social and sexual repression, others seek social and career advancement and more still, that age-old reason for migration, adventure.¹⁰

2.1.1 Historical Irish migration to Australia

Irish migration to Australia commenced with the British colonisation of the continent. Not confined to the convict class, the Irish were also part of the officialdom that accompanied white settlement. A number of entries in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* testify to this fact.¹¹ By the 1830s, the

⁹ This figure of 35,300 is a notable decrease on previous years. Approximately 50,900 Irish nationals left the Republic of Ireland in the year to April 2013 (CSO 2013). Around 12,500 people left Northern Ireland to live outside the United Kingdom between mid-2011 and mid-2012 with indicators of out-migration showing signs of modest increase (NISRA 2013). In the year to April 2014, approximately 40,700 Irish citizens left the Republic of Ireland.

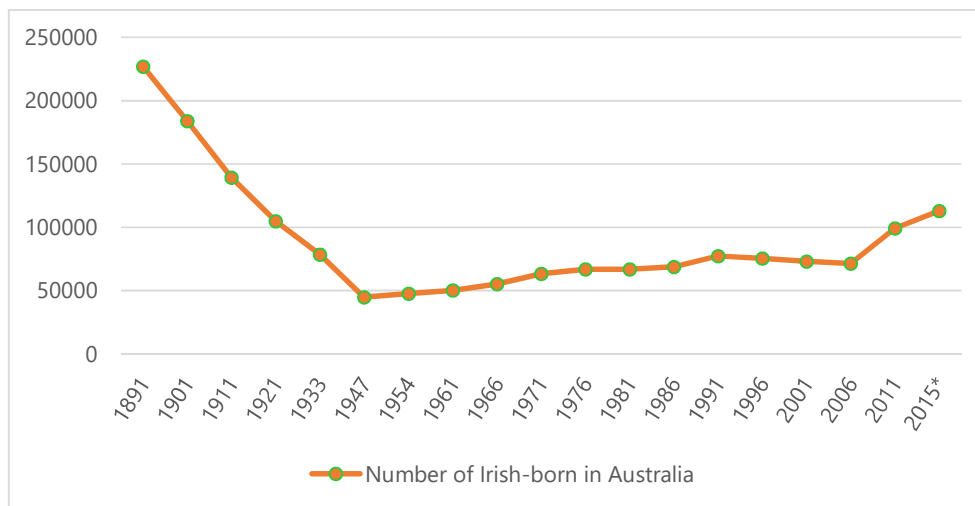
¹⁰ The categories provided here for the motivators of migration derive from the responses provided by Irish immigrants to the survey questions described later in this work.

¹¹ See the entries for Denis Conisden (?–1815), Thomas Jamieson (1753–1811), D’Arcy Wentworth (1762–1827), John Harris (1754–1838), Jacob Mountgarrett (1773–1828), Nicholas Divine (1739–1830), and John Cuthbertson (?–1823) for a few examples of those who held posts such as surgeon, commandant, and superintendent of convicts. *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au> (accessed 10/06/2012).

Colonial administration was offering land grants and assisted passages to willing immigrants to supplement the initial convict population and the majority of the new population were free settlers by the 1850s. Gold rushes in Victoria and Western Australia had brought large numbers of immigrants in the 1850s and 1860s. Assisted passage schemes and economic growth in the 1880s saw another influx of newcomers and this became the height of Irish immigration to Australia in colonial times.

In the 1880s, the Irish-born comprised around 9.5 per cent of the total colonial population although the Irish component differed from colony to colony (South Australia 1881). In 1901, 21.5 per cent of the Australian population was Irish-born (Phillips et al. 2010, p.22) however this decreased to 19 per cent by 1911 (Castles 1991). Interestingly, the English-born and Scottish-born maintained their proportion of the Australian population at around 47 per cent and 12 per cent respectively between 1861 and 1911. Figure 2.1 shows the number of Irish-born people in Australia between 1891 and 2015 where the recent upwards trend of the Irish-born component in the last decade is clearly visible.

Figure 2.1: The Irish population of Australia from 1891 to 2015



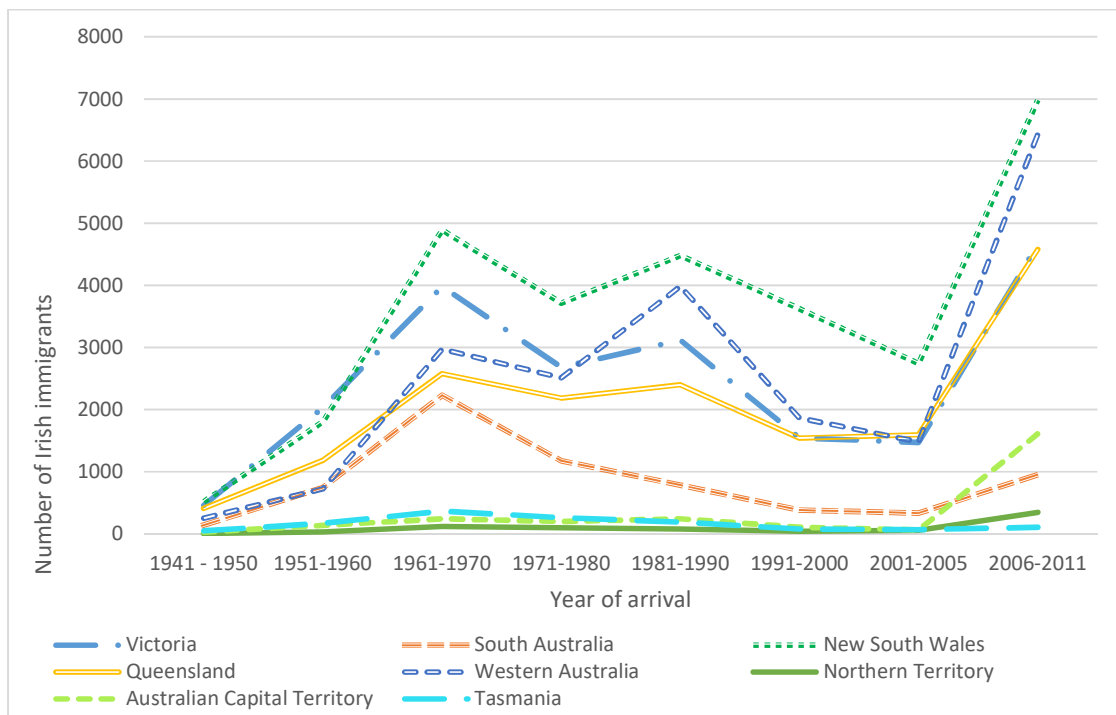
*Note that numbers for 2015 were calculated using ABS 2011 QuickStats Country of Birth data for Ireland (2201) and Northern Ireland (2104) and adding the DIBP arrival figures for Irish-born in Table 5.2 of Historical Migration Statistics. A 1.5% proportion of the UK ERP is used to estimate Northern Ireland's ERP in Australia.

Source: Compiled using ABS and DIBP data

Migration slowed significantly in the inter-world war years. Australia reintroduced assisted passage to bolster numbers from preferred source countries after World War II when it became clear that population augmentation was needed. From 1946 until 1972, the great majority of British arrivals to Australia were part of an assisted passage scheme ('Ten Pound Poms') jointly agreed between the British and Australian governments until Britain withdrew in 1972. The scheme was open to residents of the Commonwealth but was particularly favoured by immigrants from the United Kingdom (DIMA 2001). The scheme was closed to anyone from the Republic born after 1949 since Ireland left the

Commonwealth that year but many migrants from the Republic of Ireland lived in England prior to their departure for Australia. Thus, immigration policy was particularly favourable to the Irish until the 1970s (Grimes 1988) and remained so for those from Northern Ireland who were, of course, British citizens. Sea travel tapered off through the early 1970s but it was not until 1977 that air travel took over completely (Richards 2008, Fouweather 2013). Figure 2.2 shows that New South Wales and Victoria are traditionally popular states for Irish immigrants. New South Wales maintained its primacy as a destination even when incoming numbers decreased. From the 1970s, Western Australia attracted more Irish arrivals and since the mid-2000s, Western Australia has risen further in popularity for Irish migrants, along with Queensland and the ACT. South Australia, the Northern Territory and Tasmania attract the least number of Irish immigrants although South Australia, having experienced a steady decline in Irish arrivals since the 1970s, saw an increase from the early 2000s

Figure 2.2: Arrivals from Ireland and Northern Ireland, prior to 1941 until 2011, by state/territory.



Source: ABS, Census of Australia, 2011

In an overview of 2011 Census data, Table shows that these two areas attract numbers commensurate with their share of the Australian population. Construction industry work in these places attracted tradespersons, project managers and engineers. Western Australia was a newly popular destination for the most recent cohort and this was due to the upsurge in mining and affiliated industries which is also reflected in high percentages of Skill stream and 457 visas. Partners and families of Fly In, Fly Out (FIFO) workers tended to live in Perth while the worker travelled and lived in remote mining towns.

Table 2.1: Geographic distribution of and inward flow data for Irish immigrants against stock data by state/territory

Population (%)	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT
Proportion of all persons Census - 2011	32	25	20	7	10	2	1	2
Proportion of Ireland-born Census - 2011	33	22	16	5	21	1	1	1
Permanent additions - 2014–15 (%)								
Skill stream (primary)	28	12	10	2	42	0	6	0
Skill stream (dependent)	21	24	10	4	37	0	4	0
Family stream	26	25	21	3	22	0	2	1
Temporary entrants - 2014–15 (%)*								
International students	51	18	12	0	15	0	1	2
Temporary Work (Skilled) visa (subclass 457) (primary)	31	17	10	1	36	0	4	1
Permanent departures (%)								
All Ireland-born permanent residents	38	18	14	3	24	0	1	2

*Excludes WHM visa which is a visitor visa

Source: DIBP (2015e Country Profile: Ireland)

Table 2.3 shows that 33,456 of the Irish-born enumerated in the 1991 census had been in Australia for more than ten years having arrived prior to 1981. It also shows the injection of new Irish stock that came from the last great wave of emigration in the late 1980s - just over 4,000 people arrived between 1981 and 1985 but 3,921 people arrived in the programme year 1986-87 and 5,952 arrived in the 1988-89 year (ABS 1991, p.20). No other English-speaking source country had an influx in 1986 that matched the total of the previous five years although New Zealand and United Kingdom arrivals also jumped significantly in the period 1988-89 and fell the following year.

Table 2.3: Birthplace by Year of Arrival, 1991 Census of Australia

Birthplace	Prior to 1981	1981-1985	1986-1987	1988-1989	1990-1991	Not stated	Total
Canada	12,825	3,122	1,549	1,918	2,668	364	22,446
Ireland	33,456	4,414	3,921	5,952	2,756	1,232	51,731
New Zealand	117,027	47,306	31,484	42,917	19,156	6,169	264,059
South Africa	21,614	10,429	7,318	5,626	3,228	721	48,936
United Kingdom (a)	884,796	83,986	33,249	41,593	35,470	24,620	1,103,714
USA	21,808	6,047	3,161	4,725	7,088	861	43,690
Total	1,091,526	155,304	80,682	102,731	70,366	33,967	1,534,576

(a) Includes England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Source: Census, ABS (1991)

Table 2.4 shows that the rejuvenation of the Irish economy in the late 1990s slowed outward migration, whereby 31,200 Irish people left the country in 1996 but only 20,700 left in 2003 (CSO 2003). Corcoran (2002, p.176) noted that even in the period 1971-1979, when Ireland experienced net immigration for the first time in 200 years, net emigration continued for those aged between 15 and 34. She proposed that 'many newly created jobs went to returned emigrants who brought with them skills and experience, while Ireland's youth continued to seek work abroad' thereby suggesting that Irish emigration will persist regardless of the economic buoyancy of the state.

Table 2.4: Estimated Emigration from Ireland by Destination and Year

Year	UK	Rest of EU	USA	Rest of world	Total
	000s				
1996	14.1	5.1	5.2	6.8	31.2
1997	11.6	3.8	3.4	6.6	25.3
1998	11.8	5.9	5.3	5.6	28.6
1999	11.2	5.5	5.3	9.5	31.5
2000	7.2	5.5	4	10	26.6
2001	7.8	5.6	3.4	9.5	26.2
2002	7.4	4.8	4.8	8.5	25.6
2003	5.9	4.6	1.9	8.3	20.7

Source: CSO (2003)

By the time the Irish economy had matured into the Celtic Tiger with a boom in the service and knowledge economy sectors; particularly the ICT, pharmaceutical and financial services industries (Grimes and White 2005), and the concomitant rise in the standard of living, construction of housing and purchase of luxury goods, net inward migration of Irish-born people to Ireland returned. Table 2.5 shows the increase in Irish people returning to Ireland from the late 1990s to 2002 with a further peak in 2007. Following the Austerity period, numbers of returning Irish dipped to a low of 11,600 in 2014 but the following two years show a slight increase.

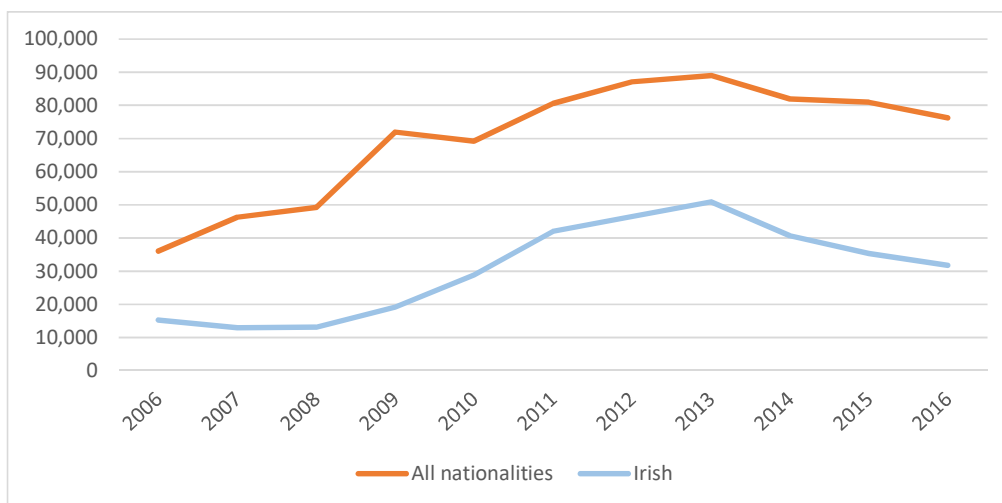
Table 2.5: Estimated Immigration to Ireland by Nationality and Year (000's)

April	All nationalities	Irish	UK	EU15 excluding Irish and UK	EU15 to EU28 states	Other nationalities
1997	44.5	20.8	8.4	5.5	..	9.7
1998	46	24.3	8.6	6.1	..	7
1999	48.9	26.7	8.2	6.9	..	7
2000	52.6	24.8	8.4	8.2	..	11.1
2001	59	26.3	9	6.5	..	17.3
2002	66.9	27	7.4	8.1	..	24.4
2003	60	17.6	9.1	8.8	..	24.5
2004	58.5	16.7	7.4	13.3	..	21.1
2005	84.6	18.5	8.9	9.3	34.1	13.7
2006	107.8	18.9	9.9	12.7	49.9	16.4
2007	151.1	30.7	4.3	11.8	85.3	19
2008	113.5	23.8	6.8	9.6	54.7	18.6
2009	73.7	23	3.9	11.5	21.1	14.1
2010	41.8	17.9	2.5	6.2	9.3	6
2011	53.3	19.6	4.1	7.1	10.1	12.4
2012	52.7	20.6	2.2	7.2	10.4	12.4
2013	55.9	15.7	4.9	7.4	10.9	17.1
2014	60.6	11.6	4.9	8.7	10	25.5
2015	69.3	12.1	5	8.9	12.8	30.4
2016	79.3	21.1	4.5	10	12	31.8

Source: CSO (2016)

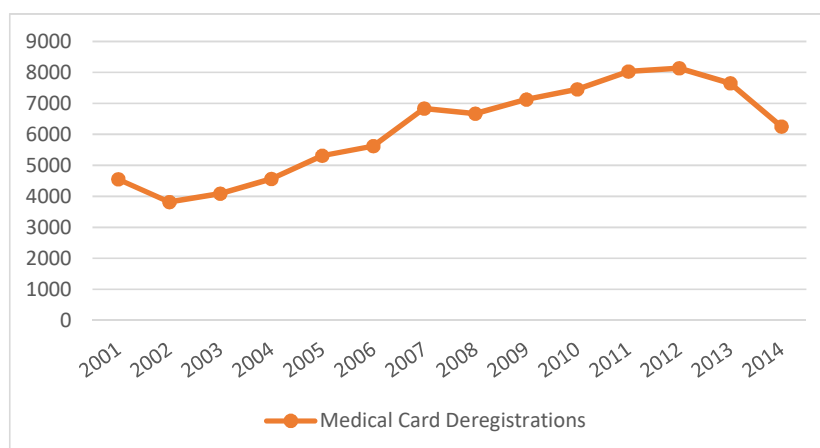
When the Irish economy went into crisis in 2008, signalling the start of a global recession, net emigration returned as the most prominent feature of Ireland's migration profile. Figure 2.3 shows that emigration of Irish citizens peaked in 2013 with 50,900 Irish nationals leaving the country in the year to April. Emigration figures for Northern Ireland show the peak period to be 2012 as recorded in medical card de-registrations (Figure 2.4). At this time more females than males left and the highest emigrating age group was the 25-34 year olds (NISRA 2014).

Figure 2.3: Estimated emigration from Ireland, 2006-2016



Source: CSO (2016)

Figure 2.4: Emigration from Northern Ireland to outside the UK as represented by Medical Card Deregistration



Source: NISRA (2014)

Table 2.6 shows that a steady stream of Irish people continued to immigrate to Australia with around 1,400-1,500 people arriving on permanent visas even during Ireland’s most prosperous years. Irish immigration to Australia started to rise again in 2008 with 2,385 Irish-born permanent additions that year. The number of permanent entry visas allocated to Irish immigrants does not tell the full story since conversion from temporary visas such as the WHM and 457 visas to permanent residency visas was common. The number of onshore permanent additions, representing conversions from a temporary visa to a permanent visa, increased noticeably among Irish arrivals from 2009 to 2014, as the highlighted figures in Table show. The same cannot be said for the Northern Ireland-born as indicated in Table 2.7.

Table 2.6: Australia: Ireland-born by Category of Traveller (On and Off Shore Permanent Additions), 2000-01 to 2013-14

Year	Offshore Settler Arrival	Long Term Resident Return	Long Term Visa Arrive	Short Term Res Return	Short Term Visa Arrive	Res Perm Depart	Long Term Resident Depart	Long Term Visa Depart	Short Term Res Depart	Short Term Visa Depart	Onshore Permanent Additions	Total Additions
2000-01	709	470	3,471	18,747	56,271	320	522	2,157	18,155	58,825	333	1,042
2001-02	504	569	2,920	na	n,a	323	442	1,971	na	na	400	904
2002-03	649	602	2,792	17,527	50,431	287	402	1,732	17,481	53,094	411	1,060
2003-04	942	583	3,326	17,890	61,128	357	411	1,769	19,063	60,795	488	1,430
2004-05	895	593	3,470	20,040	63,359	366	542	1,861	21,527	64,060	517	1,412
2005-06	1,067	663	3,747	22,682	67,568	386	574	1,647	23,540	69,149	485	1,552
2006-07	1,165	644	3,566	24,652	70,804	423	531	1,975	25,334	70,755	505	1,670
2007-08	1,261	748	4,966	25,958	75,542	478	574	2,325	27,382	75,549	584	1,845
2008-09	1,531	756	7,073	26,727	73,947	453	443	3,157	26,460	74,041	854	2,385
2009-10	1,488	761	7,522	29,732	65,304	412	416	4,466	28,744	68,167	1,256	2,744
2010-11	1,321	864	11,878	33,702	64,891	507	367	5,298	34,875	63,385	1,710	3,031
2011-12	2,241	842	20,244	40,430	73,160	508	335	5,966	40,689	77,110	2,340	4,581
2012-13	1,662	718	22,279	42,302	71,533	551	324	8,629	44,998	79,984	3,122	4,784
2013-14	1,272	651	19,000	51,324	70,160	657	439	9,533	51,124	84,355	4,269	5,541
											17,274	33,981

Source: DIBP unpublished data

Table 2.7: Australia: Northern Ireland-born by Category of Traveller (On and Off Shore Permanent Additions), 2000-01 to 2013-14

Year	Offshore Settler Arrival	Long Term Resident Return	Long Term Visa Arrive	Short Term Res Return	Short Term Visa Arrive	Resident Permanent Depart	Long Term Resident Depart	Long Term Visa Depart	Short Term Res Depart	Short Term Visa Depart	Onshore Permanent Additions	Total Additions
2000-01	136	102	299	4,632	10,322	58	102	132	4,577	10,250	62	198
2001-02	131	108	295			57	100	130			80	211
2002-03	188	116	299	4,425	10,849	59	91	135	4,363	10,988	76	263
2003-04	274	114	329	4,855	11,469	69	88	150	5,023	11,689	85	359
2004-05	273	120	449	5,660	11,720	70	102	152	5,703	12,002	95	368
2005-06	351	128	488	6,097	11,888	80	116	143	6,051	12,158	97	448
2006-07	354	131	522	6,564	12,319	85	110	154	6,462	12,565	98	453
2007-08	354	133	618	7,031	11,657	91	108	182	6,970	11,964	114	468
2008-09	326	132	656	7,095	11,129	92	93	207	6,899	11,412	155	481
2009-10	235	139	663	7,842	11,183	107	92	229	8,052	11,601	148	383
2010-11	167	138	753	8,440	10,894	107	82	222	8,496	11,327	144	312
2011-12	256	127	940	9,063	10,311	104	76	237	9,057	10,813	142	398
2012-13	181	131	1,006	9,184	10,632	114	67	276	9,379	10,899	159	340
2013-14	145	128	814	9,801	11,295	109	69	306	9,820	12,056	195	340
											1,649	5,021

Source: DIBP unpublished data

Movement towards Ireland from Australia declined in the years after 2007. The Australian Quarterly Report for Net Overseas Migration for March 2013 gives the annual historical series for the period March 2005 to March 2013 and shows a decline in the number of Australians (likely dual Irish-Australian citizens) departing for Ireland from a peak of 1,453 departures in March 2007 to 587 departures in March 2013 (DIBP 2013c, p.125). This suggests that although Australia was one of the most popular destinations for Irish emigrants, the Irish in Australia represented less than five per cent of Irish nationals returning to Ireland.

2.2 Irish migration to Australia in the global context

According to the OECD, only 3.2 per cent of the world's population (approximately 232 million people) are migrants (UN-DESA and OECD 2013, p.2). This figure obscures the high concentration of those people in traditional centres of emigration and settlement. Ireland has a reputation as an 'emigrant nursery' and the small island has had the statistical record through the 1950s, 1980s and post-2008 to substantiate this (Mac Laughlin 1994, p.2). Although the term implies a somewhat deliberate strategy which cannot be verified as easily as the statistics, notions of chain migration, migration network development and familiarity with migration can more easily be applied (O'Farrell 1986, Chetkovich 2003, Campbell 2007).¹² Castles (2010, p.1658) notes that 'cultures of emigration have become established in certain origin areas,' and Chetkovich's (2003) thesis demonstrates the culture of emigration which has dominated Irish society.

Table 2.8 shows Australia's increasing popularity as a destination for emigrating Irish people in recent years and shows it was the second top destination after the UK in 2012 and 2013. This is even more significant in light of the increased risk in immigrating to Australia given cost and its distance from Ireland. Increasing focus on and support for Irish communities in the Middle East from the GAA and the Irish Abroad Unit could account for the increased migration to Rest of World in 2014. Common perceptions that the United Kingdom and the United States are the favoured destinations of emigrating Irish has led to much of Ireland's diaspora efforts being directed to these two places to the detriment of Australia's Irish community.

¹² See accounts of townland migration networks in Campbell (2007) and O'Farrell (2000). The emigration culture of Ireland is discussed further below.

Table 2.8: Estimated Migration from Ireland classified by Country of Origin/Destination, 2009 – 2014

Year ending April / Origin/Destination	Emigrants					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
UK	13.2	15.3	20.0	19.0	21.9	17.9
Rest of EU 15	7.4	11.9	13.9	14.4	11.5	16.2
EU 13	25.2	14.6	10.4	9.6	14.2	8.7
Australia	11.1 3rd*	10.4 5th*	13.4 4th*	18.2 2nd*	15.4 2nd*	10.0 4th *
Canada	1.1	2.4	2.1	3.0	5.3	4.7
USA	4.1	2.9	4.7	8.6	6.2	6.9
Rest of world	9.9	11.7	16.2	14.4	14.4	17.5
Total	72.0	69.2	80.6	87.1	89.0	81.9

*Denotes destination ranking for the year

Source: CSO (2014)

The skilled migrant intake is important to Australia in terms of labour supply yet Glynn et al. (2013, p.36) question if this attraction can be maintained in the future. The reasons for their doubt are related to the uncertainty of the Australian economy, the fact that a minority of Irish migrants are using the 457 or other visas which,

might lead to a longer-term or permanent stay, whereas many of those on short-term Working Holiday Visas are likely to find themselves unable to remain on after the maximum period of 24 months has expired.

Their study attracted 38 per cent of its respondents from Australia, yet the data suggest that many WHMs do actually manage to stay on after the maximum period has expired. This is often done through visa-hopping from the WHM visa to a student visa, and then jumping categories from temporary to a permanent visa option such as the 457 or a partner visa. Some respondents moved directly from the WHM visa to a permanent residency visa. The proposed abolition of the 457 visa in March 2018 will change the pathways to permanent residency that some current and all future migrants can take.

The accession of more and more European nations to huge sector economies such as the European Union has provided a migration route for many people previously denied freedom of movement. As economic and political unions collapse and reform, migration pathways will be channelled, closed and reopened in another direction. Migration will likely always be the remit of those with resources, be that money, education, knowledge and/or connections (Amit 2007). While the proportion of the world's population who migrate may not have increased dramatically – up just 0.3 per cent between 2009 and 2013 (UN-DESA and OECD 2013) - the change in access to migration and in direction of movement affected Ireland's place as

an immigrant destination. An example of migration as an agent of social change can be seen in the accession of formerly excluded countries, such as Poland, to the European Union which acted to change Ireland's immigration profile and, ultimately, Irish society (Devine 2005, Conway 2006).

In just 15 years, Ireland moved from the position of being a small, ex-colony of Britain's, peripheral to Europe, to that of the quintessential example of neo-liberal globalisation. The economic boom attracted not just the return of previous Irish emigrants but also an influx of migrant workers from Western and Central Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa. Within Ireland, societal transformation accompanied a mindset change which embraced membership of the European Union and integration into the global circuits of trade and finance. In 2004, when Poland gained membership of the EU as part of the A8 accession, Ireland was one of only three member states to grant work rights to Polish migrants (Gaine 2006)¹³. When the financial system crashed in 2008, one in ten Irish citizens and one in three migrant workers lost their jobs and net outward migration returned once again (Castles 2011, p.xix). The economic crisis led to a surge in emigration amongst Irish nationals once more with the *Financial Times* declaring dramatically that one Irish person was leaving the country every six minutes in the year to April 2013 (DIBP 2013e, Financial Times 2013). Large numbers of foreign workers also left the country. While global forces can be seen to have some impact on these migration decisions, we must recognize the local and individual specificities of the migration decision: no one single occupation, sex, class or regional group left Ireland.

Global forces have changed the social fabric of Ireland and this has some impact on emigration and return migration as notions of home and sentimentality associated with childhood, two of the most potent reasons for return, are affected by a changed 'home'. With net immigration came migrants from all over the globe as can be seen from the increasing number of people whose birthplace is outside Ireland and further, Great Britain, over the last four censuses (CSO 2006). The number of non-Irish nationals living in Ireland grew from 224,261 persons in 2002 to 544,357 in 2011, an increase of 143 per cent over the nine-year period (CSO 2011a). While there have always been non-Irish immigrants, the sheer volume of entry of foreign-born people in recent years has altered Irish society meaning definitions of Irishness will evolve in the future.

Migration from Ireland has often been characterised as 'exile' or 'victim-driven' (Cohen 2008). Historians, geographers, and other social scientists have analysed the 'push' and 'pull' factors of centuries of migration and, as much as they change over time, these remain connected to the search for adventure, prosperity and advancement (Ravenstein 1885, Schoorl et al. 2000, Lowell 2009). Macro-level forces such as global politics and economies can, and do, affect local situations and so have some consequence at the micro-level; but devising a framework for the migration decision should take into account all the factors involved. As much as an individual makes the final decision to either move or stay, the macro (structural), meso (relational) and micro (individual) level factors each play their part in enabling a move (Faist 2010, p.61). Political, legal,

¹³ The United Kingdom and Sweden also allowed immigration with work rights to citizens of the new accession countries.

economic and cultural structures provide opportunity (or disbarment) by way of permitted geographic mobility, access to capital and accepted social norms and discourses. Social relations (both strong and weak ties) offer network contacts while social capital can assist migrants in destination places. Lastly, degrees of freedom in aspects such as resources and values and ambitions and expectations can fuel the individual's decision to move or stay. Immigration policy is of consequence in this age of global citizenship since it is a primary element or structure in the multiple enablers of or barriers to emigration. The entry policies of a prospective host country either limits or expands one's opportunity and ability to participate and engage in a community located somewhere other than one's birthplace. Despite this, some Irish migrants have managed to scale barriers to migration through upskilling, visa transfer and accessing visas that were previously not available to them. Understanding the context in which immigration policy is formulated is important to correctly pinpoint both its explicit aims and its actual consequences.

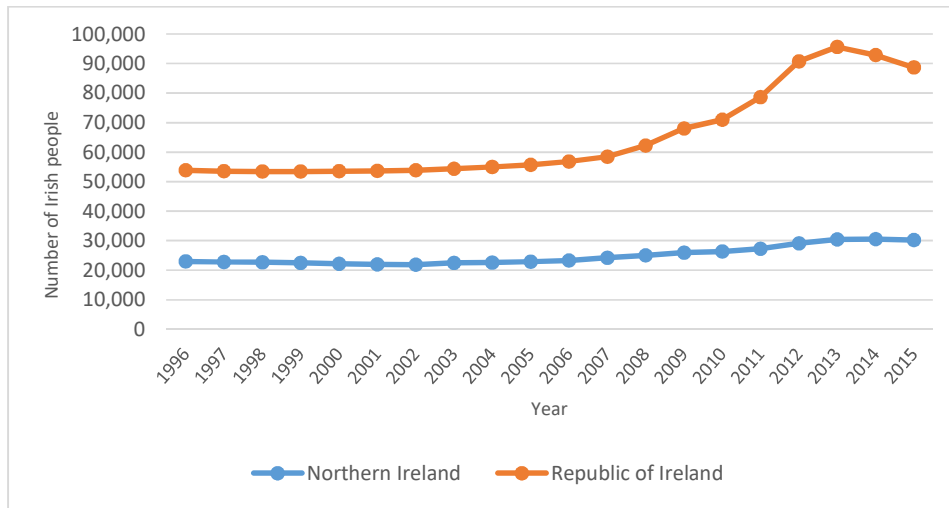
Return and onward migration is a notable feature of modern migration as shown by studies of Italian migrants in Australia (Baldassar 2011, Hugo 2014b) and is particularly prevalent amongst Australian immigrants from Europe (Lianos 1975, Lukomskyj and Richards 1986, Hammerton and Thomson 2005, Holmes and Burrows 2012). Some migrants do not settle permanently regardless of their initial intention. Changing or improving conditions in Ireland, or unexpected circumstances in Australia, can force premature or unintended departure from Australia and a return migration.

2.3 Recent immigration to Australia: Stock and flow data

The estimated resident Irish population of Australia in June 2013 was 95,640 according to the ABS (Figure 2.5). Adding the Northern Irish resident population (30,470) gives an estimated resident population for the island of Ireland of 126,110 in June 2013. By June 2015, this had fallen to 118,910, being the sum of 88,700 citizens of the Republic of Ireland and 30,210 people from Northern Ireland indicating that around 7,200 (net) Irish people had left Australia in that two year period (DIBP 2016c). Reports of an improving economy in Ireland and a campaign to attract emigrants home called #HomeToWork may have influenced return migrations.¹⁴ In addition, those who emigrated because of the recession in Ireland may have reached the end of their visa or attained Australian citizenship and returned home knowing they had the option to re-enter Australia in the future.

¹⁴ #HomeToWork was a Government of Ireland initiative launched in December 2015 intended to encourage Irish emigrants who were back in Ireland for the festive season to return permanently to Ireland to live and work.

Figure 2.5: Estimated Resident Population of Irish-born in Australia by Country of Birth, 1996 to 2015



Note: The ABS population for Northern Ireland-born people is almost double that accounted for by the DIBP. Many Northern Ireland-born people do not specify 'Northern Ireland' as their point of departure on incoming passenger cards since they often embark at Dublin. In census data however, they may be more specific about birthplace and previous address.

Source: ABS Social Statistics 2015: Estimated Resident Population by Country of Birth. Table constructed at <http://stat.abs.gov.au/>

2.3.1 Census characteristics of the Irish in Australia, 2011.

The following tables show that there are some significant differences between those born in the Republic and those born in Northern Ireland among the resident Irish population in Australia. Those from the Republic are younger and have arrived more recently. The higher outright home ownership amongst the Northern Ireland-born relates to the length of time resident in Australia as does the higher numbers who are Australian citizens. Table 2.9 shows that almost 30 per cent of the Ireland-born recorded in the 2011 census arrived between 2006 and 2011 whereas the majority of the Northern Ireland-born arrived between 1961 and 1970 with only 11.4 per cent arriving in the five years before the census.

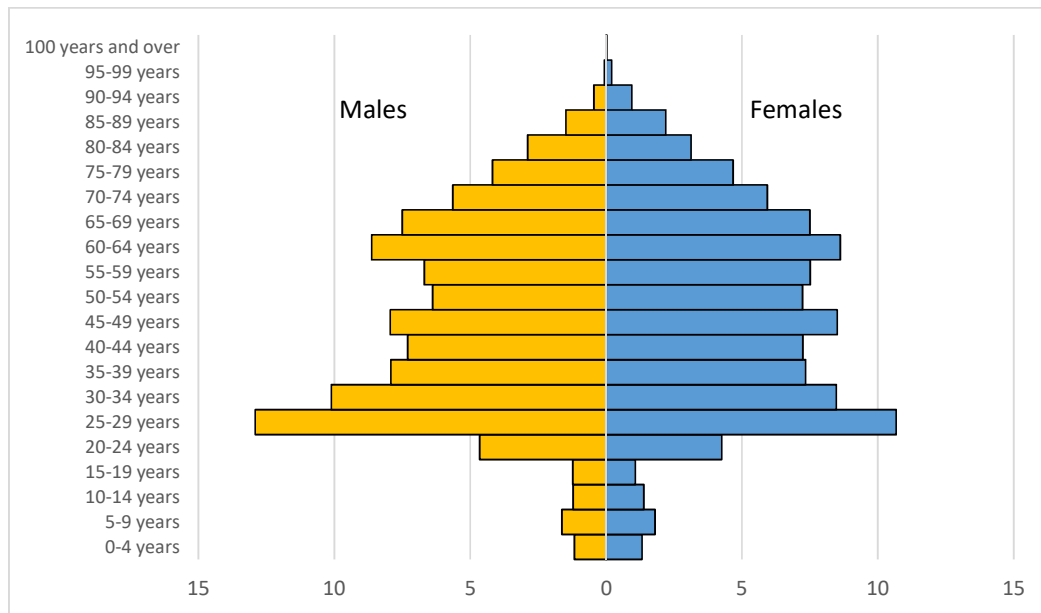
Table 2.9: Length of Residence Characteristics of those born in Ireland and Northern Ireland, Australian Census 2011

Year of arrival	Born in Ireland	% of total	Born in Northern Ireland	% of total
Before 1941	317	0.5	111	0.5
1941 - 1950	885	1.3	578	2.6
1951 - 1960	3,611	5.4	2,571	11.4
1961 - 1970	8,882	13.2	5,573	24.7
1971 - 1980	7,767	11.5	4,747	21
1981 - 1990	11,372	16.9	3,105	13.7
1991 - 2000	6,458	9.6	1,485	6.6
2001 - 2005	5,311	7.9	1,343	5.9
2006 - 2011	19,958	29.6	2,580	11.4

Source: compiled from the 2011 QuickStats Country of Birth tables available at <http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/>

Age is a factor in the endogamy evident amongst the Northern Ireland-born and in the lower numbers of families with children under 15. Almost a third of the Northern Ireland-born are aged 65 years or older while only one-fifth of the Republic-born are in this age group. The median age of the Northern Ireland-born is 57 years compared with 43 years for the Ireland-born and just 33 years for the Australian-born. More of the Northern Ireland-born have experienced marriage, divorce and/or the death of a spouse. Figure 2.6 shows the high numbers of Irish-born in the 25-34 years age bracket indicating the prime age of migration when migrants have attained educational qualifications and labour experience, and meet Australia's skilled migration entry requirements. There is also an imbalance of males in this group. Low numbers in the 0-14 years age group could be indicative of children born to one or more Irish parents being rightly cited as Australian-born in the census. The Ireland-born feature strongly in the working age brackets (15-54 years) while the Northern Ireland-born are more visible in the retiree cohort (55-65+ years). This is due to the time since arrival and the more prevalent use of the recent skilled migration entry system amongst the Ireland-born.

Figure 2.6: Population pyramid of Irish-born population in Australia, Census 2011



Source: ABS (2011)

Table 2.10 lists a number of significant demographic indicators from the 2011 Australian Census which demonstrate the differences which exist between those born in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Australia. Those from the Republic earn incomes which are significantly higher than both the Northern Ireland and Australia-born recorded in the census. There are multifactorial reasons for this. Around 70 per cent of those from the Republic work full-time compared with 63 per cent of those from Northern Ireland which reflects the older age structure of the latter. Both have higher percentages of full-time workers than the Australian-born population. In addition, a higher percentage of Northern Ireland-born people are not in the labour force – almost 42 per cent against 27.8 per cent of those from the Republic – which again reflects the age structure of this cohort. Almost 30 per cent of parents in Ireland-born couple families both worked full-time which logically translates to higher household incomes. However, those from the Republic also work longer hours. Census data reveals that almost 57 per cent of them work 40 hours or more per week. In contrast, 45.6 per cent and 48 per cent of Australian-born and Northern Ireland-born people respectively work do so. In terms of occupation, higher numbers of the Ireland and Northern Ireland-born are Professionals and Clerical and Administrative Workers reflecting the higher skilled migration requirements in the later period.

The fact that the Republic-born also pay more in mortgage or rent suggests residence in higher socio-economic areas. Higher numbers of group households amongst the Ireland-born compared with the Australian and Northern Ireland-born supports the proposition that Irish backpackers, singles and couple migrants without children often reside together. Higher numbers of renters amongst the Ireland-born compared with the longer-resident Northern Ireland-born is commensurate with the lower eligibility for mortgages of more recent immigrants. In addition to the time needed to establish a career, income and a

good credit rating and save a deposit, those who arrived post-2009 faced tighter lending criteria established by mortgage providers in the wake of the GFC.

Table 2.10: Demographic indicators, Ireland and Northern Ireland and Australia-born

	Selected Demographic Variables	Ireland-born	Northern Ireland-born	Australia-born
Sex	Percentage of Population Male	53.8	51.0	49.4
	Percentage of Population Female	46.2	49.0	50.6
Citizenship	Percentage of Population Australian Citizen	52.6	64.6	98.0
Age	Percentage of Population Aged 25-34 years	25.5	8.5	13.8
	Percentage of Population Aged 65+ years	20.1	32.8	11.9
	Median Age (years)	43.0	57.0	33.0
Marital Status	Percentage of Population Married	48.6	64.4	44.9
	Percentage of Population Over 15 Never married	36.2	15.7	38.8
Employment	Percentage of Population Worked full-time	70.8	62.9	59.4
	Percentage of Population Worked part-time	20.4	28.2	29.4
	Percentage of Population Unemployed	3.6	3.4	5.3
	Percentage of Population People aged 15 and over not in the labour force	27.8	41.7	32.4
Education	Percentage of Population attending University or tertiary institution	2.4	1.9	4.1
	Percentage of Population attending Technical or further education	1.3	1.0	2.2
Occupation	Percentage of Population Professionals	28.8	27.5	20.1
	Percentage of Population Clerical and Administrative workers	18.9	15.5	15.2
	Percentage of Population Managers	13.6	15.0	13.2
	Percentage of Population Technicians and Trade workers	13.0	14.0	14.5
Family	Percentage of Population Couple family without children	49.3	52.3	36.4
	Percentage of Population Families with a child aged 0-15 years	34.5	27.5	42.3
Households	Percentage of Population Family households	74.4	78.0	71.5
	Percentage of Population Single (or lone) person households	15.6	17.0	24.3
	Percentage of Population Group households	8.4	3.3	4.1
Home Ownership	Percentage of Dwellings owned outright	27.9	40.0	32.1
	Percentage of Dwellings Rented	35.6	23.0	29.6
Religion	Catholic	75.4	24.7	25.3
Income	Median Personal weekly income	\$892	\$618	\$597
	Median Household weekly income	\$1,888	\$1,423	\$1,194
Mortgage/Rent	Median monthly mortgage repayment	\$2,128	\$1,829	\$1800
	Median weekly rent paid	\$400	\$320	\$245

Source: ABS (2011)

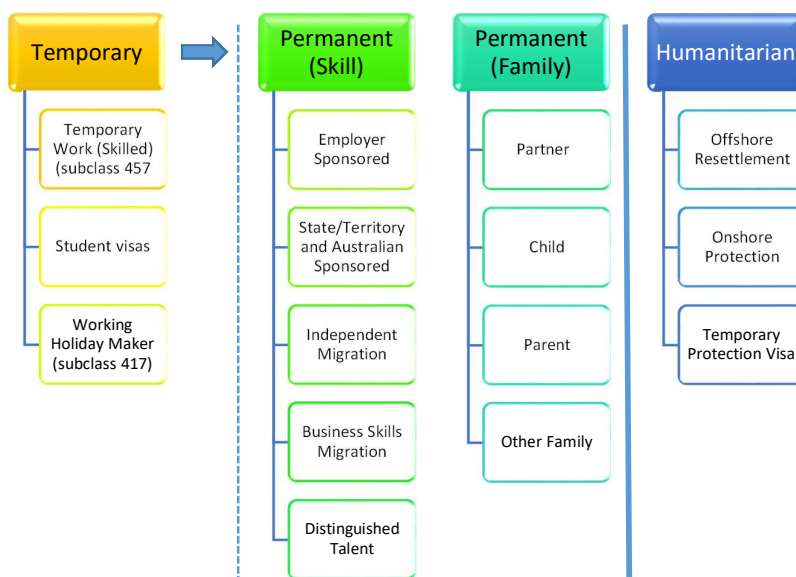
Census data show that the Republic-born differ from the Northern-Ireland born in terms of age, employment and time of arrival. Both cohorts differ from the Australian-born in demographics concerned with age where the bulk of the Australian-born are aged 0-14, most of the Ireland-born are aged 25-34, and the Northern-Ireland born are 55+. This characteristic is replicated in census data about labour force participation and subsequently in income. Family composition is significantly different with regards to one-parent families which account for almost 19 per cent of the enumerated Australian-born population and around six per cent of Northern and Republic-born Irish. Around 50 per cent of Irish couples were childless and 36.4 per cent of Australian couples were so. Characteristics such as age and family composition can be related to the visas used to enter Australia, the more recent immigration and focus of the immigration system on attracting young, independent, skilled and educated migrants.

2.3.2 Entry visas used

Investigation of the visa categories and subclasses used focussed mainly on two of Australia's most commonly used temporary visas, the 457 and the Working Holiday Maker visa. Few Irish migrants immigrated with permanent resident status for entry to Australia. Since at least 2000, Ireland has remained within the top ten source countries for these two subclasses.

The four possible entry streams are depicted in Figure 2.7. The three main entry visas utilised by people from Ireland and Northern Ireland which allow long-term residency and work rights in Australia are the Working Holiday Maker (subclass 417) visa, the Temporary Work (Skilled) (subclass 457) visa and the permanent residency visa, Skilled Independent (Subclass 175) (See Skill Stream intake from Ireland in Table 2.12). The Skill Stream is comprised of the Permanent Employer Sponsored Programme and the General Skilled Migration (GSM) category. The Permanent Employer Sponsored Programme is made up of two components – the Employer Nomination Scheme and the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS), each of which have three streams: the temporary residence transition stream, for subclass 457 visa holders who have worked for their employer for at least the last two years in a nominated occupation and whose employer wants to offer them a permanent position in that occupation; the direct entry stream, for applicants who have not held a subclass 457 visa for at least the last two years or are applying directly from outside Australia; and the agreement stream, for applicants who are being sponsored by an employer through a negotiated labour agreement or regional migration agreement. The General Skilled Migration (GSM) category is broken down by the Skilled Independent category, the State and Territory Government Nominated category and the Skilled Regional category (DIBP 2016b).

Figure 2.7: Australia's entry streams



As a source country, Ireland ranked 4th overall in the total Skill stream in the 2014-2015 migration programme statistics: 11th in the Points Tested Skilled migration and 4th in the Employer Sponsored category (DIBP 2015c). In the final Permanent migration category, family migration, Ireland ranked 17th of 20 source countries. In the Temporary visa categories, Ireland ranked low (50th) in Student visas, 18th in Visitor visas but 6th in Temporary Work (Skilled) visa grants. While the United Kingdom remained the largest source of immigrants to Australia, Ireland was the 16th source country in this regard.

Demand for 457 visas decreased significantly in 2013–14, down 22 per cent overall on the previous year. This reflects labour-market conditions that occurred through the year. As Table 2.11 shows, the largest falls were in the United Kingdom (down 7,439 grants), Ireland (down 4,344 grants), India (down 2,690 grants) and the Philippines (down 2,535 grants) (DIBP 2014b, p.53). A number of granted visas were cancelled (i.e. not activated within the specified period) by visa-holders. Most of the 49,618 visas cancelled in 2013-14 were 457 visas which the Department states 'may reflect a decrease in demand for skilled overseas labour' (DIBP 2014b, p.71). It is possible too that fewer applications were made as home country conditions began to improve and that fewer people at the end of the recession had the means to emigrate. The Department (DIBP 2014b, p.71) stated that,

The increase in visa cancellations to Irish nationals (up 1,475 on 2012-13) reflects the surge in temporary migration from this country in recent years. The most common subclasses for Irish cancellations in the last three financial years were Temporary Work (Skilled) visa (3639 visas) followed by Working Holiday visa (932 visas). Between 2012–13 and 2013–14, Temporary Work (Skilled) visa cancellations increased by 131.2 per cent while Working Holiday visa cancellations increased by 46.2 per cent.

Visa cancellations continued to increase for applicants from Ireland which ranked 4th with 2,849 cancellations in 2013-14 (DIBP 2014b, p.138). In the same period 478 compliance-related departures were undertaken by Irish nationals putting them 4th in this category behind the UK, US and Republic of Korea.

Table 2.11: Subclass 457 visas granted—top 10 source countries, 2010–11 to 2013–14

Citizenship	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	% change 2012-13 to 2013-14
India	15,808	22,078	27,211	24,521	-9.9
United Kingdom	21,667	28,733	24,147	16,708	-30.8
People's Republic of China	2,979	4,804	6,609	6,159	-6.8
Ireland	5,817	10,134	10,291	5,947	-42.2
United States	7,020	8,669	7,063	5,718	-19
Philippines	5,898	9,167	8,000	5,465	-31.7
Republic of Korea	1,118	1,810	2,816	2,316	-17.8
Canada	2,731	3,255	2,668	2,090	-21.7
France	2,089	2,412	2,421	2,007	-17.1
Nepal	249	908	1,893	1,928	1.8
Other1	24,743	33,100	33,229	25,712	-22.6
Total OECD countries	50,847	68,486	62,860	45,711	-27.3
Total	90,119	125,070	126,348	98,571	-22

1. Includes citizenship Unknown. Note: OECD member countries are highlighted in pink. Top 10 countries are based on 2013–14 visas granted.

Source: DIBP (2014e)

Table 2.12 and Table 2.13 show the size and composition of the skilled and family migration categories amongst Irish immigrants from 2011–12 to 2014–15. In this time skilled migration increased by 33 per cent overall, comprised of a 118 per cent increase in Skilled Independent category and a 54 per cent growth in the Employer Sponsored category.

The Employer Sponsored category is an extension of the 457 visa whereby applicants are afforded the opportunity to gain permanent residency after two years in Australia with the sponsorship of their employer through one of the three streams listed above. High numbers of Irish applicants in the Skilled Independent category reflect the number of people who worked in occupations on the list of those required in the Australian labour market, the Skilled Occupations List (SOL), in Ireland. The SOL is reviewed each year and applies to those who are applying for an Independent or Family Sponsored Points Tested visa or a Temporary Graduate visa (subclass 485) – Graduate Work Stream. The Consolidated Sponsored Occupations List (CSOL) applies to those who are nominated by a State or Territory Government, a direct entry stream Employer Nomination Scheme visa, a 457 or a Training visa (Subclass 407). The increasing proportion of skilled visas as a proportion of all permanent visas from 83.2 per cent in 2011 to 88.4 per cent in 2014 further demonstrates Australia’s positioning of itself as a skilled labour migration destination (Table 2.12).

The OECD reports that in recent years Australia has attracted almost 50 per cent of the world’s working holiday makers (OECD 2016). Young, skilled Irish workers have many destination options including free

movement to mainland Britain and the other countries of the EU. Over the past five years, the total number of WHM applications granted have ranged from 219,119 in 2011-12 to a low of 200,271 in 2015-16. The peak in this period was the 2012-13 programme year when 255,722 applications were granted (DIBP 2016h).

Table 2.12: Skill stream intake (Irish migrants) 2011-12 to 2014-15

Migration Category	Programme Year				Per cent change on previous year	Per cent change for the period
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15		
Skilled migration (points tested)						
Skilled Regional	166	41	17	15	-11.8	-91
Skilled Independent	531	809	1,252	1,158	-7.5	118.1
State/Territory Nominated	987	712	618	602	-2.6	-39
Skilled migration (non-points tested)						
Business Innovation and Investment	28	6	0	0	n/a	-100
Distinguished Talent	0	5	< 5	< 5	200	n/a
Employer Sponsored	2,397	2,752	3,469	3,692	6.4	54
Skilled visas as a proportion of all permanent visas (%)	83.2	83	86.8	88.4	n/a	n/a
Total: Skilled visa grants	4,109	4,325	5,357	5,470	2.1	33.1

Source: DIBP (2015e Country Profile: Ireland

The other major component of the Migration Programme is the family category which accounted for just over 30 per cent of the intake in the 2015-16 year. Table 2.13 shows that partner applications account for 83.3 per cent of the Family stream and a number of Irish men and women immigrate to Australia on one of the five available partner visas. Onshore applications can be made through the Temporary Partner Visa (Subclass 820) and Permanent Visa (subclass 801). Offshore applications are accepted through the Partner (Provisional) Visa (Subclass 309), Permanent Visa (Subclass 100) or the Prospective Marriage Visa (Subclass 300). These visas represent another pathway from a temporary visa to a permanent one.

The increasing number of permanent Irish migrants from 2011 is also shown in Table 2.13. In the 2011-12 programme year, the Migration Programme granted 4,938 permanent places to Irish citizens and approximately 379 (1.5 per cent of the 25,274 UK permanent places) to people from Northern Ireland (DIAC 2012a). In the 2012-13 year, Irish places increased to 5,209 and approximate Northern Irish places decreased to 325 (DIAC 2013a). The upward trend continued for Irish permanent additions in 2013-14 and 2014-15 with 6,171 and 6,187 additions respectively. Northern Irish migrants in these two years numbered approximately 348 and 316 respectively (DIBP 2014a, 2015a). Irish permanent visa grants declined in the 2015-16 year to 4,903 as did Northern Irish places at 284 additions (DIBP 2016a).

Table 2.13: Family stream intake (Irish migrants) 2011-12 to 2014-15

Migration Category	Programme Year				Per cent change on previous period	Per cent change for the period
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15		
Family migration						
Child	20	16	13	22	69.2	10
Partner	791	838	767	673	-12.3	-14.9
Parent	17	20	26	15	-42.3	-11.8
Total: Family visa grants	828	875	807	710	-12	-14.3
Family visas as a proportion of all permanent visas (%)	16.8	16.8	13.1	11.5	n/a	n/a
Total: Permanent migrants	4,938	5,209	6,171	6,187	0.3	25.3

Source: DIBP (2015e) Country Profile: Ireland

At 31 December 2012, 36,750 Irish people were in Australia on temporary visas including 12,030 on 457 visas (an increase of 43 per cent among Irish migrants compared with an overall annual increase of 22 per cent in 457s) and 15,010 on WHM visas (an increase in Irish visa holders of almost 45 per cent compared with the overall increase of 20.5 per cent in the visa category) (DIAC 2013b). While the overall figure for Irish temporary entrants dropped to 32,570 a year later, 457s increased slightly to 12,150 with the remainder of temporary visa holders being made up of 10,100 WHMs and around 10,000 others on Student, Bridging and Visitor visas. The increase in Irish 457 visas (242 per cent) between 2008 and 2013 could suggest a move towards spending migration money wisely and a more permanent intention towards settling in Australia (DIBP 2014d, p.13).

Although the 457 visa is more expensive and takes longer to obtain than the WHM visa, the perceived benefits in terms of working rights and the path to permanency it affords are much higher than the WHM visa. The airfare and cost of moving personal belongings are considerations too. From 2008 onwards when the financial crisis struck, few people had the resources to undertake a 'casual migration' or just 'try it and see'. Likewise, the drop in WHM visa applications from Ireland from 2013 onwards represents the reduced ability of eligible applicants to afford the trip (Kennedy et al. 2014b). Table 2.14 shows the increase in net overseas migration, that is, the difference between the number of all Irish people entering and departing Australia, since 2008.

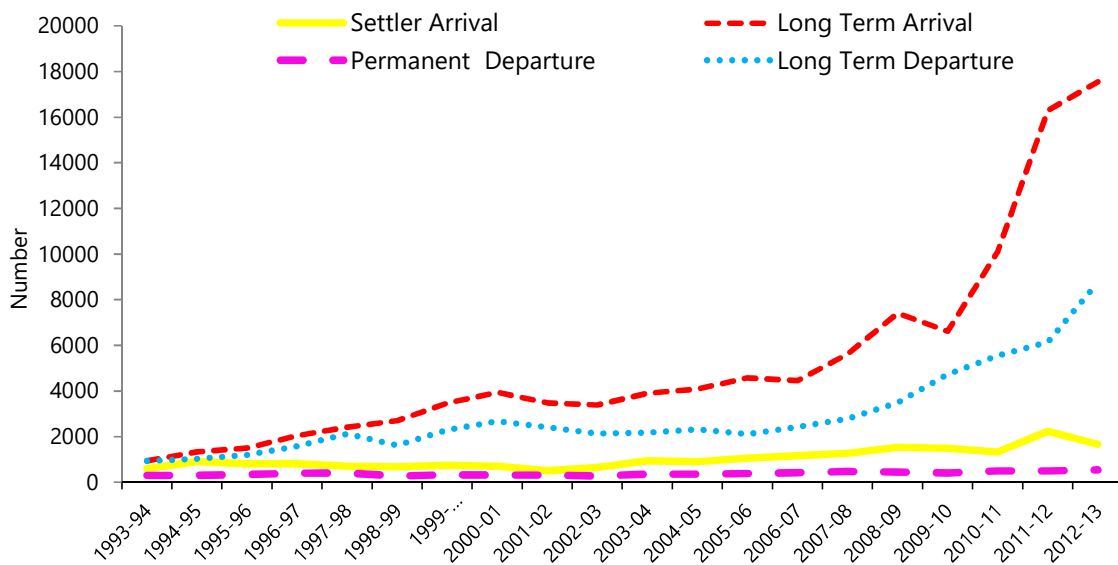
Table 2.14: Net overseas migration (NOM) to Australia from Ireland, 2005-2013.

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
NOM	1,652	1,913	2,473	4,379	7,434	3,959	7,578	14,234	8,453

Source: DIBP (2013c p.10)

Long-term temporary arrivals such as 457 or WHM visa entrants have steadily increased since 2000 but as Figure 2.8 demonstrates, an observable spike occurred in 2008 and numbers sharply increased from 2010 onwards. However, long-term departures did not follow the same trajectory. The figure shows the trend of increasing long-term arrivals and the significant gap between long-stay arrivals and departures indicating that the majority of new arrivals did not depart but secured another visa which permitted them to stay. Departures of Irish nationals were less than one-quarter of arrivals in 2011-12 (DIBP 2014b, p.83).

Figure 2.8: Permanent and Long-term Arrivals and Departures of persons born in Ireland, 1993-94 to 2012-13



Source: DIBP, unpublished data

European citizens account for almost two-thirds of the WHM visas issued in Australia in recent years. The GFC struck many European countries hard and it is unsurprising that many sought an alternative to unemployment in their native place. A DIBP report on Australia’s Migration Trends noted Ireland’s prominence in the WHM scheme in 2009-10 stating that significant growth in WHM visas had occurred amongst some OECD nations experiencing economic turbulence, ‘but none stand out more so than Ireland. In 2009–10, 14,790 visas went to Irish nationals but by 2011–12 this had grown to almost 26,000’ (DIBP 2014b, p.43). In 2013-14, the number of WHM visas granted to Irish nationals fell to their lowest level since 2003. The Department (2014b, p.43) states that since Ireland’s economy was improving, ‘this would seem to suggest that the unprecedented growth in this visa was due in part to people temporarily escaping economic uncertainty at home’. Those who were already in Australia, however, wanted to extend their stay:

Second Working Holiday visas grew strongly in 2013–14, up from 38,862 grants in 2012–13 to 45,950 grants, an increase of 18.2 per cent. Most of these went to citizens from Taiwan (11,295 grants), the United Kingdom (8,430 grants), the Republic of Korea (5,783 grants) and Ireland (5,233 grants) (DIBP 2014b, p.43).

The growth in the Employer Sponsored category and its prioritisation by the Department accounts for a great deal of the conversion of temporary to long-stay visas. In the 2009-2010 programme year, onshore applications comprised 87.2 per cent of total applications with the department noting that 'many of those granted an employer sponsored visa are already in Australia on a temporary visa' (DIAC 2010, p.8). Of the 126,000 457 visas issued in 2012-2013, over 10,000 (around eight per cent) were granted to Irish nationals. More than 19,000 Irish people were granted the WHM visa in 2012-13 from a total pool of almost 179,000. They comprised 12,000 initial and 7,300 second-year WHM visas. In 2013-14, the overall trend was downward. WHM visa applications fell by eight per cent from 249,231 to 229,378 but were still higher than the 2011-12 year when 214,644 WHM visas in total were granted. Finland, Belgium and Denmark recorded increases but significant falls were noted from Republic of Korea (down 8,327 grants), Ireland (down 7,121 grants) and Taiwan (down 6,395 grants) (DIBP 2014b, p.43)

2.3.3 Mobile versus migrant

Working Holiday Makers could be considered 'mobile' rather than 'migrant' because the premise of such visas is a long-term temporary sojourn. As Jarvis and Peel (2012, p.123) put it, they challenge 'traditional tourism taxonomies' because their work and travel behaviours effectively situate them as both short-term migrants and long-term holiday makers. In the context of this study, the categorisation of WHMs is further problematised by the fact that many temporary visa applicants subsequently apply for permanent status and this trend is growing. Category jumpers (conversion from temporary visa to permanent residency) are plentiful. Former WHM visa-holders represented almost a quarter (24.8 per cent) of those who were granted a Subclass 457 visa onshore in 2013-14 pointing to 'the changing nature of migration, as more and more migrants extend their stay by transitioning to various temporary visas' (DIBP 2014b, p.53). They often then move to permanent status. According to DIBP's *Subclass 457 Annual Report 2013-14*, in the 2013-14 programme year to December 2013, 24,440 subclass 457 visa holders were granted a permanent residence/provisional visa. This was 44.2 per cent higher than the same period in the previous programme year and 3,400 (14 per cent) of these were granted to Irish people (DIBP 2013d).

Measuring 'intention' is difficult, both because of its subjectivity and because of the time-specificity of the response given by respondents in a survey. Migrants often rationalise their decision post-event and after some time has elapsed. As Castles et al. state, (2014, p.25) 'migrants' intentions at the time of departure are poor predictors of actual behaviour' meaning that not all take the path they think they will at the point of departure. Nevertheless, settlement intentions at the departure point must be taken into account even knowing as we do that the experience of migrating and living in another cultural, political and social setting may have modified those original plans. This is imperative if we are taking the view that, all things being equal, the migrant has agency and self-determination and is the main force behind a decision to stay or move on/return home (Akenson 2010).

Structural forces play a part in the mobility or immobility of any sector of the global population. Castles (2010) argues that recent political discourse characterises migration as a problem that requires a solution.

While professional mobility, that is highly skilled migration, fits in the 'shiny new post-industrial economies', the movement of lower-skilled 'migrant workers', mere migration, is not so welcome. Australia's increasing Skill proportion of the Migration Programme intake and, within that, the focus on the 457 visa which expedites the entry of the highest-skilled applicants, supports Castles' thesis that these highly-skilled migrants are more welcome than the lower-skilled. However, the ability to transfer from a non-skilled visa like the WHM to citizenship through a series of visas, also provides an indirect pathway for those who are not strictly skilled migrants. A number of 457 applicants are intracompany employee transfers who treat the visa in the manner it is intended - as a maximum four-year work visa – and then go home. However, overall, the tendency of temporary migrants to seek permanent residency through onshore applications has increased from one in five in the mid-1990s to one in two (50.4 per cent) in 2013-14 (DIBP 2014b, p.22).

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter outlines the longevity of Irish immigration to Australia and notes the peak of the Irish in the colonial population. Numbers have slowly increased since World War II but a sharp rise in immigration from Ireland occurred in 2006 and was sustained by movement caused by the GFC. Investigating demographic characteristics of the Ireland and Northern Ireland-born through census data indicates that the Ireland-born are generally younger than both the Northern Ireland-born and the Australian-born and the majority have arrived since 2006 which explains the recent 39 per cent increase in the Irish population. They work longer hours and are more likely to be in a professional occupation and live in a more expensive area. The Northern Ireland-born have been in Australia longer, with most arriving between 1960 and 1980, and they are more likely to be retired and own their home outright. The pattern of Irish immigrants entering Australia on a temporary long-stay visa and moving to a permanent visa is strong and evident in official immigration data. This raises questions about the motivations of recent migrations and the characteristics of new arrivals given Australia's focus on attracting skilled migration. Having provided the context for this study in terms of immigration trends and the demography of the Irish in Australia, the following chapter explores the literature of Irish migration generally, and to Australia specifically.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY

3.1 Literature Review

This chapter discusses the literature relating to Irish immigration to Australia in the relation to the term 'diaspora' and its application to Irish people resident in Australia. The concept of 'diaspora' is not central to this thesis on Irish migration to Australia specifically, but it is relevant in terms of transnationalism (Castles 2002) and a sense of engagement with Ireland by Irish migrants. This chapter concludes with an examination of theories of migration. A number of government publications were used to construct the previous chapter on trends in Irish migration to Australia but as these are factual in nature rather than scholarly interpretations of migration they are not discussed here.

3.1.1. Diaspora

Researching the concept of 'diaspora' necessitates defining it which, in academic research, has been a 'complex affair' (Sideri 2008). Some researchers argue that our conceptual tools around 'diaspora' are so stretched as to be practically indefinable or empty of any analytical value (Sartori 1970). The etymology of the word is Greek, from 'diaspeirein' meaning 'disperse', from dia 'across'+ speirein 'scatter' and the term was originally used to describe the dispersion of the Jews in the sixth century.¹⁵ Hugo (2006a, p.106) argues that,

with the acceleration in international mobility, the term has been used more broadly to encompass expatriate populations who are living outside their home countries.

The expansion of the language in the field has kept pace with the elasticity of the concept. While Cohen (2008) labels the Irish one of the 'victim' diasporas in his typology, Brubaker (2005) slips them into Anderson's 'long-distance nationalists' category (Anderson 1998). This thesis argues that the definition of the Irish diaspora has evolved from an initial, narrow classification to the broader concept of a diaspora as defined by Irish President, Mary Robinson, below. In essence, it has followed the trajectory of the term itself, from a victim dispersion sympathetic with the original meaning, through the long-distance nationalism categorisation commensurate with the political strife of the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s, to the global community definition popularised in the last decade. Ireland has a long history of emigration, and, ipso facto, of diaspora. Although historical migrations took place before nation states were the norm, the literature points to evidence of international links between the Irish communities abroad, especially from the age of the Young Irelanders in the 1840s through to the global fundraising tours of the Irish Parliamentary Party in the early twentieth century (McMahon 2010, Breen 2013). Previously, nationalism,

¹⁵ Definition of 'diaspora', Oxford Dictionary, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/diaspora>

specifically the struggle for self-determination, was the glue that held together the diaspora. Ireland's diaspora appears to re-form or evolve as the term 'diaspora' continues to be redefined. Anderson (1998) defined some diasporas as long-distance nationalists because of their continued involvement with the politics of the homeland yet there is some indication that ethnicity has overtaken nationalism as the bind. The diaspora policy of Ireland proffers cultural exceptionalism as the new glue focussing, as it does, on cultural pride and, in effect, creating a global brand of the international Irish community (Meade 2011).

The Irish diaspora feature in the work of Miller (1988, Miller and Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies 2008), O'Sullivan (O'Sullivan 1992, 1997, 2003), Kenny (Shenton and Kenny 1990, Kenny 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2006b, 2009), Hickman (Hickman 2002, Hickman and Ryan 2015) and Ryan (Thapar-Björkert and Ryan 2002, Ryan 2004, Leavey et al. 2007, Ryan 2008a, 2008b, White and Ryan 2008, Ryan 2011, 2013, Ryan and Mulholland 2014, Ryan 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, Ryan et al. 2015, Ryan and Kurdi 2015). Hickman and Ryan often cite the important gendered aspects of Irish diaspora apparent in the work of Gray (2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2012, 2013) and Walter (2004, 2013, 2013) but this is a facet of Irish diaspora research which this study is not primarily focussed on due to a preference for a transnational theoretical framework.

In the context of this study, Kenny's most relevant authored work is '*Diaspora and comparison: The global Irish as a case study*' (Kenny 2003a). This article gives a broad history of Irish migration and a summation of the various definitions and theories of 'diaspora'. However, in his rejection of a discursive theory of diaspora, refuting its usefulness as a category of historical analysis, Kenny (2003a, p.143) makes the point that we should be wary of 'projecting on to the mass of ordinary emigrants...a transnational identification with Irish settlers elsewhere.' Kenny (2003a p.156) calls out the assumption of a 'single, unitary Irish identity transcending the particulars of history and asserting itself wherever the Irish settled' and, castigating the 'uncritical deployment of the concept of diaspora', he encourages the questioning of the term. Transnational social practice – individual migrant links to family members and friends in Ireland - gives life to the idea of diaspora but the notion of exile, and of a further connection to Irish people settled in other places is largely absent from contemporary experiences.

'Diaspora' implies a multi-generational and long-term, if not permanent, link to the homeland and in this it is relevant to the 'belonging' of migrant children. In its inducement of the idea of a 'community', 'diaspora' can also lead one to assume a homogeneity, which is of course, impossible, given the varying social, political and temporal contexts of Ireland's emigrants. Thinking of 'diaspora' as constituting hybridity is perhaps more useful. Social markers such as class, sex, sexuality, religion and provincial or county origin divide the Irish diaspora, like any other community. Hickman (2002, p.20) argues that 'community' lies in the realm of the imagined relations that underpin all forms of national and ethnic identifications including the diasporic and so, as a principle it is not undermined by these fissures.

It was not until the mid-1990s that the Irish community outside Ireland began to feel a political embrace. President Mary Robinson (1995) led the public in not just an acceptance of Ireland's emigrant community,

but a celebration of it, with her speech '*Cherishing the Irish Diaspora*' in February 1995. Tölöyan (1991) argues that for a consciousness of diaspora to emerge, a discourse of diaspora must be produced by a small group of intellectuals and political leaders and Robinson's affection for, and ability to draw attention to, the millions of people outside the country who felt they had a connection to Ireland assisted this (Gray 2004). It has taken almost twenty years for Irish politicians to act on Robinson's pleas that the diaspora be cherished but in May 2013, Joe Hackett, Director of the Irish Abroad Unit, noted that Ireland now has an 'inclusive approach to its diaspora. If you are Irish, if you feel Irish, if you feel connected to Ireland then, as far as we are concerned, you are Irish' (Aikins and Russell 2013, p.27).

3.1.2. The Irish world wide

Between 1992 and 1997, O'Sullivan produced six volumes of edited work entitled 'The Irish World Wide' which investigated many aspects of the Irish diaspora. The series is an important body of work in its capture of the 'state of the art' in the lull between the last two emigration spikes and perhaps more importantly, in the years before Ireland's almost monocultural profile changed dramatically.

Despite their age, many of the articles contained in these volumes remain relevant and offer links of continuity and evidence that some aspects of migration have not altered between the cohorts featured in the chapters of The Irish World Wide series and contemporary Irish migrants. The first issue, *Patterns of Migration*, contains two chapters which are of particular interest to this study, namely Hanlon's (1992) chapter on graduate emigration and Grimes' (1992) look at friendship patterns and social networks of post-war Irish migrants in Sydney.

Grimes' work is explored in more detail below where it fits with the literature on the Irish in Australia specifically. Hanlon's (1992) chapter supports the thesis that Irish migration, as a whole, has always been, and continues to be a mixture of highly skilled, low-skilled and unskilled migrants. His focus on graduate migration is particularly pertinent when discussing the makeup of recent emigration because of the focus on graduates and fears of a new 'brain drain'. He aims to show that graduate emigration, often promoted as evidence of Ireland's economic success since the 1960s, was actually a symptom of the country's industrial policies. The contemporary picture of a young Irish graduate earning a high salary in London's financial centre is often set against an image of pre-1960s emigrants, deemed to be unskilled labourers, usually from rural areas, with little or no formal education beyond primary level. Graduate emigration has been a potent issue in public conversations about the composition of Irish emigration since 2008 and this is discussed further in the survey analysis in Chapter Five.

Arguing that the migration of the middle class has been underplayed in analysis of pre-1958 migration, Hanlon (1992) relays evidence that between 1800 and 1920 an average of 25 per cent of Irish migrants to England were skilled and that by the 1940s, the figure was 40 per cent. Skilled migration was not a new phenomenon, having been part of the outward flow constantly, if to differing degrees. Migration itself was propelled by domestic economic conditions and, one could argue, still is, based on contemporary

evidence. External factors, such as the encouragement of migration to large core labour markets like mainland Britain and the United States, added incentive to anyone willing to contemplate leaving Ireland.

In the post-1958 era Ireland's focus on the attraction of foreign direct investment entwined domestic fate with global favour. The globalisation of markets, particularly the graduate labour market, allowed cross-border movement for many Irish graduates. Given that Irish graduate unemployment was low and domestic starting salaries were attractive, Hanlon (1992) concurs with Tansey's (1990) assessment that much of Ireland's graduate emigration was voluntary. Today, class, as an element of differentiation amongst Irish migrants, is much harder to clarify because of the prolific output of Ireland's universities. The establishment of free secondary education in the 1960s and state-aided tertiary education has reduced educational markers between middle and working class families to a large degree. Along with global labour market demands, the characteristics of recent emigration still reflect Ireland's industrial policies. It makes sense for those entering tertiary institutions to consider courses relevant to the sectors with the best employment options around the world. For example, the attraction of pharmaceutical and financial services businesses and technology start-ups as well as the alignment of educational outputs with industrial strategies can account for the high numbers of Irish finance sector employees, project managers and IT specialists seen in Australia's intake (DIBP 2016a, p.12).

Hazelkorn's (1992) chapter about the political economy of Irish migration marks out the characteristics of Ireland's late industrialisation. The primacy of the technological and information sectors, evident in contemporary Ireland, was initiated in the early 1980s. Hazelkorn (1992, p.183) notes 'a strong performance in commerce, insurance, finance, and public administration' and the growth of a 'dual economy' characterised by 'persistently high levels of unemployment, migration and endemic poverty, residing side-by-side with booming economic indicators...'. Further continuities with contemporary social commentary are offered in the fact that various newspaper polls from 1987 to 1989 reveal a 'deep ambiguity about migration, ranging between anger, acceptance and compliance' (Hazelkorn 1992, p.195). Hazelkorn argued that migration was a rational response to underdevelopment within, and the internationalisation, of Ireland's economy. Emphasising the class-based nature of migration, she concluded that the poor migration prospects of the low skilled argue against over-generalising the migration experience. Yet a focus on graduate emigration ignores the recent ability of the low and unskilled to migrate using bilateral agreements such as Australia's Working Holiday Maker scheme.

Corcoran's (2002) chapter investigates the experiences of returning migrants and self-reinvention. In its focus on reasons for emigration and return immigration, it offers a basis for comparison for this study despite the intervening period between the two movements being spent in America and not Australia. The relevance is in 'push' factors on the outward journey and 'pull' factors on the return, giving primacy to Ireland in the circular movement. The difference between her respondents and contemporary migrants lies in the timing of their migrations. Corcoran's respondents departed in the 1980s and returned to a 1990s Ireland, which was economically buoyant and much changed society-wise. Corcoran cites career autonomy and reinvention as notable components of the migration experience but says respondents

were drawn back to Ireland searching for a community and a quality of life that had been subsumed in the New Ireland. In contrast, the majority of contemporary migrants left post-Celtic Tiger, and post-crash Ireland, and so had experienced all the economic vicissitudes, as well as the vastly altered social context brought about by substantial and newly-sourced immigration. However, ideas about community still feature heavily in the return migration conversations amongst Ireland-Australia migrants. So too does the notion of 'quality of life' but in the sense of family life rather than career or material acquisition.

Ryan (2004, 2008b, 2008a, 2011, 2013, 2015c, 2015b, 2015a) has written widely on Irish emigration to Britain from the 1930s to the present day. Some of her work concentrates on gendered aspects of migration and the role of women in enabling movement and settlement and on the hidden aspects of migration that this intra-family role plays. While not concerned directly with Irish emigration to Australia, and although this thesis does not attempt to contemplate gendered migration in any real depth, her work is valuable in its consideration of the assumed simplicity of Irish migration to a white, British environment where acculturation and assimilation are often taken for granted (Ryan 2004). Another focus of her work, negotiating the complexity of emotions in transnational families through aspects of care-giving and family ties and obligations, are only just secondary to the importance of social networks and the strength of weak ties in the Irish-Australia migration context. Although her work with recent Irish migrants takes place in Britain, her focus on qualitative narrative analysis and the emotional dimensions of social network theory makes it relevant to this study.

Much of the literature on the Irish abroad focusses on the two traditional major destinations of Irish emigrants – mainland Britain and the United States of America. Kenny's (Shenton and Kenny 1990, Kenny 2003a, 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2009, 2014c) work concerning the Irish in America is well-cited yet for the purposes of this study offers little in the way of comparison or continuity with contemporary migrants to Australia due to both its location and timeframe constraints. Similarities exist in the character of migration to the US and Australia in that the great majority of newcomers were European up until 1965 for America and until the early 1970s for Australia. After these dates, both countries had increasing numbers of arrivals from Asia resulting in a European minority in both stock and flow populations (Shenton and Kenny 1990).

The exploration of emigration from Ireland generally, without a fixed focus on a specific destination, is important to this study. In recent years, there has been an increase in interest about the supposed changing nature of Irish emigration as well as its rapid increase since the Global Financial Crisis. Of this research, the results of *Irish Emigration in an Age of Austerity* (Glynn et al. 2013) are most relevant to this study. The *Austerity* report focusses on emigration from Ireland, the journeys of Irish emigrants and their future intentions as well as the social effect of widespread emigration on community members who remain in Ireland. The *Austerity* study shows the similarities and disparities in the characteristics of the broader cohort of Irish emigrants with those of Irish immigrants in Australia.

The *Austerity* report (Glynn et al. 2013, p.i) states that,

There exists no 'typical' emigrant, and no single set of circumstances or experiences that can be prescribed as being typical of Irish emigrants today. In fact, there are a number of 'types' of emigrant, from the educated younger person often portrayed in the media, to less educated emigrants who felt forced to leave out of economic necessity, to older emigrants who have left mortgages and/or children at home in Ireland.

These 'types' are all represented in the current study. Further consideration of the *Austerity* report is included in Chapter Six when the data on migration motivators and characteristics of recent Irish immigrants are explored.

3.2 The literature researching the Irish in Australia

3.2.1 Historical research

The great majority of research on the Irish in Australia is historical in nature and therefore, not directly relevant to this topic of contemporary migration. Primary amongst the existing works is Patrick O'Farrell's (1986, 1993, 2000) *The Irish in Australia*. Although the first edition was published more than thirty years ago, there has yet to be a book that matches it in scale and ambition. However, in its focus on the states of Victoria and New South Wales, it contains generalisations about Irish settlement and social interaction that are not applicable to the Irish elsewhere in the country as shown by Richards (1991, 1998, 2004, 2008), James (2010), O'Connor (2005a) and Breen (2013). His work also highlights the essentialism of Irishness to the Australian character, an element of some of the earliest Irish Australian historiography (Hogan 1887, Cleary 1933). The body of work on regional Irish Australian settlements is simply too vast and, truth be told, too distant in temporality to be relevant to this study and to comment on here. In its aim to represent all of Irish Australia, this thesis attempts to fulfil the wish of Reece (1987, p.13) that studies 'examine the Irish in a particular context in the light of such questions as demographic distribution, economic role, social status and mobility, political consciousness and retention of ethnicity'.

Aside from the large corpus of historical texts there are three doctoral theses pertaining to post-war Irish settlement in Australia. This latest research provides grounding for the present study and the following review illustrates the gap in the literature that this project aims to fill.

3.2.2 Most recent research

Grimes (1979) completed a thesis on the spatial aspects of Irish immigrant friendship patterns in Sydney. This thesis was important in demonstrating the social and economic patterns of settlement and in highlighting the networks which existed amongst Irish people in the city and its surrounding suburbs. In some respects, the Irish still dominate certain aspects of construction, pipe laying for example – and Irish families usually live in the outer suburbs while single Irish are conspicuous in inner city housing, yet technology's impact on friendship maintenance dates this work. It should be acknowledged that Grimes successfully integrated geography and spatial analysis into a research field dominated by historical studies.

Chetkovich (2003) produced an excellent study of the Irish in Perth, Western Australia. In studying the 'new Irish', that is, those who arrived between 1945 and 1995, she challenged O'Farrell's (2000, p.321) thesis that the Irish in Western Australia were 'happy apart' from Australian society and that they did not 'make the movement of the heart and mind, away from Ireland, into Australia'. Chetkovich's study, with its focus on the immigrants of the 1980s and 1990s, concentrates on the commitment to Australia of Irish immigrants. This is gauged by an assessment of connection to both Ireland and Australia in the light of an analysis of frequency of return visits and on multiculturalism as a policy of integration and the increasing emphasis on skills in Australian immigration policy.

Chetkovich argues for the existence of a migration culture in Irish society over the core/periphery argument of World Systems theory, and the importance, if not the predominance, of lifestyle reasons over economic reasons for emigration. By positing as an important difference between the old and new Irish, that 'later migrants could keep in much closer contact with Ireland than could their earlier counterparts, due to improvements in telecommunications and affordable, available air travel', Chetkovich (2003, p.264) succinctly captures one of the temporal gaps between contemporary migrants and her 1997 participants. The growth of smartphone technology, social media and 'less than a day' air routes between Ireland and Australia in the last twenty years shows that this area alone warrants investigation and also offers the possibility that there are new 'new Irish' in town.

In *'The Multiple Experiences of Migrancy, Irishness and Home Among Contemporary Irish Immigrants In Melbourne, Australia'*, O'Connor (2005a) also cites the advancements in technology and travel as reasons for a new study of Irish people in Australia. Her research centred on understanding more recent flows due to changed economic circumstances in Ireland. She adds to this the availability and popularity of short-term residency visas and a decline in settler arrivals as evidence that 'migration is a qualitatively different experience for contemporary Irish immigrants' (O'Connor 2005a, p.4). A review of the literature concerned specifically with the Irish in Australia suggests that this is again the case if only by sheer force of numbers. The marked increase in numbers since 2006 means that the 'Irish community', however defined, which previous research has examined, has reached a new critical mass. Furthermore, Ireland's economic situation has again changed and the country's social fabric has been irrevocably reweaved by both new source country immigration and extensive national emigration. The implications of this in terms of chain migration, migration culture in Ireland, settlement issues, perception of the Irish in Australia and Australian visa use by Irish migrants are examined here.

O'Connor's (2005a) research participants arrived between 1980 and 2001 and all lived in the Greater Melbourne area. A criterion of the project was that respondents were limited to having lived only in Ireland (North or South) before moving to Australia and the research was concerned primarily with Irish identity in Australia, the invisibility and 'whiteness' of Irish migrants, and how identity issues and migrancy impacted informants' senses of belonging and home. These are pertinent to the current study also with regard to successful settlement, transnational practice and longing as an impetus for return migration (Ralph and Staeheli 2011). The two studies are similar in their conceptualisation of identity as a fluid,

situational, even reactive phenomenon, a socio-demographic analysis of participants, and a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. Further congruence is evident in the focus on social networks as a means of facilitating and sustaining Irish migration to Australia. The preponderance of immediate and close, if superficial, glimpses into Australian life through Facebook™ is a new factor in information dissemination. Dissonance is evident in the analysis of O'Connor's data and that of the current study. Gender, origins within Ireland and religious affiliation were key axes for O'Connor's analyses while visa entry and pathways to permanence along with career progression and co-ethnic social networks are the main avenues of investigation in this study.

The temporal space between the two studies is evident in O'Connor's hypothesis that then current communication media, the telephone being the most popular, lacked the intimacy the migrant requires to deal with the separation from home. Of course, at that point in time, the researcher could not have envisaged that almost everyone eventually would have web cam facilities that help 'address this deficiency' in the form of Skype™ or Facetime™ due to the use of smartphones and iPads™ (O'Connor 2005a, p.34). Further changes over time include the resurgence of Australia's popularity as a destination for the emigrating Irish. O'Connor (2005a, p.57) noted that, prior to 1980, 'Australia's position as receiving country for Irish emigrants has been one of diminishing significance over time'. The rise in attractiveness since 2006 is a further impetus for a renewed look at Irish immigration.

Further research is needed by virtue of both the time elapsed since many of these studies were undertaken and in the contexts of new societal and economic circumstances in Ireland, as well as new immigration policy in Australia. Additionally, global communication and travel has improved in reach and affordability. These two aspects of technological advancement are particularly important in the migration context enabling, as they do, existence within a transnational sphere.

3.3 Theory

3.3.1 An overview of the main theories of migration

The literature on migration gives rise to two broad theoretical considerations when researching migration. One is the economics of migration while the other is concerned with the emotional or cultural movement of an ethnic group, whether it is bound to a nation state or geographical region or not. Neither theory completely explains Irish immigration to Australia. Elements of each of the neoclassical and new economics theories appear relevant to the international movement of the Irish but the implications and corollaries of meso-level network theory and micro-level decision-making dominate the migration process. It is important to define the stages of migration associating macro, meso and micro-level considerations in any overarching theory. While there is a danger in over-simplification, economic theory may well apply to the migration decision and can influence the migration experience and the profitability

of the move in terms of both economic and social benefits. Thereafter, network theory may play a greater part as the settlement phase begins while transnationalism may be considered more relevant to the settlement period.

Massey et al (1993) presented a concise summary of the existing theoretical work in migration research, presenting two paradigms – one which explained the initiation of migration and another which explained the maintenance of it (Castles 2010). In today's closely connected world transnationalism has gained the most traction within the theoretical frameworks of migration as a cultural phenomenon as it fits the fluidity of the migration experience. Living both 'here and there' and being of two places is an accepted form of existence for some contemporary migrants (Nedelcu 2012). Since the advent of emigration from Ireland, Irish migrants have not been a homogenous group in terms of motivation, their moves having been made for various reasons and for varying lengths of time. With the evolution of cheaper travel and the growth and circularity of the global labour market fewer moves are permanent or final, and with the advancement of technology and development of media communications, particularly social media, it is possible for family, community and cultural connections to remain relatively unbroken by emigration (Ryan 2004).

An overarching synthesis of migration theories eludes scholars despite attempts at interdisciplinarity. Castles (2010) puts this down to a tendency towards adding discipline-specific views to the mix rather than seeking to integrate them. The split in migration studies across the major disciplines of social science has resulted in

a failure to understand the historical character of migration, false assumptions of one-way causality, and an inability to understand the overall dynamics of migratory processes and their embeddedness in processes of societal change (Castles 2010, p.1570).

The dominant theory of migration and, therefore, the research questions, and units and levels of analysis differ across the academic disciplines concerned with migration studies. Demography, law and political science favour macro analysis using a rationalist perspective. Economics and anthropology usually employ micro-level analysis with the dominant theories in the former being rationalist while the latter uses structuralist or transnational theory. In geography, the level of analysis can be macro, meso or micro and the units of analysis are individuals, households or groups which are framed by relational, structural or transnational theory (Brettell and Hollifield 2014, p.4).

Economics has produced many theoretical frameworks for migration research. These can be divided into macro – Classical (Lewis, 1940); Neo-Classical (Harris and Todaro, 1970); Keynesian (Hart, 1975) and Dual Labour Market (Piore, 1979) - and micro theories - Neo-classical (Sjaastad, 1962; Todaro, 1970; Borjas, 1980); Value-Expectancy (DeJong and Fawcett, 1981) and New Economics of Migration (Stark and Bloom, 1984). Neoclassical theories (I (macro) and II (micro)) are concerned with both internal and international labour migration. Neoclassical I examines migration at the macro level and takes community or country groups as its unit of investigation. While Neoclassical I has no constraints, Neoclassical II recognises

restrictions in the cost of migration and the risk associated with the probability of employment and in these aspects it relates to the Irish in this study. The use of the WHM visa as a cheaper way of entering Australia initially, and of avoiding the points assessment of an offshore 457 visa application at the outset, could be considered typical of Neoclassical II theory as it analyses individual actors in a micro-level evaluation and looks only at the initiation phase. Neoclassical I, on the other hand, aims to explain all stages of the migration process: initiation, maintenance and end. The New Economics of Migration theory differs from the neoclassical theories in its micro-analysis which uses the family rather than the individual as the unit of research. Concerned primarily with the initiation and maintenance of migration, this theoretical development, contained in the work of the economist Stark (1991), recognises obstacles presented by a lack of financial or insurance institutions which help rural families cope with crop failure or future loss. The migration decision is undertaken by a family unit and, initially at least, one member of the household migrates. Here the migrant is the safeguard against poverty caused by natural disaster, low crop yield or unemployment and a provider of investment capital used to implement increased productivity (Massey et al. 1993). While Ireland is no longer the predominantly agricultural economy it once was, family migration in the face of economic hardship remains a valid concept.

Mincer's (1977) Economics of Family Migration considers the first phase of the migration process and the initiation of movement by families which sees migration restricted by variables in spouse employment, two-earner families and the presence of school-age children. He provides formulae for calculating the net family benefit of migration. Within the context of the family the individual spouses calculate their own personal benefit in certain geographic areas including the home place. The sum of these two benefit calculations is the net family benefit of migration. The decision to migrate to the place of highest net family benefit can result in an individual net loss which the family can internalise through a redistribution of gains. Elements of this theory are evident in recent migrations which happened in the context of economic crisis where some women gave up decent jobs to migrate for the mental well-being of a spouse who had been unemployed for a long time.

The final two theories to be considered within economic studies of migration are Segmented Labour or Dual Labour Market theory promoted by Piore (1980) and Wallerstein's (1974, 1976, 2010) World Systems view. Both are macro-level analyses of international labour migration concerned with country migrations. Theorising the initiation and maintenance of migration, Piore sees structural constraints at the destination as reducing social mobility while Wallerstein proposes that one's position in the capitalist system is the greatest inhibitor of success.

Piore (1980) theorises that international migration is caused by a permanent demand for immigrant labour which stems from four basic characteristics of advanced industrialised societies: structural inflation; problems of motivation; bifurcated labour markets and the changing demography of the labour force. Despite the high use of an unskilled entry visa by contemporary Irish migrants this theory does not apply to recent migrants because they rarely engage in low or unskilled labour. Piore's theory was revised by Portes and Bach (1985) who factored in the idea of an 'enclave economy' where ethnic workers employed

by a fellow countryman had greater chances of career progression even in the lower sectors than when employed by a non-member of the ethnic community. Despite the presence of a sometimes powerful employment network such as exists in Perth's construction industry there is little evidence of enclaves among the Irish in the labour force. Overall, segmented labour theory is not applicable to this cohort of immigrants. Older theories such as Dependency theory, developed in Latin America in the 1960s, and World Systems theory, are often viewed as a precursor to Globalisation theory (Castles 2010) but are no longer applicable given the shift in world economics.

Within sociological migration theory, four frameworks of analysis exist: Stouffer's Intervening Opportunities (Stouffer, 1940); Lee's Push-Pull model (Lee, 1966); Migrant Networks, (Taylor, 1986) and Transnational Social Spaces (Pries, 1999; Faist 2000). Lee's Push-Pull model attempts to explain migration initiation while Network theory looks at migration stream maintenance. Lee did not use the term 'push-pull' (Kivisto and Faist 2010) but he theorised that the migration stream (from Point A to Point B) and those who became part of it were influenced by four factors: specificities of the point of origin, of the destination, 'intervening obstacles' and the personal attributes of prospective migrants. Pressures at Point A include poverty or lack of economic opportunity, political oppression, and rapid population growth. Attractions at Point B usually involve more or better job opportunity and/or higher wages, social freedoms and the possibility of financial and social advancement. Certainly from the perspective of Irish emigration, economic considerations and disillusionment with Ireland's government have played a significant role in the migration decision of recent migrants. The 'intervening obstacles' include physical distance and financial, physical and legal barriers. Although distance is certainly a factor in Irish immigration to Australia, visa category-jumping shows that the legal barriers are surmountable where they exist. Lee (1966, p.51) also points out that most people are non-migrants by nature, having what he calls a 'natural inertia' that determines staying rather than moving as the normal course of action for the majority of people. Personal factors which facilitate migration include one's perception of the situation at Point A and some level of knowledge about Point B while personality traits include being amenable to change. Lee states that the 'decision to migrate... is never completely rational' and 'we must... expect to find many exceptions to our generalizations.' (Lee 1966, p.87). Although Lee's work is decades old it remains fundamental to understanding the forces in both origin and destination at play in the migration decision.

Migrant network theory, which focusses on the social forces involved in a migration trajectory, is another avenue for analysis of international migration. Boyd (1989, p.642) states that

studying networks, particularly those linked to family and households, permits understanding migration as a social product—not as the sole result of individual decisions made by individual actors, not as the sole result of economic or political parameters, but rather as an outcome of all these factors in interaction.

Along with the applicability of transnational theory to this case study of Irish migrants in Australia, migrant network theory is discussed further below. Faist et al. (2013, p.14) believe there are three

expressions of transnational social spaces: transnational kinship groups; transnational circuits and transnational communities. They argue that 'a focus on transnational social spaces and transnationality fits with scholarship which has addressed methodological nationalism', namely that of Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2003, p.17) which is also addressed below.

Geographical theories are concerned with spatial interactions – Gravity theory (Stewart, 1941; Zipf, 1946; Isard, 1960; Lowry, 1966); Entropy (Wilson, 1967) and Catastrophe Theory and Bifurcations (Wilson, 1981). Mobility transition (Zelinsky, 1971) as proposed by Zelinsky is a macro theory which can be used in the consideration of all types of internal and international migration excluding forced movement and is analysed at the country level. Discussing the theories, realities and myths of migration theory, Drbohlav states that it is 'a must to consider both macro and micro approaches in any meaningful study of international migration ... Both perspectives are significant and complementary to one another' (Drbohlav undated, p.45). Castles (2010, p.1554) argues that,

A conceptual framework for migration studies should take social transformation as its central category, in order to facilitate understanding of the complexity, interconnectedness, variability, contextuality and multilevel mediations of migratory processes in the context of rapid global change. This would mean examining the links between social transformation and human mobility across a range of sociospatial levels, while always seeking to understand how human agency can condition responses to structural factors.

He points out that

migration is actually one part of the process of transformation of [the fundamental] structures and institutions [of developed societies], which arises through major changes in global political, economic and social relationships (Castles 2010, p.1566)

This applies equally well to Australia and Ireland. Australia has been continually and positively transformed by immigration – a phenomenon which only affected Ireland relatively recently. The converse applies to Ireland with emigration usually dominating movement there and social transformation becoming evident in a negative way. Ireland has a tense relationship with emigration. It is seen as the cause of Ireland's lost generations and social and community fracture. The high rate of emigration amongst the Irish-born is continually cited as evidence of failure in the provision of jobs and management of the economy. The general acceptance of migration as a 'bad' thing - a discourse Bakewell (2008) calls 'sedentary bias' – may arise from the misconception that economic decline *causes* Irish emigration rather than a more balanced perspective which sees it as an accelerant of emigration. In the contemporary situation, economic decline goes hand in hand with a widespread discontent amongst Ireland's emigrants regarding the country's political leadership. These macro level factors influence micro level decisions around migration.

Castles (2010, p.1557) argues that the 'postmodern utopia of a borderless world of mobility has not yet dawned' and so migration scholarship must continue to assess the global, multidirectional movement of a small percentage of the world's population on the basis of interaction between the macro structural

forces of politics and economics and individual human choice and ability in migration. As well as macro and micro analyses, conceptualising social changes at different spatial levels – global, national, regional and local - assists the development of migration theory which more fully encapsulates the transformation of the social world (Pries 2007, Castles 2012).

Harnessing a theoretical framework is a difficulty that does not belong to the individual scholar alone. The OECD *International Migration Outlook 2014* report firmly situates international migration within an economic context at some points and within micro-level decision-making at others: it reported that the modest slowdown in permanent migration flows in 2012, a fall of 0.8 per cent, was the result of ‘the slow pace of the global economic recovery, as well as the economic climate in Europe’ yet free-movement mobility (noting that this includes a significant component of employment-related migration) increased by 10 per cent in 2012 and student migration ‘doubled since 2000, reaching 4.5 million in 2012, with 75% enrolled in an OECD country’ (OECD 2014, p.19). It also noted that ‘the objectives and choices of migrants themselves make them key actors’ (OECD 2014, p.160). Irish migration to Australia within the period 2011-12 to 2012-13 can be seen to go against this ‘slowdown’ trend since permanent migration intake in Australia increased for Ireland as it did for India, China, Vietnam and Nepal. The *Outlook 2014* report (OECD 2014, p.19) stated that while

overall net migration continue[d] to be positive among OECD countries...the effects of the global slowdown have been reflected in these flows. Average net migration has almost halved, from 4.4 persons per thousand of population in 2005-08 to 2.6 persons per thousand in 2009-12.

Macro processes of globalisation have affected Australia’s immigration policy and so in turn, must be said to have an effect on its immigrants (Hugo 2006c). Hugo reports that a number of components have increased the complexity of the international migration influencing Australia. These include the increasing significance of skill-related migration compared with the former primary immigration category of family settlement and reunion, a move towards long-term temporary over permanent migration, the increasing nexus between temporary and permanent migration via ‘category-jumping’, the increasing emigration of Australians, a hike in student migration (although this is also a global trend) and

the increasing significance of migration in influencing Australia’s relationship with its Asia-Pacific neighbours. These changes have profound implications for Australia’s contemporary and future demography (Hugo 2006c, p.107).

The theoretical frameworks devised to account for migration, from Ravenstein to Network theory, primarily have an economic basis while showing some regard for social networks and therefore having a sociological bent. No consensus has emerged from the debate and a clear delineation is made between the labour migrants accounted for to some extent in the aforementioned theories and those who move involuntarily or become displaced. Kivisto and Faist (2010, p.43) argue that ‘from a sociological perspective, voluntary versus forced migration ought to be treated as a continuum rather than in dichotomous terms’ which would allow us to take account of ‘impelled migration’ which characterises

much of the movement from Ireland since 2008. Prospective Irish migrants from across the skills spectrum had an element of choice and had the option to remain in Ireland. To question them on how forced their migration was or how much the move was a matter of choice was an acknowledgement of the nuances of the decision-making process. Petersen (1958, p.261) recognised that migrants may feel compelled to move but that these migrants 'retain[ed] some power to decide whether or not to leave'.

3.3.1.1 The process theory of migration

While this work concentrates on the movement of Irish people between two highly developed countries – Ireland and Australia – both the macro and micro elements of neoclassical economic theory, which base international migration in labour movement and wage/cost differentiation, are applicable to some Irish migrations. Upon closer investigation the movement of human capital associated with the microeconomic analysis of individual choice may bear more weight since the majority of Irish emigrants are highly skilled and, therefore, a cost-benefit calculation leads them to expect a positive net return from the investment in migration, not just in monetary terms but also in career advancement and lifestyle (Brettell and Hollifield 2014). Dual labour market theory is applicable only to a small sector of migrants where Irish workers have been specifically recruited by Australian employers to fulfil a structural need of the Australian economy. Recruitment amongst health professionals in particular has been demand-driven and initiated by the health sector in Australia (Kenny 2015b). That the demand coincided with the Irish public services employment moratorium austerity measure was coincidental.

The application of World Systems theory (Wallerstein 1976) may be deemed to have passed with Ireland's move from a predominantly agrarian economy to a more industrialised one during the nineteenth century. Although Ireland sits on the geographical periphery of Europe it cannot be considered an outpost of the Western economy. Indeed its standing as a global IT company headquarter (Roberts et al. 2015), Dublin having a tech-intensive area known as Silicon Docks, places Ireland's capital in contention for the title of a global city similar to Sydney or London. Network theory is perhaps most suitable to the Irish situation in Australia. This conceptualisation of migration as a self-sustaining diffusion process overcomes the distinction between the individual or household decision-making process which characterises much recent Irish immigration to Australia. Network theory dictates that the correlation of wage differentials and employment rates to the size of the migratory flow are lessened by the falling costs and risks associated with migration caused by the extension of ethnic networks (Massey et al. 1993). This describes more succinctly the recent flow of skilled individuals from Ireland to Australia.

3.3.1.2 The cultural theory of migration

Many scholars assume the givenness of ethnic categorisations, the integrity and coherence of ethnic cultures and the boundedness of ethnic communities (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). Whilst transnationalism, the idea that some ethnic communities can live in many places simultaneously, has overcome the spatial bounds of Herder's (1800) 'nation-plant' vision, this social world too is constituted

by separate ethnic groups which share a culture (Wimmer 2007). Nevertheless it is a compelling theory when considering the Irish diaspora since the claim that 70 million people worldwide are Irish or of Irish descent firmly embeds second and subsequent generations in the scope of any study.¹⁶ Transnationalism in the Irish case is not created solely by international migration. Ethnic transnationalism exists in the community of Irish people resident in Northern Ireland (Walker 2007). Much like the ethnic Hungarians who live in Slovakia and Romania and who are outside Hungary's borders because of political settlements which have redrawn the nation's boundary (Faist et al. 2013), many of Ireland's citizens have been in Northern Ireland for generations. Social and economic relations are strong across the almost non-existent border and so, even without migration, Ireland has a transnational community on the same land mass. While many scholars accept that transnational practices are strong amongst the first migrant cohort and their offspring, fewer believe transnationalism persists in later generations citing language decline and lack of intention to return to the country of origin as evidence of this (Waters and Jiminez 2005, Levitt and Jaworsky 2007). Institutional educational programmes in the United States and Language Schools in many diasporic centres, including Australia, funded through the Emigrant Support Programme and supported by Culture Ireland aim to reverse both of these conditions (Government of Ireland 2015). Waters and Jiminez (2005, p.121) point out that contemporary migration is characterised by replenishment of immigrant stock so generation becomes less of a factor – 'at any point in time each generation is a mix of cohorts and each cohort has a mix of generations'. The age of contemporary Irish migrants, the majority of whom are between 21 and 30 years of age and so likely to bring young families or have children during their migration, as well as the improvement and affordability of communications technology and travel will undoubtedly affect the strength of ties with Ireland in the future.

In its diaspora policy, the Irish government encourages transnational practice. In August 2014, briefing documents stated that the Government would welcome the idea of a youth Gathering, *Fréamhacha* (meaning 'roots'), led by private enterprise or the Global Irish Network, which would see children of Irish emigrants visit for up to two weeks to introduce them to Irish history and culture (Irish Times 2014). The idea is now enshrined in official diaspora policy (Government of Ireland 2015, p.38). This follows on from the success of The Gathering in 2013. This was a year-long programme which provided a national branding umbrella for around 5,000 locally-organised activities aimed at bringing members of the diaspora back to Ireland to assist in rejuvenating the economy, as well as encouraging those of Irish heritage around the world to connect with the country through genealogy, history, sport and community events (Faist 2000). A €1 billion boost to the Irish economy was the result of the increase in return travel to Ireland by expats who comprised a quarter of the total visitor number to Ireland in 2012/13. VFR (visiting friends and relatives) tourism was up nine per cent year on the year between 2012 and 2013. This equates to about 250,000 extra visitors. For Australia and New Zealand, the growth was even more

¹⁶ This claim was made in President Mary Robinson's inaugural address on 3 December 1990. It is likely that the number is considerably higher three decades later. For example, 1.8 million people claimed Irish ancestry in Australia in 2006 but this had increased to 2.08 million in 2011. O'Sullivan notes that the statistical basis for the figure of 70 million remains obscure O'Sullivan, P. (2003). "Developing Irish Diaspora Studies: A Personal View." *New Hibernia Review* 7(1): 130-148.

pronounced, up 18 per cent in the year for VFR visitors (Irish Echo 2014). Even where these initiatives do not result in emigrant return such diasporic engagement may affect the longevity and survival of transnational practices.

But what of the settlement experience of that first migrant? In the 1980s, Berry (1980) produced a four-field typology of acculturation which distinguished between community and culture. Either, both, or none of these aspects may be influenced by mainstream social identity leaving the following four options as an outcome for the new arrivals: cultural and social assimilation logically produces 'assimilation'; cultural retention and social assimilation results in 'integration'; if neither the social or cultural are assimilated the community remains as an ethnic enclave ('separation'); 'marginalisation' occurs when a group becomes socially acculturated but remains socially unintegrated (similar to downward assimilation). Even this progression in the theoretical field has a Herderian tinge since it analyses group processes and is collectivist in its approach.

Elements of an ethnic enclave mentality can appear strong amongst some Irish groups such as backpackers but this may have more to do with the needs of their immediate situation and is evidence of the network theory discussed earlier whereby they live and work with compatriots where possible. Amongst longer-resident Irish people examples of all Berry's acculturation strategies are evident but the majority integrate into Australian society while retaining a cultural and social interest in Ireland. Marginalisation can occur in a social context rather than an ethnic one when a migrant becomes vulnerable through poverty or ill-health and is without a support network. The work of the various Irish-Australian welfare organisations cater to this circumstance (Kennedy et al. 2014b). Other migrants maintain elements of separation defined as an ethnic enclave in some social contexts as demonstrated by the close living and working arrangements of Irish communities in Bondi in Sydney or St Kilda in Melbourne (Allon 2004). True separatism is not possible since no area is exclusively Irish or large enough for such a community to exist although virtual enclaves could be said to exist. Facebook™ sites may meet this tendency to a certain degree given that there are more than eighty Facebook™ groups concerned with the Irish in Australia alone. This compares to around thirty or so for English/British groups and just four for Italian migrants.¹⁷ The fora of social media provide an outlet for the maintenance of a separate ethnic identity while acculturation, integration and eventually assimilation take place in the real social world out of necessity and pragmatism.

Almost all of the existing theoretical frameworks used in migration research rely to some extent on the basic premise of the Herderian school of thought, that ethnicity is bound by a strong, defined and often closed community, identity and culture (Herder 1800). Herderian theory is based on the work of Johann Gottfried Herder, an eighteenth century philosopher, who determined that the social world was populated by a multitude of nations and ethnic groups in much the same way as species compose the

¹⁷ Author count as of June 2013.

natural world. While the tradition of that time was to consider that a nation's civilizational achievements were the basis on which to rank it or that physical characteristics and innate character traits were sufficient to divide peoples into 'races', Herder believed that if each of the nations had remained in place the social world could be perceived as a garden where human nation-plants grew at their own pace and in their own way. According to Herder, ethnicities and nations are total social phenomena, constituted by three inter-related aspects which see community, ethnic category/identity, and culture as synonymous (Wimmer 2007). Many Irish agencies actively promote this idea of the uniqueness of Ireland and its people yet it, like any nation, is comprised of individuals whose differing life experiences and personalities can only separate them. At the macro level, the Irish of the North did not share the political, cultural and social destiny of those in the South, East and West but does this make them any less Irish? In the case of Irishness, Herderianism is severely flawed as a theoretical concept.

Wimmer (2007) believes that the social sciences have largely inherited the Herderian view. Its premise, that nations are the basic building blocks of society and that ethnic groups are quasi-natural units of analysis, has influenced both researchers and lay people. The definition of ethnicities as communities with identities that cannot be separated from their culture is rarely questioned (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). Places like Northern Ireland demonstrate the case in point because the lines of community boundaries are perceived as tightly cast and impermeable, whether rightly or wrongly. Catholics are generally thought to be politically nationalist or republican and identify as Irish whilst those of the Protestant faith are held to be loyalist, pro-Unionist and British (Cairns 2010, Tajfel 2010). The atheists in the population are defined by their origins, surname and place of residence – a good example of an ethnic categorisation imposed by others. Place of residence itself is a cultural marker given the widely segregated nature of Northern Ireland's housing estates and historical territoriality (Gans 1979, Paris 2005). The 'naturalness' of Herderian ethnicities is somewhat confounded by a place like Northern Ireland.

In migration research, especially that focussed on the integration of immigrants in the host nation, the classic assimilation paradigm has also been strongly influenced by the Herderian school. The theory posited here is that immigrant communities will inexorably follow a pathway to assimilation into the social mainstream through one or a combination of spatial dispersion, intermarriage or acculturation (Wimmer 2009). Revisionism has struck the assimilation theory to the end that not all immigrant communities are now predetermined as being inevitably assimilated into the cultural and identity mainstream of their new homes but even the neo-assimilationist theorists who argue for segmented assimilation pathways use the ethnic group as the base unit of investigation thus continuing the Herderian tradition (Portes and Zhou 1993). Segmented assimilation theory argues that an immigrant cohort has two further possibilities in addition to Berry's four outcomes – they can continue to progress socially and materially without assimilating and becoming acculturated thereby forming an ethnic enclave or they can participate in a 'downward assimilation' whereby they identify with the minority group in society, for example, the black community in the United States.

Multiculturalism represents a contrast to assimilation theory (Wimmer 2009). The belief that ethnic identity and cultural and community values should persist and remain vibrant and visible across both time and space is the basis of the multiculturalist approach. Proponents of multiculturalism believe that assimilated communities are those suppressed by the dominant community and that if permitted to 'breathe' these communities would remain vital and significant in terms of cultural, community and identity (Wimmer 2007). Australia promotes a multicultural agenda in its inter-community relations though one could argue that recent changes to the Citizenship test appears to weaken multiculturalism in favour of 'Australianness'. This appears to be a global trend as evidenced by the backlash against multiculturalism which started in the mid-1990s (Kymlicka 2012) and has gained momentum following mass immigration in Europe (Tarozzi and Torres 2016).

This study examines the concept of transnationalism amongst Irish people in Australia. Transnationalism and transnational practice are crucial to understanding the Irish experience of migration given the connection to place that Irish people exhibit but the analysis forced the conclusion that this cohort do not neatly fit the transnationalism framework. This is due to several factors: the Irish are migrating from one developed nation to another but much of the literature in transnationalism is concerned with the actions of migrants from developing nations (Guarnizo 2017). Remittances feature heavily and the Irish do not remit large/regular sums of money (except for mortgage payments) and irregular or one-time economic activity in the homeland by migrants such as sending monetary gifts or owning a house in the home nation is precluded as a feature of transnationalism (Portes et al. 1999). The Irish in the United Kingdom could enact transnational activism during the #hometovote campaign because of proximity (VotingRights.ie 2016) and similarly, they are close enough to maintain care-giving roles for ageing parents while the Irish in Australia are limited because of distance. However, technology enables some practical and emotional assistance (Baldassar et al. 2007, Baldassar 2011, Bacigalupe and Cámara 2012, Benítez 2012, Baldassar et al. 2016).

Schiller et al (1992) first raised the idea that migration did not begin with an outward migration and end in settlement in the host nation. Neither was the severing of ties with a home country inevitable. Portes et al. (1999 p.219) define transnationalism as concerned with 'occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contact over time across national borders for their implementation'. However, in their pursuit of turning transnationalism 'into a clearly defined and measurable object of research', Portes et al (1999, p.218) further delimit it to exclude the ownership of a home in the origin country and occasional gifts of money and other goods to friends and family at home. This would seem to exclude contemporary Irish migrants if we did not go further and consider their interest, and intermittent activism, in respect of home politics alongside the regularity of media consumption and return travel they engage in. This thesis argues that new technology allows transnational practice to be extended since more forms of transnational practice are now possible. Hugo (2014c, p.28) argued that the

ease of international travel and exponential improvements in information and communications technology (ICT) have not only facilitated international movement but made it possible to

maintain close, strong, immediate and intimate contacts with origin countries to an extent that has never before been possible.

The consideration of the two-pronged theoretical frameworks of migration allows an understanding in part at least, of the decision making processes of international migrants. However, it is the receiving country's immigration policy in conjunction with the migrants' intention and desires that ultimately affects the overall migration process and determines the characteristics of its migrant intake.

3.4 Conclusion

A search of the most recent academic literature on the Irish in Australia has revealed a paucity of research into the Irish migration experience in this new age of communication and technology. It has shown that gaps exist in every aspect of Irish immigration to Australia – there is no Australia-wide study, there is no 'big picture' view of the various communities and support networks that exist, no profile of recent migrants and recent temporary visa use by Irish immigrants and subsequent permanent residency has not been explored. In addition, this literature review has illustrated that even in the context of Australia, there are few works on the pathways to permanent residency and Australian citizenship taken by young Working Holiday Makers. Little is known about what triggers a change in intention on the part of a temporary visa holder to seek a permanent right to work and reside. The existing works concerning the Irish in Australia differ in terms of location both spatially and temporally and there is no study which encompasses the increased Irish population in Australia since 2006. In addition, the advancements of technology in terms of social media and communication mechanisms such as Facetime™ and Skype™ and their effect on the migration experience and the maintenance of transnationalism have not been examined.

Economic theories of migration are plentiful but perhaps the most relevant of these are the macro and micro elements of neoclassical economic theory since the effect of macro processes, in particular, the GFC and Ireland's subsequent austerity regime, prompted many of the migration trends indicated here. The microeconomic analysis of individual choice is clearly evident too since the majority, even in the context of Ireland's recession, chose to emigrate. The transnational theory framework, though imperfect because of the limitations imposed on it by various researchers, was most applicable to this study.

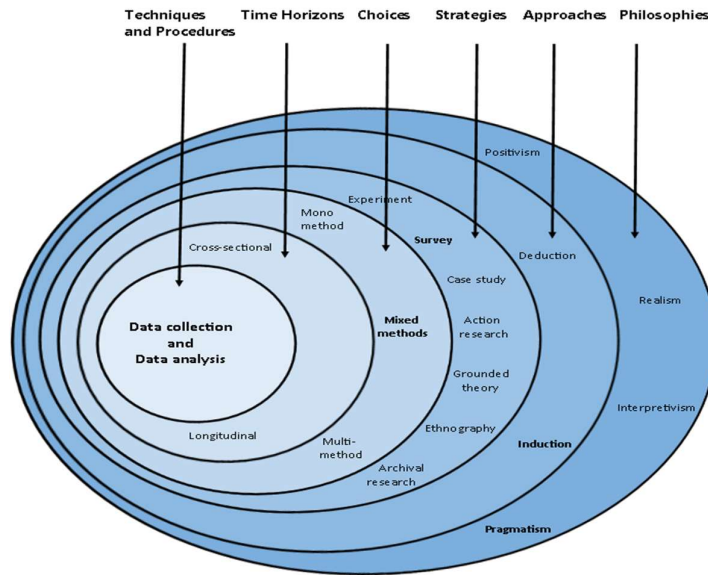
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology undertaken to complete this study and outlines the reasons for the methods chosen. Research in the social sciences is traditionally divided into two categories: quantitative research which emphasises the power of numerical data and scientific method to describe a phenomenon under study, and qualitative research which emphasises the diversity of individual human experience and the significance of perception. The core concepts of social science are ontology, epistemology, methodology, methods and sources (Grix 2002). Figure 4.1 illustrates the various accepted epistemological positions, with the concepts and methods relevant to this study in bold text (Saunders 2011). Commencing from an ontological position of constructivism, a belief that the world consists of multiple constructed realities as perceived by various social actors and is being constantly revised, and an epistemological position of pragmatism, which concedes the relativity of any knowledge produced, it logically followed that this project would employ both quantitative and qualitative methodologies and use research instruments appropriate for each, namely surveys and interviews (Wahyuni 2012). Johnson et al (2007, p.125) asked 'What philosophy of science, or set of philosophical positions, will best partner with mixed methods research?' and answered that 'many (or most) mixed methods writers have argued for some version of pragmatism as the most useful philosophy to support mixed methods research'. Figure 4.2 illustrates the research process and shows, after determining the ontological and epistemological positions and considering the methodology and choosing appropriate research instruments, that the last stage is to analyse and interpret the data sources produced by those instruments.

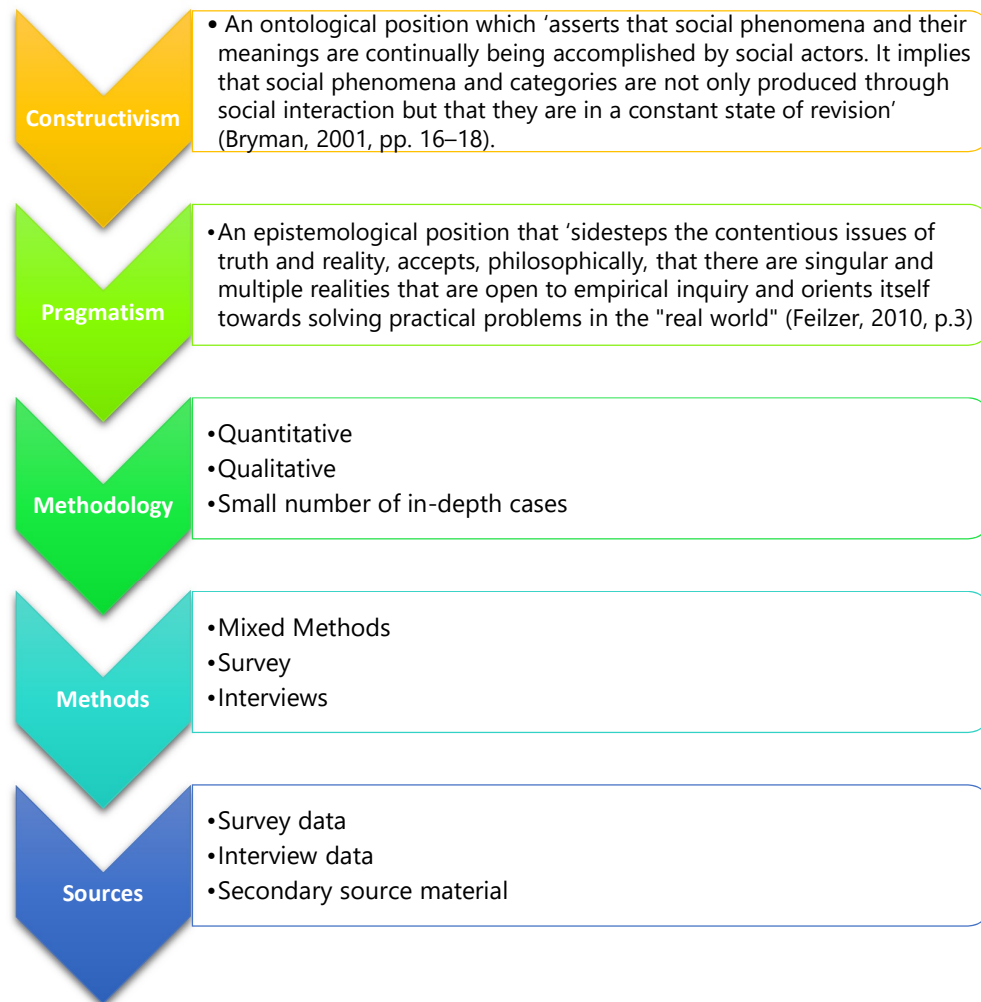
Figure 4.1: The research onion



Source: Saunders (2011)

Being an 'insider researcher', as discussed below, the research axiology was unavoidably value-bound since it was the researcher's identity as an Irish national living in Australia which prompted the study. However, the 'voice' of the thesis is that of the 'transformative intellectual' of critical theory rather than the 'passionate participant' of constructivism as noted by Guba and Lincoln (1994). The voice of the participant is paramount as noted in the opening quote from the IOM at the beginning of this thesis. The subject of the study is those who are subject to the legal framework of migration. The economic and political contexts relate directly to the structural, global, legal frameworks of migration but behind these are the stories of people in a cultural and social context and their individual journeys which were in part determined by the attitude, personality, and outlook and how they responded to the structural framework within which they found themselves.

Figure 4.2: Flowchart illustrating the ontology, epistemology, methodology, methods and sources for this project



The theoretical framework dictates to some extent the methodology employed in research. In defining a theory upon which to frame research of an Irish diaspora, it seems logical to take an anti-Herderian stance since this study sought respondents from both ends of Ireland and did not assume the Irish in Australia to be a culturally homogenous group. It heeded Wimmer’s advice to ask if the Irish community in Australia is closed, culturally different and strong in its identity rather than assume that this is the case. Obtaining the views of immigrants from both parts of Ireland was a means of attempting to match methodology with theory since a non-Herderian stance which considers the Irish in the two locales to be culturally differentiated was adopted. Actively seeking to include Northerners was a way of allowing those who are constitutionally British to self-identify as Irish. There must also be a consideration of those who do not maintain links with Irish organisations in Australia or place any value on being ‘Irish’. The research design attempted to allow the possibility of identifying traits of

non-identification as Irish amongst the study's subjects by making the main focus the visa utilised for immigration. While recruitment was largely carried out through 'Irish' social media sites it was not done exclusively so. Pages such as '457s in Australia' were also used with respondents asked in the first instance if they originate from Ireland/Northern Ireland, not if they are Irish. The term 'Irish' was not used in the title or preamble of the survey although the birthplaces of Ireland and Northern Ireland were specified. This may be a subtle but important difference in avoiding ethnic categorisation while allowing self-identification. Methodological modification is a result of a consideration of such aspects of theory.

4.2 Adopting an epistemological position

The difficulty of adopting a position on methodological enquiry is illustrated by Feilzer's (2010, p.7) assertion that the best path through the dichotomy of the positivist-post positivist/constructivist allegiances of the quantitative and qualitative methodologies is the pragmatism which 'focuses on the problem to be researched and the consequences of the research'. Pragmatism is, simultaneously, a more concrete and determined position on methodology and theory and a 'commitment to uncertainty, an acknowledgement that any knowledge 'produced' through research is relative and not absolute, (Feilzer 2010, p.14). Within this framework there is an acceptance of the 'human effect' on research and its outcomes and room for manoeuvre in the interpretation of 'validity'. Abductive and reflexive reasoning takes priority over the logic of scientific method (Rorty 1991, p.65) which is characteristic of quantitative methods.

Mason (2006) advocates that qualitative methods have a particular strength in their ability to answer the 'how' and 'why' questions in the domains of social process, change and context, and argues that the capacity of quantitative methods is 'ultimately limited' because of its concern with standardisation, variable analysis and correlation and with the identification of associations between the variables being used. While acknowledging that standardisation 'may be useful for some comparative purposes', the implication is that quantitative methods produce a one-dimensional result concerned with measurement and causation but not wider explanation (Mason 2006, p.16). It is the comparison and context produced by qualitative methods which allow a holistic view of a case. Despite not having a representative sample from which one could make generalisations relating to the experience of Irish immigrants in Australia, the qualitative and quantitative datasets produced by this research allowed for comparison with official data, such as that produced by the ABS and the CSO, and with the output of other research projects such as *Émigré* (Glynn et al. 2013). Qualitative data built on the survey data provided by interviewees and formed a context for the information given. The rich narrative that this produced enabled an explanation of the whole migration experience without the need for statistically relevant causality and correlation.

In considering both the theoretical implications of methodology and the methodological implications of chosen theoretical concepts, Mason (2006) argues that since social lives transcend and traverse the macro and micro levels of decision-making on which existing migration theories are based, so too should the methods used to research them. Her statement that 'simply to measure ...will not capture the 'heart and soul' – the essence or the multi-dimensional reality – of what is taking place' alludes to the necessity of amalgamating qualitative and quantitative data analysis to give a holistic picture of the experiences of Irish migrants in Australia at all stages of the migration journey (Mason 2006, p.12).

4.3 Research methods

The pilot studies (Breen 2012, 2014) carried out in the research proposal stage and which were the foundation for a book chapter in *Ireland in the World* (McCarthy 2015) provided a sound methodology in the feasibility and speed of web-based surveys distributed through social media (Patton 2002, Palinkas et al. 2013, Breen 2015). The literature notes the drawbacks and benefits of online survey research. Of the latter, Evans and Mathur (2005, p.197) cite Scholl et al (2002) in stating 'that when most of a society has internet access and savvy, the basic drawback for the use of online survey research – the lack of representativeness – disappears'. The pervasiveness of technology and access to it in both Ireland and Australia are discussed below. Other noted advantages are the wide reach of internet disseminated links, convenience to participants, less margin for data entry error and low administration cost. The widespread use of internet and particularly mobile technology such as Facebook™, which was the most used distribution platform for this project's research instruments, are discussed below. Using Facebook™ added to the 'convenience' factor in this instance because social media is considered a 'downtime' or leisure activity and participants could complete the survey when they came across the link or could choose to save it and return to it when they had time. Some confirmation of this came from qualitative data: one participant relayed in her interview that she had completed the survey late at night in her 'wind down' time after a late shift at work.

Another advantage is the flexibility of online surveys with regard to multi-method distribution via URL link which can be distributed through email or posted in an online forum such as Facebook™ and shared far beyond that forum by other users. Surveys themselves are becoming increasingly flexible with the addition of functionalities such as skip-logic questioning which facilitates a smoother, more relevant user experience by avoiding non-applicable questions based on previous answers. Such functionality tailors a survey and can reduce its length for particular respondents. The automation of the feature in current web survey software reduces participant error and improves data quality (Schonlau et al. 2002, p.30). Added to this are the multiple question formats that can be included in a survey. A mix of multiple choice, simple dichotomous 'Yes/No' questions, rank order and open-ended questions has the ability to satisfy all potential respondents as well as allowing for the capture of qualitative data in an essentially quantitative data instrument. Response bias can be reduced by

disallowing participants to scroll ahead until the current question has been answered. The provision of a graphical progress indicator, such as a percentage bar at the top of each page, can encourage completion of lengthy surveys. Conversely, the progress indicator may also dissuade completion if the participant feels the survey is taking too long to complete. For this reason, an honest estimation of the required participation time should be given in the survey preamble or consent form.

Particular disadvantages of online research include impersonal contact, concerns about sampling and representativeness of respondents, possible skewed attributes of internet users in terms of privilege and access, respondents' lack of online expertise and low response rate (Evans and Mathur 2005). The issue of the impersonal nature was somewhat mollified by the fact that the researcher posted the survey links in relevant Facebook™ groups, pages and comment threads using her personal account, making personal information contained in her profile readily available to any respondent who chose to view it. Additionally, the posting of the links in a comment thread which is essentially a multi-person conversation, added a personal element. The last section of each survey allowed the respondent to leave contact information and indicate if they were prepared to participate in a follow-up one-to-one interview which also detracted from the usual impersonal nature of online research.

The visa holders being surveyed and the chosen medium of web-based survey for data collection determined that the study would focus on migrants under the age of fifty years. This is in line with Kennedy et al's (2014a) finding that those leaving Ireland in the post-2008 period are predominantly between the ages of 15-44 years. The mean age of respondents was 28 years old. Age limitation is a factor in the visa application process so naturally the restrictions of Australia's immigration programme also played a role in determining the demographic target of respondents.¹⁸

As well as the effectiveness and speed of internet dissemination of the surveys demonstrated by the pilot study, justification of reliance on web survey and social media relates to several other factors. The first of these is the demographic of the target study group, particularly their age. Other reasons include the fact that all visa applications are submitted online through an ImmiAccount and migrants are advised by DIBP to establish a personal electronic account, VEVO - Visa Entitlement Verification Online, for access to information about their current visa details and conditions which presupposes access to the internet and, therefore, the suitability of an electronic survey. The 2015 Sensis Social Media Report indicated that Facebook was the most popular social media site in Australia where 79 per cent of users aged 18-29 accessed their Facebook™ profile every day as did 55 per cent of women and 44 per cent of men overall (Sensis 2015). These figures, combined with the existence of over 80 'Irish in Australia' Facebook™ groups, indicated that social media dissemination and electronic survey hosting were the optimum distribution and collection methods.

¹⁸ The Working Holiday Maker (subclass 417) visa is only open to those aged between 18 and 31 years of age. The suite of Skilled Independent visas which are points-tested are open to those aged between 18 and 50 (DIBP 2016g).

Using social media was considered a promising data collection method given the proliferation of Irish-Australian groups and pages on Facebook™. Numbering over eighty (excluding Irish themed pubs and restaurants) in June 2013, these virtual entities often represent real associations such as Irish sporting, dancing, music and migrant groups although some exist online only. They represent the Irish on the ground in Australia. Largely founded by migrants for the purposes of maintaining cultural identity and to provide social and business connections as well as pre- and post-migration advice and comfort, they appear to have superseded the past functions of the Church and traditional Irish clubs.

Part of the methodology entailed regular interaction with the service provider groups, both formally constituted, not-for-profit associations and informal Facebook™ groups through social media as well as fieldwork with welfare and business organisations in Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney. By the end of Year Two face-to-face enquiry had only taken place in Adelaide and Perth and the researcher noted that analysis of the networks in place in these two cities was easier than for Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane at this point because of the familiarity that the fieldwork had afforded. Later in Year Three of the study, fieldwork was undertaken in these other cities with representatives of a number of groups and individual members and service users of the resident Irish groups. The networks in place in each location were then more easily identifiable and confirmed from multiple bona fide sources. The websites and Facebook™ pages of the various stakeholders were good starting points as sources of their historical development and current activities but they were no replacement for immersion in the services or for grasping the innate essence of an organisation in situ. The social media element of the research methodology meant that investigation was not confined to business hours nor limited by distance which resulted in the 'fieldwork' in this medium being fairly constant throughout the period of the study.

Irish use of Facebook™ is considerably high. In September 2013, the *Irish Independent*, reported that the Irish were 'the biggest Facebook™ users in [the] English-speaking world' (Weckler 2013). In September 2014, polling firm, Ipsos MRBI, reported that 61 per cent of Irish adults use Facebook™ with almost three quarters (71 per cent) of Irish adult Facebook™ users visiting the service every single day (Weckler 2014). Facebook™ stated that 9 million Australians use the site every day, including 7.3 million who log in via mobile. Ireland ranked 33 out of 198 countries for internet usage in 2014 while Australia was 24th in the list (Stats 2014). Taking into account both the high usage and the very visible presence of the Irish in Australia on Facebook™ and the fact that mobile and social media technology and the internet have had a significant impact on the migration experience as a whole, Facebook™ was deemed to be the most appropriate medium for dissemination of the research instruments.

4.4 Research Design

In order to present a holistic picture of Irish immigration to Australia and emigration from Australia it was necessary to survey those who had undertaken these journeys. The Irish in Australia and the Departed Australia surveys invited respondents ($n = 1,560$) to answer questions about their social and economic life in Ireland, their migration decision, settlement experience in Australia, their intentions to return to Ireland, and communication. A number of respondents ($n = 67$) participated further by granting the researcher an in-depth personal interview revisiting these themes and giving them the opportunity to tell their migration stories.

A sequential mixed methods design, that is, one which collected quantitative data via survey and qualitative data via in-depth interview in a pre-determined order, was employed for the study. A mixed methodology was chosen since the literature suggests that neither qualitative nor quantitative data singly are sufficient in studies of migration (Ritchie and Lewis 2003, Mason 2006, Feilzer 2010, Palinkas et al. 2013). Secondary data were presented to validate some of the survey data. In its use of data triangulation (use of a variety of sources in a study) and methodological triangulation (use of multiple methods to study a research problem), this study used between-methods triangulation which was first explained by Denzin (1978, p.14) who believed that 'the bias inherent in any particular data source, investigators, and particularly method will be cancelled out when used in conjunction with other data sources, investigators, and methods.'

Targeting both Irish immigrants in Australia and those who had left Australia required the construction of two surveys. The 'Irish in Australia' survey consisted of fourteen sections related to the research questions. These interrogated the respondent's employment, education, living arrangements and accommodation status prior to emigration; the information sought prior to travel; the visa used to enter Australia initially; the reason for migration; who the respondent travelled with, whether they knew anyone in Australia; settlement intentions; remittances; contact with friends and family; socialising in Australia; employment and living arrangements in Australia; use of Irish networks; citizenship, intentions to return and homesickness. The survey ended with a short demographic questionnaire and a section which asked for the respondent's opinion of the survey itself. The 'Departed Australia' survey was similar with the exception of the intentions to return section which was amended in this survey to enquire about the return decision and employment, accommodation and social integration issues on return.

The surveys (Appendices 3 and 4) consisted of around 100 questions each over 17 pages in a screen-by-screen layout. Its length and the order of questions were considered carefully in the light of findings that relay the effects of time burden perceptions and response rates on survey participants. The time taken to complete the survey varied with 65 per cent of all complete responses submitted in less than 30 minutes, averaging 27 minutes in the Irish in Australia survey and 19 minutes in the Departed Australia survey. The survey commenced by addressing migration and visa use directly and

concluded with the demographic questions which were used to categorise responses. The perception of burden increases as a survey progresses and placing demographic questions at the end was an attempt to minimise this by placing items which did not need deep consideration to answer last. The salience of the topic - research on the Irish in Australia – was presumed to trump all other considerations since it is noted that ‘personal interest in the topic influences participation behaviour and data quality’ (Keusch 2013, p.59) and ‘the salience of a topic is one of the most important factors that influence response rates in both mail and web surveys’ (Cook et al. 2000, Krosnick et al. 2002, Fan and Yan 2010, Keusch 2013, Cunningham et al. 2015, p.5).

The questions for the qualitative in-depth interview were initially formulated around the categories of the quantitative survey but were expanded to encompass points of information given in the comments boxes of open-ended questions in that survey. Carrying out qualitative data collection after the survey allowed the second stage to be modified in accordance with some issues that were raised.

4.5 Sampling

One of the most critical decisions in research design is how to gather data in order to accurately characterise a group of people and the issues that affect them. In the absence of a full listing of the Irish community in Australia, it was necessary to adopt a convenience sample that reflected the diversity of the population. This was a non-probability sample of Irish adults aged 18 and over and, as such, the results of this study cannot be generalised to the wider Irish or immigrant population. The aim was to examine the characteristics of the sampled population who completed the surveys through virtual and actual community-based linkages via online methods.

It was logical to seek Irish migrants in Australia as participants in a study that sought to uncover the drivers of contemporary Irish migration to Australia. Information-rich cases are required to get the optimum data from qualitative investigation (Patton 2002, Palinkas et al. 2013). The qualitative data is embedded in the larger quantitative dataset.

Social media sites which cater for Irish and British people were used for distribution in order to ensure that Northern Irish people who may identify as Irish were captured. Traditional and online media agencies such as *The Journal.ie*, *Irish Echo*, the *Irish Times*, *Irish Independent* and *Belfast Telegraph* were also used to disseminate the link to the survey and to also find returnees. Social media sites dedicated to two visa categories – WHMs and 457s – were also targeted to remove the ‘methodological nationalism’ (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 2003) that a focus on Irishness without the entry visa dimension would have caused. Posting in social media fora which were directly relevant to the target audience such as ‘Irish in Australia’ pages or relevant visa comment threads defined the research as

relevant and avoided some of the negative bias associated with the plethora of advertising and commercial surveys that might be encountered on social media.

While studies have shown that web-based surveys potentially reduce response bias, increase response rate and improve the accuracy of the data collected, it is clear that they have their limitations too (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998, Scholl et al. 2002, Schonlau et al. 2002, Evans and Mathur 2005). Most notable are the exclusion of certain demographic groups due largely to technological deprivation in the form of equipment or skills. However any potential obstacle to participation was lessened by the fact of the age of targeted respondents – their demographic being dictated by the propensity of Irish migrants to be under the age of 44 which conformed with those targeted by Australian immigration conditions. In addition the prevalence of mobile phone use and its associated technological capabilities, in both Ireland and Australia, suggests that this technology is not a differentiating factor in socio-economic status thereby inferring that seeking respondents through social media would not skew the data through sampling bias.¹⁹ Indeed, Kennedy et al.'s (2014a) report noted the growing use of technology amongst Irish migrants. Self-selection of participants is an acknowledged selection bias yet studies of this kind are impossible to complete without volunteers in the absence of a probability sample. No incentive was offered for participation. Potential interviewees were not pre-screened and interviews were carried out in the order of response to the invitation. Reference to demographic information at the population level (i.e. census data) and the use of a much larger reference study, *Irish Emigration in an Age of Austerity* (Glynn et al. 2013), as secondary data, in part, offsets the selection bias inherent in the volunteer participant base.

It is difficult to address the issue of response rate in this project because dissemination of the research links was uncontrolled. The research instruments were distributed through multiple fora, unquantifiable in terms of membership and exposure, then shared arbitrarily and therefore, not sent only to a specified number of people in a database. It is assumed that only those who were interested in the survey would click on the link provided and only those eligible to participate as described in the inclusion criteria would do so. Response can be measured from the point of access to the surveys onwards: Under 2 per cent ($n=27$) of people who accessed the Irish in Australia survey link declined to participate due to ineligibility. Of the 98 per cent ($n=1,049$) who commenced the survey just under 50 per cent ($n=520$) abandoned it at some point meaning that 50.4 per cent ($n=529$) answered all questions. However, most variables in the analysis had around 652 answers which equates to just over 62 per cent of respondents meaning that most did not abandon the survey until they had progressed

¹⁹ In 2012 Australia had 133 mobile phone devices per 100 persons (in the population) with the total number of mobiles being 30.2 million ACMA (2012). ACMA Communications Report 2011-12. A. C. a. M. Authority. Melbourne, Australian Communications and Media Authority.. 'Official data from ComReg shows that there were 5,432,182 active mobile phone subscriptions at the end of March. This equates roughly to 1.185 mobile phones for every man, woman and child in the country, irrespective of their age.' Reilly, G. (2013). Ireland has more mobile phones than people. [The Journal.ie](http://TheJournal.ie). Dublin, The Journal.ie.

quite a way through. Of the 490 who commenced the Departed Australia survey, 18.5 per cent did not meet the criteria. Of the remaining 81.5 per cent, about 45 per cent completed the survey.

4.6 Data collection

4.6.1 Quantitative data collection

The surveys were created in SurveyMonkey™ and a web link was generated from within the software for dissemination. Online distribution was carried out through web links posted on specific Facebook™ sites between November 2014 and May 2015. A deliberate strategy of dormancy was employed between December 2014 and March 2015 in an effort to collect data unbiased by feelings of homesickness which are more potent at times of significant family gathering such as Christmas as relayed in the analysis below. For this reason also, interviews were not solicited until late February 2015. Hard copy surveys and email packages were made available for distribution through various Irish welfare organisations, however no participant requested to use these.

4.6.2 Qualitative data collection

Most respondent interviews ($n=67$) were conducted between 19 February 2015 and 31 March 2015 with the exception of one interview held in December 2014 and another five interviews held with irregular immigrants after the fieldwork visit to Perth in November 2015. The majority were conducted via telephone with a small number done via Skype video call or face-to-face. The qualitative interview was semi-structured and its length varied according to the demographic characteristics and visa category of the interviewee. Older respondents obviously had a longer life history to relay and had usually emigrated decades ago unlike younger participants. Suitable open-ended questions based on the data provided in the survey were used to guide the interview. Interviews generally started with an overview of the respondent's personal background – early family history, education, progression from education to employment until point of emigration. Post-migration experiences under discussion were the visa process, the transition from temporary to permanent visa, settling into social, family and work roles in Australian society, self-perception as a member of the Irish diaspora, the level of significance of cultural identity, use of technology in maintaining contact with Ireland and future migration plans. All interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the interviewee and transcribed as soon as was practical. The audio files are between 54 minutes and 140 minutes in length. While O'Connor (2005a) noted a particular reluctance of Irish interviewees to be recorded and declined to tape interviews in her 2003 study, none of the interviewees here refused recording. Comfortable conversation and lack of shyness was likely facilitated by the fact that interviews were conducted via video call on Skype™ or by telephone with the call on speaker, and the conversation captured by a digital voice recorder. Self-consciousness on the part of the interviewee was often assuaged by usage

of the participant's survey data, which acted as a familiarity nexus between researcher and interviewee, to prompt and guide questions. Some deeply personal and emotional, even traumatic information, related to family and upbringing was disclosed during the interviews. Strong homesickness was evident in many responses and this led to deeper consideration of this aspect of migration. The use of the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) and the results of this are discussed in the conclusion. The methodology was responsive to this unexpected data and this demonstrates the benefits of a pragmatic epistemological framework as it highlighted one of the key advantages of pragmatism as a paradigm, namely 'allowing for new and deeper dimensions to emerge' (Jick 1979, p.604).

Online social networks (OSNs) and the internet in general represent significant opportunity to empirical researchers with regard to survey reach and data collection. Speed, economy and the anonymity of the internet are just three reasons this new area of methodology should be tested further (Ahern 2005, Cantrell and Lupinacci 2007, Tates et al. 2009, Gruzd et al. 2012, Hailu and Rahman 2012, Hunter 2012, International Telecommunications Union 2013, Kennedy et al. 2014a, Mannix et al. 2014). Candidness was certainly a feature of data collection which carried through to the qualitative interviews provided by respondents. Ongoing engagement was another result. Contact between the researcher and some respondents persisted on a more familiar level through social media as some participants became public followers of the researcher on Facebook™, followed the researcher on Twitter and became connected on LinkedIn.

4.6.3. Secondary Data

A number of secondary data sources were highly useful in placing this study in its context. In addition to the empirical data collected, primary source material from the Australian (ABS), Irish (CSO), Northern Irish (NISRA), and British (ONS) statistical collection agencies was utilised in the form of census data and reports. Australia holds a census of the population at five-year intervals as does Ireland. The 2011 Census in each location was the primary population data source although other censuses, particularly the 1991 Census of Australia, were used to track the historical changes in the Irish population in Australia. Reports on migration trends and outcomes from Australia's Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) were widely used to supplement this study. Australia collects some of the most comprehensive migration data in the world and information on incoming and outgoing travellers and data in most visa classes is publicly available on the DIBP website. A number of annual reports from the Department also assisted in the compilation of information on Irish immigration and visa use. Likewise, Central Statistics Office data on Irish emigration was used.

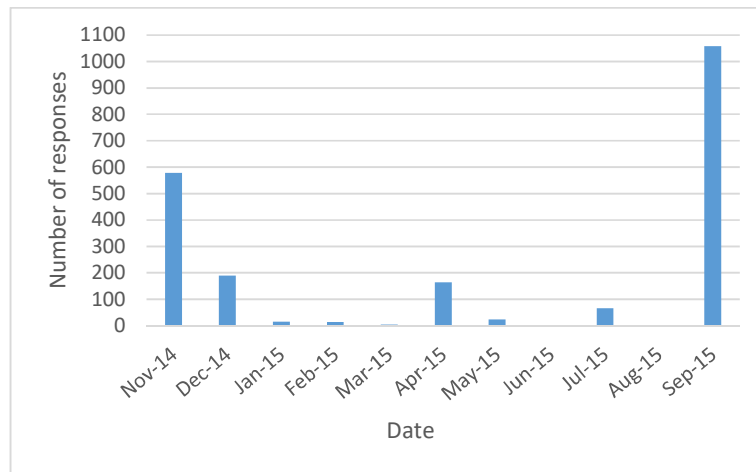
Secondary sources in the form of academic writings, media releases, newspaper articles and social media commentary all provided context for the study rationale and its findings. These are listed in the appended bibliography.

4.6.4 Responses

The dissemination of the research instruments took place over a number of months from 6 November 2014. Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4 show the responses received for each survey by calendar month. When the completion count slowed the survey links were re-posted to distribution sources on Facebook™ and Twitter™ and this resulted in surges in April 2015 and May 2015. By the end of June 2015 over 1000 partial (500 complete) responses had been received from the Irish in Australia cohort. The survey closed on 1 August 2015 by which time 1,049 people had responded to the invitation to participate in the study. By comparison, the response rate from the Departed Australia cohort appeared low at this time although it too was released on 6 November 2014. The researcher attended the Global Irish Civic Forum (GICF) in early June 2015 and made contact with many diaspora groups there. In mid-July a contact list which contained the names of consenting individuals, the group/s they represented and an email address was distributed to GICF participants. Making use of this distribution list, an email was sent to the 96 addresses listed requesting assistance in distributing the 'Departed Australia' survey link globally. Immediate responses were received from five organisations confirming their willingness to assist. Their tweets, Facebook™ shares and individual client/member emails resulted in 24 additional responses within a day. Less than a week later with responses numbering 186, a 'Departed Australia' survey link was posted in the comments section of an article entitled 'After too many tearful airport goodbyes, I couldn't be happier to be home from Australia' in *TheJournal.ie* online and another 124 responses were submitted within three hours suggesting that telling their migration story was important to many returnees (Kirwan 2015). A tweet which mentioned the interest to the newspaper's Twitter handle, '@Journal.ie', elicited no response. The survey links had been posted in comment threads on *The Irish Times*' 'Generation Emigration' blog numerous times but the curator (one of the contacts made at the Civic Forum) ignored requests for a full story on the study or a tweet of the links. The story which appeared in *The Journal.ie* noted above was responded to enthusiastically as a 'good news' story and it may be a reflection of this that so many immediate responses came from this one posting.²⁰ The Departed Australia survey closed on 2 March 2016 with 490 hits representing 91 ineligible link activations and 399 survey responses, 45.4 per cent ($n=181$) of which were complete. Approximately 30 per cent of these respondents had not yet left Australia so their data have been omitted from the thesis since intention is not a solid indication of departure from Australia.

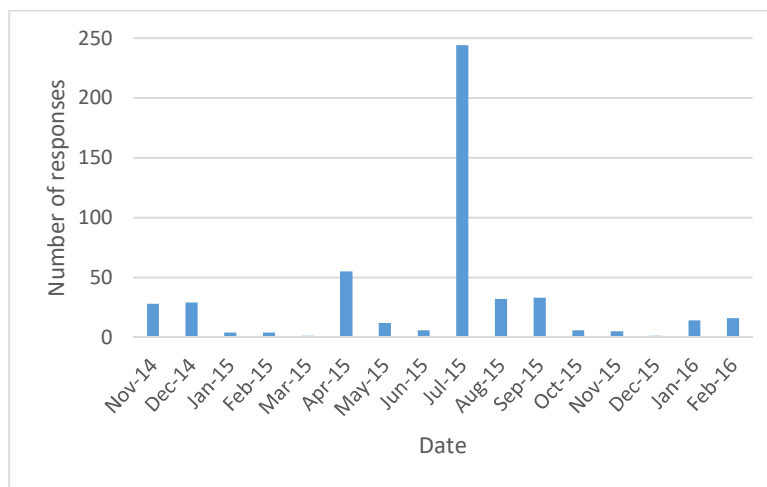
²⁰ A total of 364 people 'liked' the following comment on the Kirwan story: 'A good story to brighten up a dull Monday morning. Well done and all the best for your new life back home' and the term 'good news' was used in several responses in the comments section.

Figure 4.3: Irish in Australia survey responses by month



Source: Irish in Australia Survey, 2016

Figure 4.4: Departed Australia survey responses by month



Source: Departed Australia survey, 2016

4.6.5 Loss of participants

Significantly, online data collection and contact with respondents reduced the potential for loss over time that occur in studies relying on mail out or personal interviews. This was particularly important as visa holders are highly mobile and postal addresses are likely to change frequently, at least in the case of WHMs. A survey by Khoo et al (2008) relied on DIMIA’s database of 457 visa holders, and from the initial mailout of 6,000 letters 1,101 were returned to sender because the visa holder had moved. Immigrants are less likely to change their email address frequently due to the need to maintain a contact point for the Department of Immigration, ImmiAccount and VEVO and the fact that email addresses are usually the required log in information for communication portals such as Skype™ and

Facebook™. In this sample, data collection was not compromised by an inability to contact survey respondents via details provided by them even after a period of up to six months.

4.6.6 Research difficulties

One of the difficulties encountered during data collection was the low response rate for Irish people who had departed Australia. As is usually the case in migration studies, connecting with potential respondents from within the Irish community in Australia was much easier than finding those who had left. There were several logical points to consider in reflecting upon the data collection exercise:

- More responses came from the Irish still in Australia because the research questions were of obvious interest to them and were relevant to their immediate lives.
- Those who responded to the survey were users of the services, pages and groups that had been used as distribution points for the research instruments. Unsurprisingly, those who had left Australia were more likely to have disconnected from social media groups concerned with the Irish in Australia.
- For those who had left, the Australian experience was no longer immediately relevant to them and may not have been something they were willing to revisit.

Arranging interviews with Irish people who had left Australia meant contending with extensive time differences. Despite the prevalence of mobile technology in Ireland, there were connection problems with some interviewees in rural areas with one being so bad that the interview was abandoned.

4.7 Data analysis

Several stages of data treatment and analysis were undertaken. The automatic coding of responses in online survey software such as SurveyMonkey™ is one benefit of this data collection method. The survey data were downloaded from SurveyMonkey™ to Excel then cleaned and uploaded to SPSS Statistics 24 for analysis. Within SPSS some of the raw data was recoded to more concise variables. For example, the many different visas used by respondents were recoded to a simplified list for ease of categorisation and analysis. Using descriptive statistics achieved from data frequencies and cross tabulations was the primary form of statistical analysis. The qualitative data provided in interviews and peppered throughout the surveys were themed according to the categories of analysis and coded accordingly in NVivo 11 through manual text analysis. Initial analysis of open-ended questions in the online survey was conducted using the text analysis function in the SurveyMonkey™ software which enabled these data to be categorised. Once transcribed, qualitative data collected during semi-structured interviews underwent basic text analysis to identify key themes and quotations. The analysis of the qualitative data looked for the common, recurring phrases and themes as well as the individual and singular and was an iterative process. It became clear that there were four particular themes emerging from the data and these formed the results chapters of this thesis – migration motivation,

settlement, transnational practice and return or onward migration. These 'parent' codes were populated with many more specific themes such as casual racism and cultural affinity which related to leaving Australia or remaining and maintaining Irish social networks or the career success which followed a 'gap year' migration and resulted in permanent settlement.

4.8 Researcher Positionality

Reflexivity is concerned with nullifying the power relations in the researcher/respondent relationship by keeping the researcher mindful of his/her influence on the research process (Engin 2011, Berger 2015). No individual person occupies a single social status. Each of us occupy a multifaceted position depending on the context and situation of an encounter in which we participate. In the research context, an awareness of the points of difference and similarity can illuminate a participant's sense of belonging in any social landscape and give rise to an understanding of the dynamics and implications of power in the researcher-respondent relationship. Through self-reflexivity, Amelina and Faist (2012) suggest migration scholars have the opportunity to address 'methodological nationalism' and critically reflect upon the taken-for-granted ways researcher and participant identities are formulated (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 2003).

An investigation of the literature around researcher positionality or insider-outsider status does not solve a researcher's dilemma but furnishes one with an awareness of the possible benefits and drawbacks of occupying either position. Where there is an intense proximity between one's personal experience and the phenomenon under study a researcher is positioned as an 'insider', someone with an 'intimate affinity' with their own culture (Narayan 1993, p.671). Such closeness led to a call for detachment on the part of insider researchers to preserve academic rigour since critics argued that the 'expert authority' of an insider was tinged with questionable academic authority. However, more recently the fluidity and flux of the various loci we operate on as human researchers – age, sex, class, ethnicity, religion and education – has led to a 'recognition that knowledge is always relational and situational [which] highlights the institutional, historical and political situatedness of scholarly work' (Narayan 1993, Kirpitchenko and Voloder 2014, p.13).

Insider status was confirmed on two points: when graduate respondents declared that they 'knew what it was like trying to get people to talk to you for a study' and so participated as 'social payback' for their own research success; and when people said they would 'do anything to help one of their own' (meaning another Irish person). This comment usually came at the end of the interview when the participant was being thanked for their time. Therefore, it occurred when the interviewer's 'Irish credentials' had been established, initially through an unmistakable Irish accent and subsequently through questioning by the informant. Even without disclosure, it was generally assumed that the researcher was familiar with the interviewee's experiences both as a migrant and a member of Irish and Australian society. Outsider status was evident when informants spoke in colloquialisms or

assumed that the researcher, born in Northern Ireland, was fully au fait with the political, social and economic structures of the Republic of Ireland.

There are benefits to the deeply embedded historical and cultural knowledge of the ethnic group possessed by the researcher. Bonner and Tolhurst (2002) cite a number of benefits of insider status. Primary among these are having a greater understanding of the culture being studied; a previously established intimacy between the researcher and participant which promotes the telling and judging of truth; and the ability to not alter the flow of interaction unnaturally. These allow the process, rather than the outcome of the research to be explored.

Among the drawbacks associated with insider research is the possibility of subjectivity promoted by an intense familiarity with the subject group and a 'loyalty' dilemma where the researcher may be tempted to disclose only positive research about the subject group. Recognition can also cause the researcher to become a non-observing participant. There is an inherent danger that an insider researcher might take common practices for granted and completely miss the opportunity to describe to outsiders routine elements of interaction in the group. Bowers (1988) cautions that the insider researcher should be mindful of the need to maintain enough distance to question the data. Breen (2007, p.163) argues

that the insider/outsider dichotomy is simplistic, and the distinction is unlikely to adequately capture the role of all researchers. Instead, the role of the researcher is better conceptualised on a continuum, rather than as an either/or dichotomy.

In this study, the researcher was mindful of both the positive and negative aspects of her position as an insider researcher. Of the positive aspects, recognising nuances and the easy flow of conversation during interviews because of cultural familiarity were two particular advantages. Reflexivity was recognised as the best method of avoiding a sympathetic bias towards the researched community. Here again, the continuum came into focus since there were no respondents who completely mirrored the researcher in migration experience, gender, age, origin and religion. The researcher's frequent 'to and fro' migration experience provided both distance from and familiarity with the study's informants.

4.9 Conclusion

The ontology, epistemology, methodology, methods and sources of this research project as described and analysed here are layers of consideration depicted in Saunter's (2011) research onion (Figure 4.1) which illustrates the depth of thought required before commencing research. The bold type elements are those that were employed in the design of this research project in light of the philosophy that underpinned this research. Starting from an ontological position of constructivism and an epistemological position of pragmatism, the choice was made to adopt an inductive approach that

allows for open-ended and exploratory reasoning. The methodological choice was a simple mixed methods approach and a research strategy consisting of a survey and qualitative in-depth interview. A cross-sectional time horizon was deemed the only appropriate one for a doctoral study. The sample is a purposive one which means the results of this study are not generalisable to the wider Irish population of Australia but this sampled population provides valuable insights into life in Australia for these Irish migrants. Statistical data from state agencies in Ireland, Northern Ireland and Australia underpin the thesis and provide context and comparison for the study. The following chapters explore the results of this study.

CHAPTER 5

THE IRISH IN AUSTRALIA

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the Irish in Australia survey and relevant qualitative interviews along the theme of migration motivations and decisions. It focusses upon the first research question: What are the migration motivators and defining demographic characteristics of this post-2000 migrant cohort?

The aim is to examine who travelled - the composition of the migrant group and the life stage reached - and how this influenced their visa options. Visa conditions affect the employment opportunities which can, in turn, influence the income, location, internal mobility and job satisfaction of migrants. For example, despite some pre-migration research, many respondents commented on Australia's high cost of living indicating that income and participation in the Australian labour market subsequently affects lifestyle options open to a newcomer and, perhaps then, the likelihood of settlement success. The chapter concludes that intentions around permanency appear to have been decided post-arrival so they played a lesser part in the visa chosen than cost, convenience or expediency. Of greater importance to the continuing reformulation of Australian immigration policy, however, is the widespread 'category-jumping' from temporary visas to permanent visas exhibited amongst this cohort.

5.2 The Migration Process

The process of migration contains a number of elements. The first of these is the life context of the migrant which has two strands – personal circumstances and labour utility. These two elements affect the migration decision and the choice of visa which can be used to enter Australia. Age can be a restrictive factor for some visas while labour market inexperience reduces eligibility for others. The conditions of visa entry may affect where a migrant can live, in the case of regional sponsorship; the industry and even the specific job in which they can work, as in the case of a 457; or how many hours a migrant can work, in the case of a student visa. One of the biggest pull factors for Australia is its climate and the perceived lifestyle that engenders, but achievement of the 'Australian dream' relates closely to income, social status and labour market value. Therefore, visa conditions can restrict or enhance a migrant's ability to progress socially and economically.

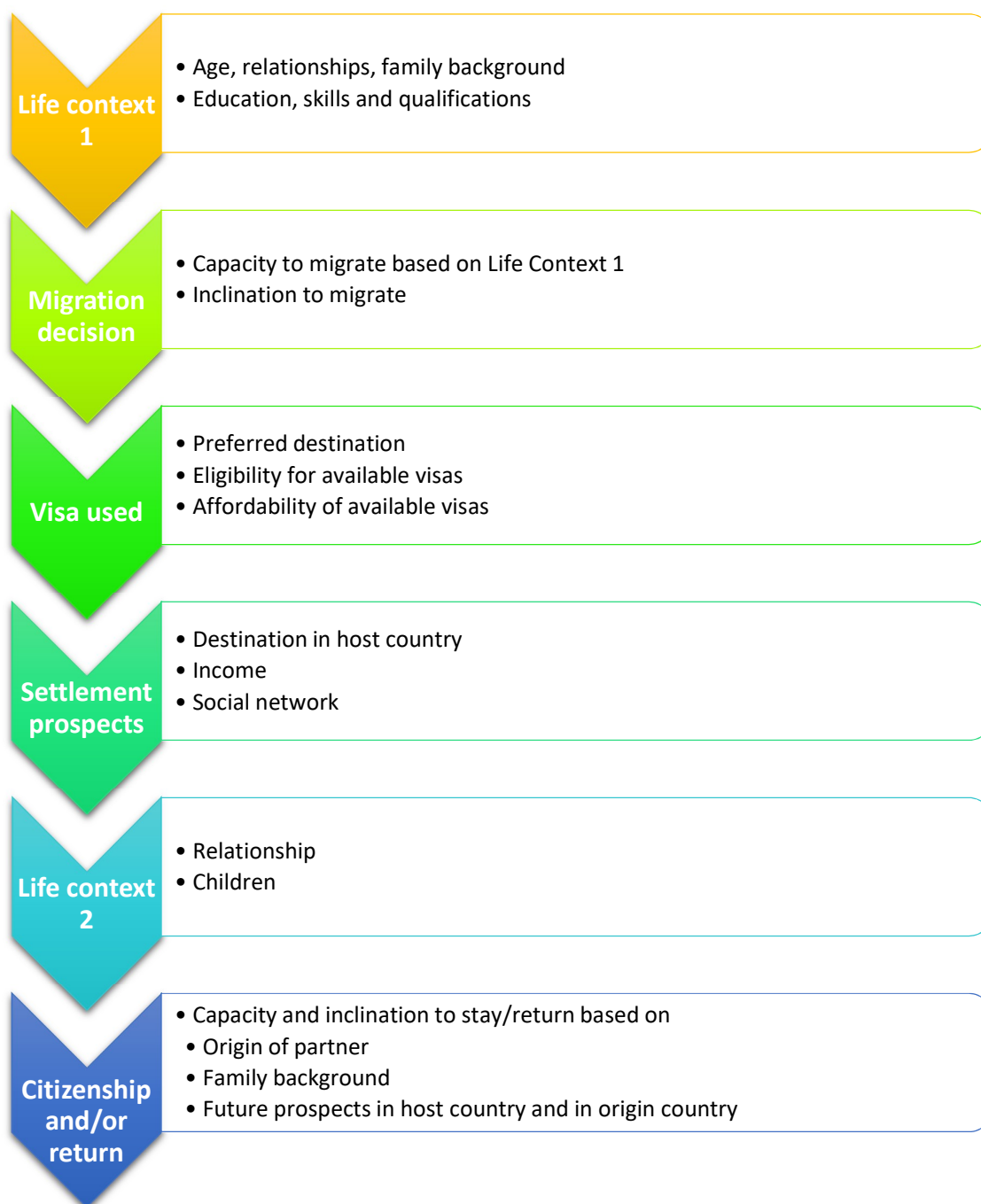
Figure 5.1 depicts the migration process and the decision-making factors of each stage of that process. Life Context 1 is comprised of characteristics such as the migrant's age, family background, relationship status, educational attainment and labour market value or utility. All of these elements affect the ability to migrate and can have some bearing on an individual's inclination to leave their home for a life abroad.

Once a decision has been made to migrate the important factor is the destination. Choosing a prospective host country should, logically, determine what visas a migrant can access but often the reverse is true. Entry to the preferred destination may not be possible and in this case it is the accessibility of visas that largely determines where a migrant travels. However, in this study, particularly among the Working Holiday Maker cohort, Australia was a natural destination in the sense that it featured in migrants' life stories e.g. it was somewhere previous family migrants had gone. Spending a year on a WHM visa in Australia was also considered a 'rite of passage' for many and, as the economic crisis struck, many came because 'everyone was going to Australia' as more than one respondent said.

The specific destination within the host country can affect settlement. For example, someone who pictures a beach-side lifestyle would not fulfil their expectations in a regional South Australian town such as Murray Bridge. Likewise, those who crave cultural affinity in their social network would be better living in a backpacker community in St Kilda, Melbourne or Bondi, Sydney than in a rural Victorian town with few Irish residents. Pre-departure research and information is important in order to ensure that expectations such as these are met.

Life Context 2 largely relates to young Irish backpackers whose age alone determines that significant changes may have taken place in their personal lives between the age of arrival (20 to 23 years of age) and any decision to remain in Australia, and perhaps even take up Australian citizenship (usually about five years after arrival based on the survey data). The formation or ending of a relationship with an Irish partner or an Australian one, affects both ability and inclination to stay or return to Ireland. A relationship with a migrant from somewhere else can introduce new future destination possibilities to the migration journey. Likewise the arrival of children has a noticeable effect on settlement and likelihood of return as will be demonstrated later in the analysis. Having Australian-born children is also the prime factor in the take up of Australian citizenship by Irish migrants for two reasons – Irish parents want to share their child/ren's citizenship and parents want to ensure that they and any siblings of an Australian-born child can return to Australia in the future in the event that they return to Ireland.

Figure 5.1: The Migration Process



The demographic characteristics of the cohort analysed here are important in terms of understanding the survey findings. They are compared with ABS census data, CSO data and the Émigré study by University College Cork, which had a well-defined and innovative methodology to establish whether they conform to these secondary data.

5.3 Reasons for migration from Ireland to Australia

The Irish around the globe are lauded as being part of the Irish diaspora – a global family of the Irish and their descendants who remain connected to Ireland no matter their location. This rather grand idea belies the widespread negativity around the issue of emigration in Ireland and indeed, amongst some members of the diaspora, since many, particularly those who left amidst economic depression, felt they had little choice. An acceptance of emigration and a recognition of all the difficulties it involves has led to the development of diaspora policy in many nations, including Ireland, and ‘*Global Ireland: Ireland’s Diaspora Policy*’, was released in May 2015. Emigration policy is a relatively new area of research when compared with immigration policy (Gamlen 2014). Its importance lies in the recognition it gives to the issue of migration in the public sphere. Previously, emigration was rarely acknowledged as the pressure valve it provided for Ireland’s economy in terms of relieving stress caused by unemployment. The survey showed that travel was the main reason for migration and accounted for more than a quarter of responses, but when the data for the period 2000-2015 was analysed separately, employment was the main factor at more than 47 per cent. This is even more pronounced in Figure 5.2 when data are disaggregated into 2000-2009 and 2010-2015 time periods. Gaining employment as a migration motivator had increased to 54.7 per cent, travelling had halved to 17.4 per cent and experiencing another culture remained steady at less than ten per cent in the most recent decade.

Figure 5.2: Reasons for migration, 2000-2009 and 2010-2015 (n=592)



Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

Kingsley Aikins of the Dublin-based company, *Diaspora Matters*, challenged the language associated with diaspora at the first Global Irish Civic Forum in 2015 when he stated that ‘we must be honest about it. We

use the word 'diaspora' so we don't have to say 'emigration'.²¹ Ireland's long and often troubled relationship with emigration needs little introduction to any person interested in migration studies. The country's role as an emigrant nursery, and the widespread acceptance of emigration as a fact of national life, was partly the reason for the Irish State's lack of action on the phenomenon even when, in the 1950s, the population, which numbered less than three million, was further depleted by fifteen per cent (Daly 2006). Although the 1950s was hailed by some as the 'lost decade' during which Ireland seemed to stagnate after leaving the Commonwealth and becoming a republic, the following decade saw an improvement in the economy which slowed emigration. The general buoyancy of the early 1970s ended with the oil crises of 1973 and 1979. The effects of the economic downturn combined with the increased labour force caused by the coming of age of the post-war baby boom culminated in a sharp increase in Irish emigration late in the 1980s when over 200,000 emigrated and the country wallowed in recession (O'Connell 1999). In 1987, the then Foreign Minister, Brian Lenihan Snr., famously said that the country should be proud of its literate emigrants, the men and women who could roam the world. Ireland should not be 'defeatist or pessimistic about it, since after all, we can't all live on a small island.'²² This comment awakened feeling against the apathy surrounding the loss of some of Ireland's young, talented and most energetic people. The recent emigration wave has been compared to that of the 1980s and has been deemed by some to be the more catastrophic (O'Brien 2014). While migration is a normal part of social relations it is accelerated by economic crisis as those with the resources to migrate and the skills to gain entry to regions unaffected by recession, seek to escape. Emigration is often then seen to be caused by economic decline rather than symptomatic of it (Castles 2010, p.1568).

It must be acknowledged that some of the more recent emigrants feel they had little choice but to migrate, yet Mac Éinri (2014) claims that they are less inclined to adopt the 'exile' motif of earlier generations of emigrants. Despite the 'push' felt by some of those who left Ireland post-2008, the reality is that this cohort are better educated than their predecessors and candidly factor in elements such as career advancement and wage comparisons when deciding whether or not to return to Ireland for the long-term. Moreover, any decision to return now factors in the economic and the social as well as the emotional aspects of well-being. In saying that, these have been considerations of generations of return migrants to Ireland. Current returnees seem to consider themselves global citizens, migrating sideways, as well as in a bidirectional path between Ireland and Australia for example, seemingly spoilt for choice in some fields of employment. Life stage can affect this relative freedom however, as children start school and parents become reluctant to interrupt education and unsettle friendships.

Although recognising that migrants do have a choice and thus make a deliberate decision to leave their home country, one can still entertain the notion of impelled, rather than forced, migration, especially in the context of economic recession. Survey respondents were asked if they left Ireland because they felt

²¹ Interactive Session on Networking led by Kingsley Aikins, Global Irish Civic Forum, Dublin Castle, Thursday 4 June 2015.

²² Brian Lenihan, interview in Newsweek, 13 October 1987.

they had to and it is clear that the vast majority (73.8 per cent) wanted to leave Ireland with only 21.9 per cent replying that they felt they had to emigrate. Nuanced responses show that 4.3 per cent of respondents wanted to leave but qualified their answers with statements such as this one from a female former WHM who is now an Australian citizen;

I left a full-time job on minimum wage that I didn't enjoy and had little prospect of promotion. I needed more experience under my belt and I couldn't find jobs in Ireland in my line of work that were not part of the Jobsbridge scheme. I have an honours degree, however all entry level jobs were advertised as "internships" and I could not afford to go for any of these positions. In Sydney I have a full-time job that suits my career path and I'm earning enough (even at entry level) to experience Australia as well as paying day to day costs (Respondent IA587).

Or this from a female former backpacker who became a permanent resident;

Both my husband and I had jobs in Dublin. However, I just finished a psychology degree and wanted to pursue work in this area and there were no opportunities in Ireland. We married in 2012 and were living in Dublin and felt that we were just living week to week and if we ever wanted to purchase property or have kids something had to change so we planned to immigrate to Australia. We had both done the working holiday visa in 2005 and loved the lifestyle here and what it would offer us if we started a family (Respondent IA415).

Others said that although their decision to immigrate to Australia was freely made, returning to Ireland was not easy because of the economic climate. This introduces the concept of impelled settlement. A former backpacker, male, aged 29 said '[I] wanted to travel. But I stayed this long because I feel like I've had to.' Another former backpacker who left Ireland in 2005 said:

Things were good in Ireland when I left, [I had] no intentions of staying away long term, but the arse fell out of the Irish economy and I was discouraged from coming home because there was no work and I was too proud to go on welfare. I said I'd make my own way (Respondent IA30).

Moving on from the decision to emigrate, it is important to highlight the particular features of Ireland's society which enable migration. Amongst these is the demography of Ireland.

5.3.1. Basic demographic statistics of respondents at time of survey

This sample was heavily biased towards females and temporary migrants. Table 5.1 shows the demographic profile of respondents to the Irish in Australia survey. Two-thirds of them were female and more than 80 per cent came from the Republic of Ireland. More than 60 per cent of respondents were

aged under 30. Temporary migrants accounted for 78.1 per cent of respondents and just 21.9 per cent came to Australia as part of the Permanent Migration Programme. Higher number of females were educated to postgraduate degree while more males were trade-qualified. This is consistent with the overall education profile of Irish emigrants. More than 65 per cent of females were educated to bachelor degree level or above yet over 57 per cent immigrated as a backpacker.

At the time of emigration just under 50 per cent of participants travelled with a spouse or partner indicating that a number of relationships formed post-emigration since almost 90 per cent of respondents had a spouse or partner and 40 per cent had children at the time of the survey. The high numbers of de facto respondents may be related to the relatively young age of respondents as the average age of marriage in Ireland is currently mid-30s. Friends were travelling companions for 20 per cent of immigrants but a quarter travelled alone.

Female respondents dominated the sample despite slightly more males than females emigrating as a whole but this may be indicative of the increasing proportion of Irish females migrating to Australia in recent years. In 2011, females accounted for 44.8 per cent of Irish immigrants to Australia and in 2016, they represented 52.5 per cent of the total (CSO 2016). Increasing numbers of female migrants may also be a result of Australia's targeting of Irish healthcare professionals as related below. This subtle change illustrates how the demographic profile of Australia's immigrants can be shaped by the labour needs and immigration policy of the receiving country.

Table 5.1: Demographic characteristics of Irish in Australia survey respondents (%)

Age at time of emigration	Male	Female	Total
<25	25.6	32.6	29.1
25-29	37.8	35.9	36.9
30-34	19.2	15.7	17.5
35-39	9.3	9.4	9.3
40+	8.1	6.4	7.2
Place of Birth			
Republic of Ireland	31.5	68.5	81.7
Northern Ireland	34.7	65.3	14.3
UK/Australia/Other	47.6	52.4	4.0
Education			
Secondary	12.3	6.1	9.2
Post Leaving Cert/A Levels	4.7	10.0	7.3
Diploma	14.0	15.3	14.7
Trade Certificate/Apprenticeship	23.4	3.3	13.4
Bachelor/Honours degree	30.4	41.4	35.9
Postgraduate Diploma/Masters/PhD	15.3	23.9	19.5
Relationship status			
Married	39.5	41.4	40.5
De facto/Partner	44.9	46.4	45.6
Divorced/Separated	0.6	1.1	0.8
Never Married	15.0	11.1	13.0
Do you have children?			
Yes	38.6	41.5	40.6
No	61.4	58.5	59.4
Initial visa used*			
457	15.7	21.2	18.5
Working Holiday Maker	54.7	57.6	56.1
Family	8.7	7.2	7.9
Permanent Residency	5.2	4.4	4.8
Higher Education or Graduate	2.3	1.9	2.1
Skilled and regional sponsorship/nomination	13.4	7.7	10.5
Total	32.1	67.9	100

*Visa types are described in Appendices 6 and 7.

Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

5.4 Enablers of Irish emigration

With the collapse of the Irish economy, net emigration returned to Ireland with 240,000 people leaving the island between 2007 and 2014. High unemployment rates, a public sector employment moratorium and collapsing house prices induced many to seek employment outside Ireland. Many of these migrants left Ireland still responsible for a domestic mortgage and increasingly, some of this cohort had less money than previous emigrants with which to support themselves in the destination country. The effects of this became apparent over time as Irish welfare organisations in the United Kingdom and Australia reported sharp increases in demand for their services from unprepared immigrants. This was particularly noticeable among those using the WHM visa in Australia, many of whom came with little or no savings and the expectation that jobs were readily available in the Australian labour market. Australia recorded a record low unemployment rate of four per cent in February 2008 (Reserve Bank of Australia 2010) just when the Irish economy was beginning to crumble, and largely avoided the Global Financial Crisis of 2007/8. However, Australia's unemployment rate rose by nearly two percentage points to around 5.75 per cent by November 2009.²³ These 'Celtic Cubs', as they were termed by the longer-standing diasporic Irish populations, came from Celtic Tiger Ireland, a nation that lived on credit and eschewed saving – which could explain why they arrived fiscally unprepared despite the majority of them having been in employment at the point of emigration. In the case of many family units, the household income had been reduced to one wage and this was often the lower income of the two. Some female respondents reported leaving stable and satisfying employment with decent wage and career prospects to migrate because their spouse had become unemployed and had little prospect of securing another position. They stated the move was more about their spouse's mental wellness than the family income. A migration decision such as this is good evidence of Mincer's (1977) cost-benefit theory whereby migration occurs to increase net family benefit which is not solely monetary, often to the detriment of individual family members.

For most, global moves were driven by wishes for an improved lifestyle, better career advancement and employment opportunities, as well as educational and leisure pursuits not catered for in Ireland. Aside from these, many migrants cite wanderlust or a quest for adventure as the reason for leaving (Breen 2012, 2014). Whatever the cause of departure, there was the reoccurrence of the theme among survey responses that contemporary emigration may not be permanent. Onward and return migration remain features of the experience of the Irish in Australia despite their quest for permanence there. Improvements in the cost, accessibility, and speed of travel, and communication and technology, may have contributed to the notion of a smaller world space and ease of connectedness but whatever the social, economic, or political ramifications of migration, the human aspect – feelings of fear, trepidation, loneliness, excitement, freedom, adventure, despair, and homesickness – has not changed. That migration

²³ At this date Ireland's unemployment rate stood at 13.1 per cent but would rise to 14.9 per cent by June 2012. Central Statistics Office, Ireland.

prompted a range of emotions such as these was evident in the qualitative data and in the survey when respondents were asked about the best and worst parts of their migration experience.

5.4.1. Age

The age profile of the respondents to this study reveals that most are in their twenties, with slightly more in their late twenties and this corresponds with the results of the *Austerity* survey. Almost 27 per cent of emigrants were in their thirties with the majority of these (17.5 per cent) in their early thirties. Not surprisingly, smaller percentages are evident in the over-40 age group due to age restrictions on Australian entry visas. A number of people in the 40-44 age group had been to Australia on a WHM visa while aged in their twenties. Additionally, several of those who emigrated on a permanent visa in their late twenties had lived and worked in Australia on a WHM visa previously. This points to the importance of the WHM programme as a pathway to permanent residency even when it does not result in immediate, on-shore conversion to permanency.

A 46 year old female who emigrated with her husband on a 457 visa in 2011 as part of this cohort notes in her history that she and her husband had been WHMs in the mid-1980s but cites a delay in processing and the quota system then in operation as the reason they (unwillingly) returned to Ireland. Despite the twenty year lapse, Australia was where they turned to escape the recession – *my husband was out of work for two years. We had to do something, so we came back.* The first visit had resonated strongly with the couple,

...one [reason] was that we fell in love with it the first time and we didn't want to leave when we had to, so we always wanted to come back but never believed we would and the second was that we wanted to come for the boys and there hasn't been a regret (Respondent IA762).

Time was of the essence for some respondents. A now 53 year old female who immigrated in 1988 in the Independent category, noted that age and skill were the two factors that secured entry for her and her husband, who was a blast miner:

... we went in under the points system which changes all the time but at the time you either had a job they wanted or family reunification or you were educated enough and you fitted in a bracket. All we could hope for was points – we were both under 30, I was 26 he was 29 so we were in the highest points for age. He had a job that would keep him employed in Australia and the education (Respondent IA1059).

A 38 year old female respondent who came to Australia on a WHM visa was aged 25 never had any intention of taking up casual work, preferring instead to seek a career job using her degree in Food Science. Despite not having any family or friends there, she determined to go to Australia and age was the propulsion:

I had it in my head that you need to get the Working Holiday visa before you turn 30 and I was 27 at the time. My company promised me lots of things but they never followed through so I just thought I will hand my resignation in and go to Australia...So I decided to get a ticket... Like I left behind a long term relationship and I went by myself but I felt I really needed to go because I felt if you don't go before you're 30...
(Respondent IA286).

Arguably career dissatisfaction also played a part in her decision but the breaking off of her long-term relationship and her declaration of age as an issue demonstrates the determination she had, as well as a knowledge of immigration policy, notwithstanding having no familiarity with the regulations through friends or family members.

5.4.2. Education

Table 5.2 compares the educational profile of the respondents with the CSO data on Ireland's emigrants. It demonstrates that the majority of survey respondents were educated to at least tertiary level and that more of the Irish in Australia had achieved higher education levels than those represented in data on Ireland's emigrants generally. Female tertiary education in Ireland is higher (38 per cent) than for males (31.3 per cent) although both genders are above the EU-27 average of 25.8 per cent (European Commission 2013, p.4). The female dominance in higher education in Ireland is reflected in this study, where 65 per cent of females and 46 per cent of males had achieved third-level education, but not in the CSO general data on emigrants where 44 per cent of females are educated to degree level or above, compared with 51 per cent of emigrating males. Females are highly concentrated in the teaching and health and welfare fields of education and this translates into sectoral and occupational sex segregation in their working lives (European Commission 2013, p.11). The main sector of employment for Irish women in Ireland is health care and social work which accounts for increased female migration to Australia since 2013 in response to Australian international recruitment in the health sector. Male education in Ireland is concentrated in the engineering, manufacturing and construction fields as well as in sciences, maths and computing, with more than 60 per cent of males in each field. The predominance of males in Australian immigration in the years 2011 and 2012 reflects two things: the severe decline in male-dominated employment sectors such as construction in Ireland and technical and managerial occupations, and the increased need for skills in those areas in parts of Australia where the mining industry was booming and these skills were in demand. Male unemployment rates almost quadrupled between 2002 (4.7 per cent) and 2012 (18.1 per cent).

Table 5.2: Education profile of respondents compared with CSO Emigrant data (%)

	Irish in Australia respondents		CSO Data - average from 2011-2016 ³	
	Females %	Males %	Females %	Males %
Higher secondary and below	6	12	40	37
Post leaving cert ¹	29	42	10	5
Third level ²	65	46	44	51

¹ Includes Technical or Vocational, Advanced Certificate or Diploma

² Third level degree or above

³ Average percentage in each education level calculated for the years 2011- 2016 as given in Table 5 Estimated Migration (aged 15 and over) classified by Sex and Education Attainment, 2011 – 2016 Note: 7% of each sex did not state education level

Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016 and CSO (2016)

Survey respondents in the age groups typically associated with backpackers (20-30 years old) had high levels of educational qualifications. Almost 30 per cent held a bachelor degree and another 11 per cent had postgraduate qualifications. This group represents the end product of both the increased access to tertiary level education and the renewed focus on trade apprenticeships in Ireland in the early 2000s which is discussed further below. Of the 10 per cent of respondents with a trade certificate, almost eight per cent were aged between 20 and 29 years.

Glynn et al's (2013, p.29) *Austerity* report states that 67 per cent of their respondents held a tertiary qualification compared with 42 per cent of the Irish population and state that 'arguments referencing a 'brain drain' are not misplaced'. Glynn et al (2015, p.1) point out,

new data indicate that university graduates are overrepresented among those leaving—62 per cent of recent emigrants of the age 25-34 cohort, versus 47 per cent of the same cohort of the population, lending some credence to worries about 'brain drain'.

Some 55 per cent of respondents held a qualification at Bachelor degree level or above. The targeting of skilled migrants in Australia's immigration policy is ensured by the points assessment which predetermines a high education profile among its newcomers. Many respondents reported an attempt to stay in Ireland through returning to study when the economic recession began. For some, a graduate degree was not enough when they found themselves competing with older people who had been made redundant and were applying for junior level positions. For others, a one-year postgraduate qualification was a method of staying off social security benefits while simultaneously improving their chances of employment when the economy started to recover. A female who came on a Working Holiday in 2009, referred to the common practice of internships when she said,

...the way people coming out of universities were treated was 'if you don't work for free then you've got no job'. What were we supposed to do? Drain our brains in Ireland or go

somewhere else and use them? You can't train someone to that level and then expect them to do some braindead job (Respondent IA874).

5.4.3. Employment

The employment rates at the time of emigration among the respondents are supported by the Population and Migration estimates release from the CSO in 2014. These provided an analysis of emigration by economic status for the first time and showed that the majority of those emigrating were either at work or a student in the period prior to departing with fewer than one in five people being unemployed.

In Ireland, there is a common misconception that emigrants leave because they are unemployed. Table 5.3 shows that 67 per cent of survey respondents held full-time positions with 10.1 per cent working part-time, 8.6 per cent unemployed and 8.9 per cent identifying as students. Glynn et al (2013) and the CSO (2014) report that 47 per cent of all current emigrants were employed in full-time jobs before leaving, One reason why Irish emigrants to Australia show this high rate of employment at the time of emigration could be related to the cost of travelling to Australia and the availability of work visas. While the Working Holiday Maker visa is relatively cheap at \$440 compared with \$1060 for a 457 and \$3600 for Employer or Regional sponsorship visas, airfares to Australia are very expensive compared with flights to the UK or USA from Ireland. For example, a one way fare to Sydney from Dublin is AUD\$1060 compared with AUD\$93 to London and AUD\$657 to Boston.²⁴ It would be difficult to save the money needed to travel without a regular and substantial wage and the difficulty would be heightened for migrants with dependants.

Table 5.3: Employment categories of respondents prior to emigration (n=640)

Employment category	Percent
Working full-time	67.0
Working part-time	10.1
Unemployed	8.6
Student	8.9
Other (please specify)*	5.4
Total	100.0

** the majority of answers were 'made redundant', 'worked several part-time jobs' or referred to the ending of a temporary position such as maternity leave contract.*

Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

²⁴ Prices quoted were retrieved on 20 March 2017. Visa costs are available on www.border.gov.au and airfares from www.webjet.com

However, despite their full-time employment status, the majority of these people could still be termed economic migrants. Many respondents reported that they were working, but living wage to wage with no capacity to save for unexpected costs or luxuries like holidays. Very often a household had gone from having two good wages to just one which was being reduced by higher taxes, fewer available shifts or hours, or wage and promotion freezes.

One respondent, a single woman aged 29 when she left Ireland, reported '*I was getting pay cuts, was barely making it through the week*', while another who emigrated aged 41 with her husband and children, noted declining hours as a problem saying '*My husband was only working 3 days and I was cut down to 20 hours*.' The context of the Celtic Tiger is important here because it was the *decline* in living standards, not just the lack of future prospects, which made many consider emigration. In addition, anger at the actions of the banking sector, as well as the Irish government and the subsequent bailout in November 2010 by the triumvirate (or 'Troika') of the International Monetary Fund, European Central Bank and the European Commission, prompted many to leave. For many, the opinion was that the people of Ireland were paying for the bankers' mistakes in credit extension through the austerity measures imposed on the country to halt and reverse economic decline. By 2014, economic recovery was visible but the regime of increased and new taxes such as the Universal Social Charge (USC) and water charges, combined with redundancies and frozen wages left a bitter taste in many mouths.²⁵

A mix of reasons - attractive future employment prospects, relationship breakdown and having family already in Australia – were a catalyst for some migration decisions. A female respondent who emigrated aged 37 stated that her brother and sister had visited Australia in 2001 and that she had 'always liked the idea of Australia'. She describes her situation prior to emigrating:

I had a life and a job in Cork and thought I should settle down ...that was 2003, eventually I wanted to do Dietetics and I broke up with my boyfriend and I thought 'Fck it, I'll go to Australia to do dietetics' and I hated my job in the Health Board in Ireland, it was just so boring (Respondent IA289).

Using a Higher Education Sector (subclass 573) visa and enrolled in an Adelaide university, she planned to stay for two years:

I came as a [international] student, paid the big fees. Then I worked out I could get a student work visa and work 20 hours a week. I got a research job on an infants feed project so I was working and studying. Then I did another part-time job as a massage

²⁵ The Universal Social Charge (USC) is a tax on income that replaced both the income levy and the health levy (also known as the health contribution) since 1 January 2011. It is a graduated tax with increasing percentages for each portion of earnings. Example: A person who is earning €50,000 per year will pay the Universal Social Charge at a rate of 0.5% on the first €12,012 (which comes to €60.06), 2.5% on the next €6,760 (which comes to €169.00) and 5% on the balance of €31,228 (which comes to €1,561.40). This person will pay €1,790.46 in 2017 http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/money_and_tax/tax/income_tax/universal_social_charge.html

therapist which helped me establish roots and make friends. I got to test out the working life and I found that I really liked it. It just felt to me that if you were willing to work in Australia there was no problem getting work – people respected the qualifications, you could get on well...I did just plan to come for two years – but the more I was here the more I began to like it. I arrived here in February and in September I met Chris who is now my husband and we have two kids. I didn't expect that to happen (Respondent IA289).

She progressed to a de facto visa and is now an Australian citizen. This 'accidental' migrant story is a common one amongst this cohort and it points to the use of one or more of the many available visas to accommodate unexpected life events.

5.4.4. Industry, occupation and employment

Table 5.4 lists the ANZSCO categories of employment of respondents at the time of emigration.²⁶ Males dominated the Managers, Technical and Trade Workers, Machinery Operators and Drivers, and Labourers categories while female respondents dominated the categories of Professionals, Community and Personal Service Workers, Clerical and Administrative Workers and Sales Workers. At 42 per cent in total, Professionals are by far the largest category and this is indicative of O'Connell's (1999) findings that the most dramatic change in sector employment growth in Ireland until the 1990s was in middle-class positions. In the three decades from 1961, the proportion of upper middle-class employees –managers, professionals and salaried employees – more than doubled; from 10 per cent to 22 per cent. This was likely due to the increased participation in secondary and tertiary education following the introduction of free secondary education in the late 1960s. Technicians and Trades workers make up 13.3 per cent of the employment category of respondents and males dominate. Skilled manual work increased in Ireland by two per cent to 12 per cent in 1991 while semi- and unskilled work declined from 19 per cent to 12 per cent in 1991. The small percentages of respondents employed at the Machinery Operator and Driver and Labourer levels support this characteristic of the Irish labour market. At 11.4 per cent Clerical and Administrative workers are the third largest group. The removal of gender-based discriminatory employment practices in Ireland through the 1970s saw female participation in the workforce increase by 90 per cent between 1971 and 1996. Lower middle-class sector employment - retail assistants, clerical workers and personal service workers – which was dominated by females expanded in Ireland from 23 per cent in 1961 to 31 per cent in 1991.

²⁶ The Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) is a classification system that provides for the standardised collection, analysis, and dissemination of occupation data.

Table 5.4: ANZSCO level of employment category at emigration (n=534)

Level of employment	Male	Female	Total
Managers	8.7	6.6	7.30
Professionals	31.4	47.0	41.95
Technicians and Trades Workers	33.1	3.9	13.30
Community and Personal Service Workers	5.2	10.8	8.99
Clerical and Administrative Workers	1.7	16.0	11.42
Sales Workers	2.3	5.5	4.49
Machinery Operators and Drivers	2.9	0.3	1.12
Labourers	3.5	0.8	1.69
Outside ANZSCO codes*	11.0	9.1	9.74
Total	100	100	100

*Includes home workers, students and unemployed

Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

It is worth noting that the 39 per cent increase in Irish-born people in Australia from 2006 to 2014 is the largest since the mid-1980s when economic depression in Ireland heralded another great wave of emigration. The collapse of Ireland's economy played a part in the country's increased emigration since 2008 but as noted, the respondents in this research were mostly employed at the point of emigration. Other threads of similarity connect earlier generations of migrants with those of today. Hanlon (1992) refers to taxation and the reluctance of Irish firms to promote staff as tacitly encouraging emigration but even in the 1990s there was the perception that overseas experience was crucial to the development on one's career. This, he says, is 'directly linked to the policy of industrialisation by invitation' (Hanlon 1992, p.190). These features are apparent in many of the transcriptions and survey responses. It is notable that overseas work experience is seen as important in varied employment sectors.

A 27 year old female social worker with an undergraduate degree and a Masters in Social Work, who arrived in 2013 on a WHM visa, said,

I had friends out here who were getting really good experience and I just wanted to get that and go home and increase my chance of getting a proper job. I wanted to get it [work experience] and go back. It's a very difficult area to get into, mental health, in Ireland even if you know someone. I'm hoping it will help. (Respondent IA371).

A 25 year old female registered psychiatric nurse with an undergraduate degree and Masters who left before the crash thought she was:

... one of the lucky ones. I had plenty of work opportunities before I left... I made my decision to move in 2008/9. It was during my undergrad. I knew Ireland was struggling and I knew in terms of getting good work experience I needed to go elsewhere (Respondent IA419).

She originally applied for a WHM visa in 2010 but was offered a Masters place and scholarship. After completing the course she moved to Melbourne in 2012;

I came out on the working holiday and as soon as I got here I went for an interview and they sponsored me for the four year visa [457] and then I went ahead and applied for the PR [permanent residency] and I just got that about two weeks ago so I'm delighted...(Respondent IA419).

These respondents represent some of the sectors of employment which attract Irish workers to Australia.

Table 5.5 shows the top ten occupations of survey respondents. The largest group were students and recent graduates followed by clerical and administrative workers. With either little work experience or a rather undefined skillset, it is unsurprising that these respondents entered as WHMs or Family migrants and in the case of clerical workers, also as secondary applicants on PR visas (Table 5.11). Occupations with a more defined skillset are listed next with the largest of these being nursing followed by engineering, finance and construction industry professions. Combining engineering, carpenters and joiners and electricians, almost a quarter of the total of these top occupations are construction-related.

The listed occupations closely align with a sex-segregated labour market where females dominate the clerical and nursing fields and males predominate in engineering and construction sectors. Perhaps the most interesting point about Table 5.5 is the fact that these top occupations are so varied. A labour market with a wide range of occupations and skill levels can attract immigrants no matter how skills-focused immigration policy is. For now, Australia is maintaining its ability to attract migrants to a labour market with a broad spectrum (Hugo 2005, p.207).

Table 5.5: Top ten occupations of respondents at the time of emigration

ANSZCO Code	Male	Female	Total
0999-10 Student/Just graduated	24.3	23.1	23.5
500000 Clerical and Administrative Workers nfd*	1.4	20.8	14
254411 Nurse Practitioner	0.0	20.0	13
233000 Engineering Professionals nfd*	20.0	3.1	9
221111 Accountant (General)	5.7	10.0	8.5
331211 Carpenter and Joiner	21.4	0.8	8
621111 Sales Assistant (General)	2.9	9.2	7
341111 Electrician (General)	18.6	0.0	6.5
241000 School Teachers nfd*	1.4	7.7	5.5
141000 Accommodation and Hospitality Managers nfd*	4.3	5.4	5
Total	100	100	100

**nfd = no further defined*

Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

Hanlon's (1992) observation regarding Ireland's trajectory of industrialisation can be seen in the growth of certain sectors there. Financial services sector employment, from whence 15.5 per cent of the respondents came, grew 37.5 per cent between 1979 and 1988 (CSO 1988). In the 1980s, about one third of the non-agricultural labour force in Ireland was employed in the public sector – particularly in health and education (O'Connell 1999). O'Connell notes that public sector employment contracted when it was reined in by austerity measures in 1987 but was expanding again in the late 1990s. It was a case of history repeating itself thirty years later. The 2009 OECD Economic Survey of Ireland noted that the public sector payroll increased by 15.5 per cent between 2001 and 2008 and that the public sector had over-expanded and needed to be cut back (OECD 2009, p.65). A moratorium on public sector jobs was introduced in 2009 to cut public spending with positions in the education and health sectors being deeply affected. The introduction of a unilateral pension levy, a pension-related pay deduction averaging 7.5 per cent for public servants further reduced wages. The private sector too implemented severe cost-reduction measures, among them pay freezes, wage cuts and employee lay-offs (OECD 2009, p.87). The *OECD Economic Survey* reports that of a sample of 400 members of the Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association taken in March 2009, around 200 had 'implemented a pay freeze and 41 per cent had cut wages with an average reduction of 13 per cent in the previous six months. Most construction firms had cut wages and around 40 per cent of services firms had implemented reductions' (OECD 2009, p.87). Across most industries and employment sectors then, workers faced increased working costs and reduced wages. Theories of economic migration which see macro effects on micro decision-making process are evident here.

Table 5.6 shows that the majority of respondents were employed in the Services sector in Ireland. Females dominate this sector which is largely composed of clerical and retail workers along with beauty therapists and a number of marketing and human resource professionals. Females are also prominent in the Health sector which is the employment industry of 14.4 per cent of the sample. Males are noticeable in the Construction sector which makes up ten per cent of the total. Students represent eight per cent of the sample closely followed by Finance workers. Engineering and Education are around four per cent each and small numbers of Education, Hospitality and IT specialists round out the employment sectors of the respondents. Almost 20 per cent of respondents did not provide information which could identify their employment sector.

Table 5.6: Ranked employment sectors of respondents in Ireland (n=652)

Sector	Male %	Female %	Total %
Services	16.1	38.5	25.5
Unknown**	Unknown	unknown	18.9
Health	4.8	23.8	14.4
Construction	38.1	1.1	10.4
Student/Home	11.3	9.4	8.1
Finance	4.8	11.4	7.5
Engineering*	14.9	1.7	4.8
Education	2.4	6.1	4.0
Hospitality	3.0	5.0	3.5
IT	4.8	3.0	2.9
Total	100	100	100

*Engineering has been combined with Factory/Plant operator to match the Austerity category of Manufacturing and Engineering. Similarly, Trade and Construction is combined. It is not clear how personal services such as beauty therapy are included in the Austerity data. They are included here in Services. The data in the Austerity report does not equal 100 per cent (Glynn et al. 2013, p.39).

**n= 123 respondents did not provide ANZSCO code information

Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

Apart from the sample bias in favour of female respondents and a resultant skew towards sectors dominated by them such as health, education and services, the numbers of emigrants to Australia in the health sector are quite likely the result of deliberate recruitment campaigns by various health provision organisations across Australia such as St John of God Healthcare in Western Australia (Kenny 2014a). The *Irish Times* reported in September 2015 that Australia deemed Ireland one of five ‘competent authority’ countries where the Australian Medical Association recognises qualifications as comparable (Kenny 2015b). It cited an ‘aggressive overseas recruitment campaign’ aimed at filling the predicted shortage of 110,000 nurses and 2,700 doctors Australia would suffer by 2025 at current graduation employment rates. The public service employment moratorium that froze recruitment and promotions in Ireland from March 2009 meant that there were no jobs for the 1,500 nurses and 727 doctors graduating each year.

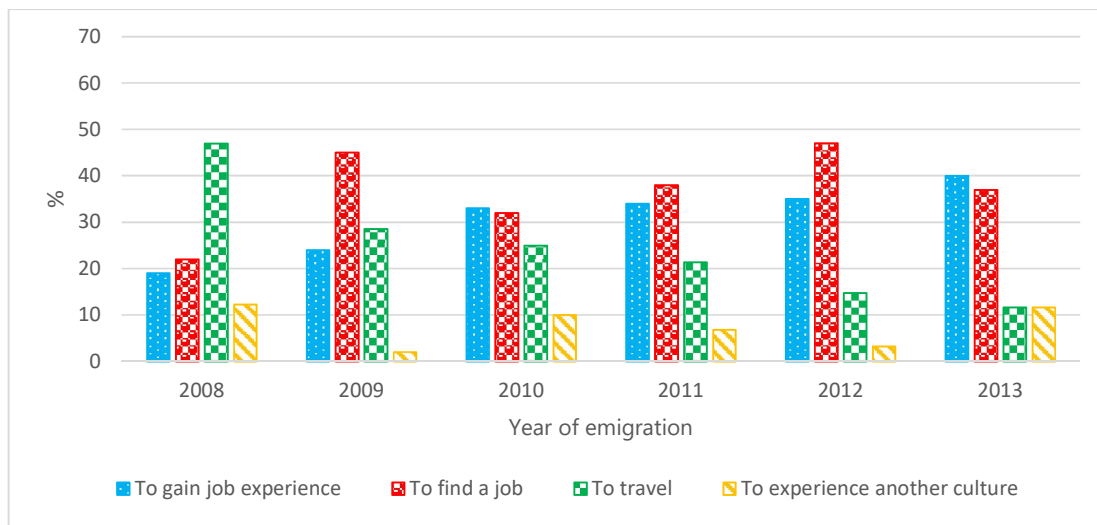
Some ease in decision-making around migration was provided in the career break option offered by the public sector. This meant employees had the opportunity to try Australia before actually resigning from their job. Many respondents availed of a career break meaning they could move to Australia knowing that their job was still available to them if they decided to return within a year or two. This was an important safety net. One respondent took a career break from her job as a catering assistant in a hospital ‘just in case’ the 457 sponsorship her husband had did not work out. Another recalls that

In 2000 I was 40 – I hadn’t been married and wasn’t interested in that. I took a career break and wanted to do something culturally different so I took a contract in Saudi Arabia – tax free income, accommodation provided and a job to walk into (Respondent IA846)

while another took a two year career break from the job in Ireland and I kept my house just as security to come out and do the dietetics [course] (Respondent IA289).

Although there are small differences in employment status, industry sector and age between the *Austerity* study (2013) and this one, it is clear that changes occurred in migration motivation from 2008 onwards. Figure 5.3 illustrates the increasing importance of employment and gaining job experience for these migrants and the decreasing importance of leisure-related reasons for leaving Ireland, such as travel which declined from 47 per cent in 2008 to 12 per cent in 2013. Employment related migration, whether undertaken to find a job or increase work experience was important in the context of the GFC. Redundancy and unemployment-fuelled job-seeking migration and increasing competition for jobs at home prompted many to seek overseas experience.

Figure 5.3: Reasons for emigration, 2008-2013



Source: *Irish in Australia survey, 2016*

Some respondents reported that they left good jobs with career prospects and decent wages to come to Australia. This was often for the sake of a spouse who was highly qualified but perhaps had been made redundant and been unemployed for some months. A female 457 visa-holder who arrived in Australia in 2012 notes,

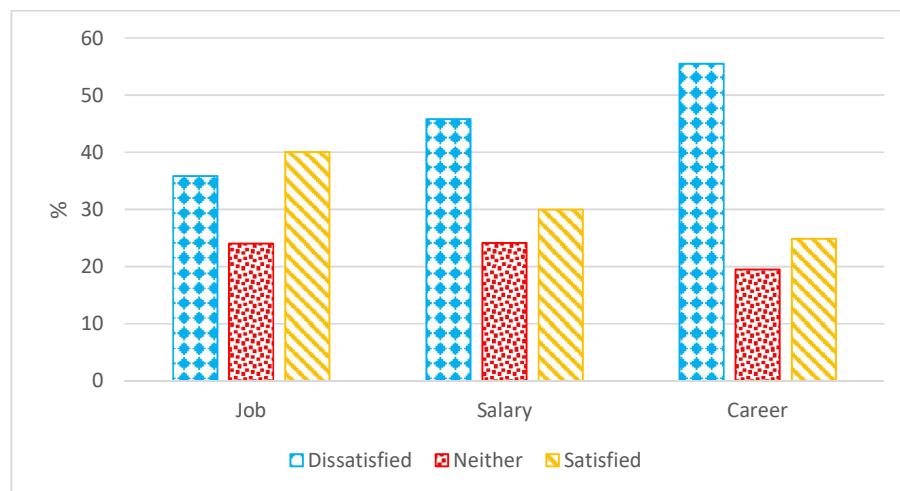
I had a full-time job in Dublin and my partner had gone back to do a Masters. He had been made redundant, he was an engineer, so he went back to do the Masters and still couldn't get any work so we decided to go. I left a full-time job – so did my friend who I'm living with here. It was the same situation – her partner was an engineer who couldn't get work so the four of us moved out here and the boys got work (Respondent IA999).

Many more respondents talked of leaving because they suffered wage cuts, freezes, increasing taxation from the USC or because there was little possibility of career advancement and promotion. Although recognising that they were lucky to have a job in such a depressed economic environment, Figure 5.4 shows that satisfaction with their career prospects and salary, and to a lesser extent, job, was quite low for those migrating to Australia. Around 30 per cent of respondents were satisfied with their job and salary and almost a quarter were satisfied with their career prospects. More than 55 per cent of respondents were dissatisfied with their career prospects, over 45 per cent had not been happy with their salary in Ireland and 36 per cent found their position dissatisfying. Not surprisingly, these aspects of working life in Ireland often made people more amenable to the idea of emigration. A 23 year old male who emigrated in 1987 as a WHM described his state of mind before he left Ireland,

I knew I was stuck in a hole and was going nowhere fast and I was one of the lucky ones out of my friends because I had a job (Respondent DA379).

A 37 year old university researcher from Northern Ireland described her job as ‘going nowhere’ and said it was ‘just depressing the hell out of me.’ Similarly, a young female food scientist took the opportunity to work in the UK after two years in a ‘rubbish job’ in Ireland because *it was a career advancement... I wasn’t enjoying what I was doing in Ireland*’ but when that job too failed to deliver progression opportunity, she ‘decided to get a ticket to Australia because the job was not going to go anywhere’ (Respondent IA286).

Figure 5.4: Respondents’ satisfaction with job, salary and career in Ireland prior to migration (n=651)



Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

Table 5.7 shows that when job security, as demonstrated by contract permanency, was matched with the reason for emigration, job-related aspirations were strong. Those in permanent positions were less likely to move for a new job (30.4 per cent) with the majority seeking travel and cultural experiences (41.6 per cent) and around 14 per cent leaving for family reasons or because of Ireland’s economy and politics.

Almost 70 per cent of unemployed migrants came to Australia to seek work with just 14 per cent leaving to experience travel or another culture, over 11 per cent trying to escape Ireland’s politics or economy and six per cent leaving for family reasons. Job insecurity meant that looking for work was a main migration reason for more than half of those on part-time or zero hours contracts. Over 17 per cent of this group left because of Ireland’s political state or economy and six per cent migrated for family reasons. However a quarter of this group left Ireland for travel and culture purposes. The qualitative data makes it clear that many people did just want to travel and for some, Australia had always been somewhere they wanted to see. The long history of Irish immigration in Australia and the strong family links of some of these migrants to already-migrated aunts and uncles, brothers, sisters and other relatives played a part in this. Those on a solid contract were more likely to emigrate to fulfil travel or cultural aspirations while job-related reasons were more important to those who were unemployed or on a variable contract.

Table 5.7: Main migration reason by contract permanency (n=631)

Main migration reason	Contract permanency in Ireland		
	Solid	Variable	Unemployed
Job	30.4	53.1	67.9
Travel/Culture	41.6	23.5	14.3
Family	13.6	6.1	6.0
Escape from Ireland's politics/economy	14.4	17.3	11.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: *Irish in Australia survey, 2016*

The *Austerity* report notes the increasing importance of Australia as a destination for those leaving Ireland, but questions the longevity of this newfound popularity, stating that,

many of those on short-term Working Holiday Visas are likely to find themselves unable to remain on after the maximum period of 24 months has expired (Glynn et al. 2013, p.36).

Citing the high number of immigration options available in Australia, the report goes on to say:

Due to the large volume of various immigration statuses that Irish people hold in Australia... it is often difficult to decipher the path those on working holiday visas take in advance of the expiry of their visas. (Glynn et al. 2013, p.56)

This study, and indeed the majority of research on Working Holiday Makers since 2011, notes the increasing trend of these young visa-holders toward staying in Australia. Of the 652 respondents who provided information about their first entry visa for Australia more than 58 per cent (n=381) were WHMs. The quite rapid move from a WHM visa to something more substantial in terms of social and employment rights is evident in the comments of survey respondents. Many backpackers either obtained a job that offered sponsorship through a 457 visa, or sought further information from the Department of

Immigration (often based on advice from their networks) and found that they could apply for permanent residency on the basis of existing skills and qualifications. For some of these applicants, a 457 visa could have been an offshore option and an application could have been made in Ireland. However, both waiting times and not knowing the 'lay of the land' in Australia made such a decision more difficult before having visited the country. In respect of intention then, answers to the question 'Did you intend the move to be temporary?' indicated that intentions changed quite soon after arrival for many respondents. A male aged 25, who did migrate on a WHM, recalls that,

when we left Dublin...I can 100% say that we were going a year's holiday. After about 3 or 4 weeks here and I was like "I can't go home. I need to stay here a bit longer (Respondent IA936).

He was not alone. A 23 year old female backpacker '*intended to come for a year but it's been four and a half years now*' (Respondent IA996). Others who wanted to holiday for around six weeks, came on WHM visas because they didn't know about the various visitor visas (subclass 600, 601 and 651) that allow for stays of up to three months at a time. One arrived in 2008 and now has PR (Respondent IA1011) while another arrived in 2012 and is on a partner visa (Respondent IA357).

Ireland's labour force clearly changed in line with industrial development and a policy of industrialisation which met the demands of service businesses, such as finance and IT. This in turn gave rise to a robust managerial class and heightened the importance of the professions and semi-skilled work to the detriment of unskilled and agricultural labour. The changed face of the Irish workforce meant the development of soft skills and easily transferable workers which fitted well with globalisation and, most importantly, with Australia's rigid visa requirements which were increasingly based on skill. Ireland's reliance on foreign direct investment and the increased mobility of its labour force, combined with its longstanding migration culture, led to emigration being a prime option in the face of economic recession.

5.5 Enablers of migration from Ireland:

The history and acceptance of emigration in Ireland meant that leaving Ireland to seek employment opportunities was for most a first, or indeed only, option when the economic crisis stalled or reduced previous social mobility and living standards in general. Within this context, there are a number of factors which exist in Ireland which specifically foster a culture of emigration. These are predominantly tied to the country's economic strategy of attracting inward investment and educating Irish people to fit developing industries and sectors.

Free tertiary education over the last five decades has resulted in a highly skilled labour force with both technical and soft skills. The growth of the managerial class and the expansion of the professions was noted above. The increasing professionalisation of Ireland's labour pool was supplemented by a renewed

focus on trades and skilled labour with an increase in apprenticeships through the National Training and Employment Authority (FÁS) training schemes. Ireland's building boom during the Celtic Tiger period multiplied the opportunities for apprenticeships which rose from 12,987 in 1990 to 26,072 in 2002 (Buck and McGinn 2005). Construction was the first industry to experience a rapid decline, some said 'overnight', and the existence of a highly experienced manual workforce meant that the traditional labour migration from Ireland to Australia could continue alongside the new, knowledge-based industry flow of migrants.

The development of a managerial class with a preponderance for job experience in multinational corporations which began in the 1990s (Collins and Grimes 2008) cemented an already strong tradition of emigration for career development. Several respondents had travelled as children with a migrating career parent which added another facet to the migration culture evident in Ireland.

About a quarter of Ireland's work force is employed in the public sector which means many could avail of employment conditions which offered career breaks – this meant emigration could take place in the context of a 'safety net' since a) there was a job to return to if emigration was unsuccessful and b) a time limit was generally in place for a return decision, meaning that a returning emigrant could 'save face' by returning to a position at the end of a career break if the migration did not produce the outcomes anticipated or hoped for. The Health Service Executive (HSE) is Ireland's largest employer (Executive 2017) and health sector employees are well-represented as shown earlier in 5.6.

General demographic change in Ireland has increased the number of independent people able to take advantage of the Australian WHM visa in particular. Women are having children later in life which increases the pool of people without dependents. The age of Irish women at birth of the first child has risen from 28.8 years in 1980 to 32.5 years within marriage and from 22.2 to 29.6 years outside marriage (CSO 2015c). Irish people are marrying later too. In 1977, the average age of grooms was 26.2 years and brides, 24 years. In 2015, the average age of grooms was 35.3 years and 33.2 years for brides (CSO 2015a). Later marriage and childbearing ages are observable as part of a general trend in western countries.

Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, Australian immigration policy enables Irish immigration. The shift towards attracting skilled migrants changed who could migrate there. Although the Irish had been significant users of family migration avenues until the mid-1980s, it could be argued that increasing skilled migration options have widened the potential pool of Irish immigrants since almost anyone, regardless of family links to Australia, can immigrate there.

5.6 Connections in Australia

In his review of the spatial distribution of immigrants in Australia, Hugo (1990) highlighted the role already emigrated family members and friends played in shaping the migrant's choice of destination. Table 5.8 shows that just over 20 per cent of respondents still in Australia had family and extended family there and 36 per cent had friends there. Around 10 per cent of newcomers had family members of their partner or spouse at their destination and a very small number knew an acquaintance, colleague or the 'friend of a friend'. Interestingly, around 30 per cent knew no one at all in Australia when they immigrated.

Table 5.8: Who respondents knew in Australia (n=608)

	Frequency	%
Friend(s)	222	36.5
No one	188	30.9
Family	131	21.5
Partner/spouse's family	54	8.9
Acquaintances/colleagues	13	2.2
Total	608	100

Source: *Irish in Australia survey, 2016*

It is noteworthy that almost half of 457 workers knew no one in Australia prior to immigration (Table 5.9). This was also the case for around 37 per cent of new permanent residents and for those on graduate, special or higher education visas. Since one-fifth of those who used a family visa came alone it can be assumed that they had no connection to Australia other than their partner. A quarter of the backpacker cohort did not know anyone in Australia and 29 per cent of this group also travelled alone. However, chain migration remains an element of the Irish migration profile in Australia as around one third of those who came on a family or permanent residency visa had immediate or extended family or their partner/spouse's family in Australia. Around 15 per cent each of the graduate and 457 cohorts had family members in Australia and a fifth of WHMs also had relations there.

Table 5.9: Who respondents knew in Australia by entry visa (%)

Who was known	457 (n=118)	WHM (n=350)	Family (n=44)	PR (n=77)	Higher Ed/Graduate (n=19)
Friend(s)	28.8	46.0	11.4	23.4	21.1
Family	14.4	20.6	34.1	31.2	15.8
Partner/spouse	10.2	5.7	31.8	3.9	26.3
No one	44.9	25.7	20.5	37.7	36.8
Acquaintances/colleagues	1.7	2.0	2.2	3.8	0.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: *Irish in Australia survey, 2016*

Table 5.10 shows that those who travelled with friends (most likely WHMs) had friends at their destination as did most of those who travelled alone. The presence of children as travelling companions suggests that family groups featured in this cohort and the propensity to settle may be more characteristic of families which relates to two aspects shared during qualitative data collection. The first of these is stronger support in the early days of migration within the migration group itself. For example, where a couple have migrated, one migrant can help refocus and support the other when a partner is anxious or homesick. Where children were part of the migration group, mothers, in particular, spoke of a need to 'get everyone settled' - children placed in schools, a family home established and spousal employment found. Logically too, of course, it is easier and cheaper for a single immigrant to return home than for two or more to do so. Relative ease comes from having to consider only one person's feelings and a more simple calculation of loss and benefit of the move. The next chapter will explore how this denser family network affected the settlement experiences of those surveyed.

Table 5.10: Respondents' migration companions and who they knew in Australia (n=608)*

Migration companions	Friend(s)	Family	Partner/ spouse	No one	Acquaintances /colleagues	Total
Friend(s)	30.0	11.3	3.7	19.1	23.1	17.4
Family	2.3	9.0	0.0	3.7	0.0	3.0
partner/spouse	33.6	36.8	27.8	35.1	46.2	35.9
partner/spouse and child/ren	8.6	21.8	18.5	22.9	0.0	14.4
Alone	25.5	21.1	50.0	19.1	30.8	29.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

**Multiple responses permitted*

Source: *Irish in Australia survey, 2016*

5.7 Visas and intention

A study of immigration in Australia is assisted by the commendable data collection of the country with regard to incoming and outgoing persons. In 1959, the Commonwealth Statistician began publishing separate figures for 'settler arrivals' to distinguish the actual number of migrants from returning Australians or visitors. Visa entry category is conceptualised as a factor in shaping the immigrant's migration experience but Irish immigrants have previously been noted for their pragmatic approach to Australia's immigration system. O'Connor's (2005a) study noted the prevalent use of permanent visas by migrants who did not intend to stay in Australia but who were informed by network contacts that labour market entry would be difficult using the WHM visa. Only a third of O'Connor's respondents entered Australia on the WHM while more than half of those in this study did so. The changed entry regulations, in particular the addition of a possible second year to the WHM visa and the extension of time allowed with one employer, as well as the different economic circumstances in Ireland no doubt influenced this

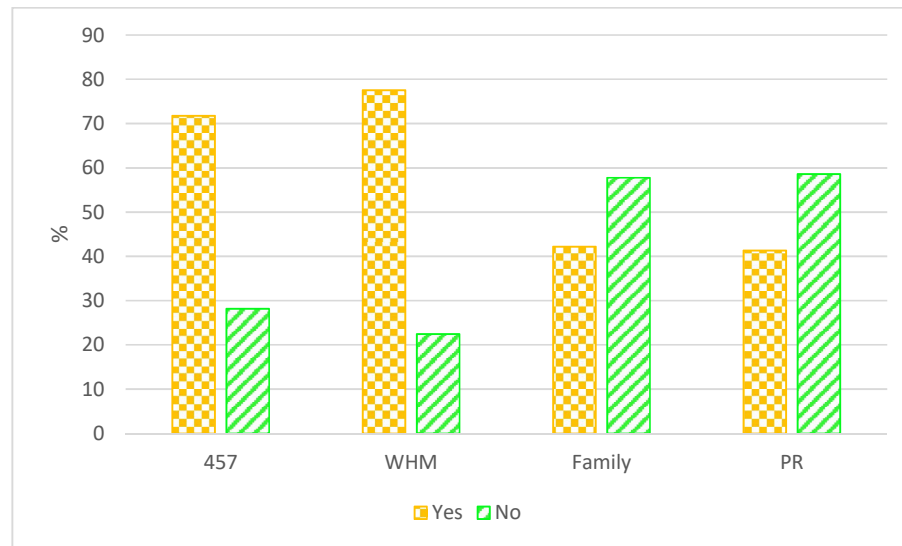
change in the present cohort. This section questions whether the initial visa entry was related to settlement intention or whether it was the most expedient means of entry to Australia. It notes the absence of family sponsorship entry amongst the latest Irish arrivals, excepting de facto and prospective spouse visas, and the dominance of independent skills visas in the permanent migration stream. Older respondents recount how they sponsored, or were sponsored by, siblings. This does not appear to have been an option for younger respondents. One respondent, whose parents immigrated in the mid-2000s, had to apply independently and take a 457 sponsorship to stay because she was over 18 and no longer a dependent of her parents who were citizens. The widespread use of the Working Holiday Maker visa as a first entry option is very clear and this phenomenon amongst the general Irish immigrant population is supported by the published figures provided by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP).

Visa conditions can affect the migration journey and outcome. Immigrants using a state or regional sponsored visa for example, usually have to reside in a nominated area for two years. Working conditions are affected by 457 sponsorship and constrained also for those on the WHM visa since a six month limitation applies to employment with any one business. Migrants, with the compliance of other bodies such as recruitment agencies, have found ways to circumvent such stipulations. However, one social effect of this limitation where it is observed, is that it encourages transiency which affects social ties. It impedes a migrant's ability to secure a social place for themselves thereby inhibiting the escalation of social status which has flow-on effects on income and lifestyle.

Approximately 58 per cent of the respondents to the surveys entered Australia on the Working Holiday Maker visa with many progressing to a subclass 457 visa within months of arrival. Subsequent visas included student visas and the Employer Nomination visa (subclasses 121 and 856) which also offer permanent residency. The remaining 42 per cent of participants used one of a number of visas, mainly Skilled Independent or 457 visas. Many people who first came to Australia on a one-year working holiday or other temporary visa travelled through the visa system to the end-point of Australian citizenship.

Figure 5.5 shows that at the time they emigrated, most temporary migrants did not intend to stay – about 70 per cent of 457s and 77 per cent of WHMs intended to go home. Around 30 per cent of 457s intended to stay as did 22 per cent of WHMs which implies that they knew about existing pathways to permanent residency. What is perhaps most interesting about this figure is the number of 'permanent' migrants who did not intend to stay. Around 57 per cent of each group intended to settle but more than 40 per cent of family migrants and those entering with permanent residency intended to leave Australia in the future.

Figure 5.5: Intention that migration was temporary matched with initial visa used by respondents (n=543)



Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

5.7.1. Use of visas by survey respondents

The most-used visa by respondents was the Working Holiday Maker visa. Survey respondents who immigrated through the Skill stream used either the subclass 417, 457 or 175 visa with heavy traffic through the Employer Nomination Scheme subclass 186 visa to permanency. Partner applications, on the other hand, were mostly made offshore through the Partner (Provisional) Visa (Subclass 309) or the Permanent Visa (Subclass 100). It is important to note the dominance of entry by the WHM visa in the dataset. This temporary visa inculcates images of a transient, itinerant backpacker community yet quite often this visa is one step on a journey towards permanent residency. The number of people choosing this path will clearly have some effect on the rise in the Irish stock population and the decline in outward flow figures.

Visa use does not correlate with occupation level as shown in Table 5.11. Professionals were the largest group overall and dominated each visa class here. While it might be expected that they would use the temporary 457 and other high skilled permanent visas to immigrate, their presence in the WHM category is a distinct anomaly. There was a relatively low intake of migrants employed at the managerial level but even lower numbers of sales workers, machinery operators and labourers which is evidence of the highly skilled nature of recent Irish migration to Australia. Technicians and Trade Workers, Community and Personal Service Workers and Clerical and Administrative workers were represented fairly evenly across all visa classes here but their slightly higher numbers in the Family visa category suggest these were younger migrants in a de facto relationship which commenced outside Australia while those in these occupations who are in the PR category may have been secondary applicants to a skilled migrant.

Table 5.11: ANZSCO employment level matched with initial visa used by respondents (n=649)

	457	WHM	Family	PR	Higher Education and Graduate	Skilled and Regional
Managers	8.1	5.6	4.2	3.4	0.0	11.9
Professionals	50.4	40.5	22.9	48.3	66.7	44.1
Technicians and Trades Workers	8.9	14.6	18.8	13.8	8.3	13.6
Community and Personal Service Workers	7.3	8.5	10.4	13.8	8.3	3.4
Clerical and Administrative Workers	7.3	11.4	18.8	10.3	16.7	10.2
Sales Workers	2.4	5.0	4.2	6.9	0.0	5.1
Machinery Operators and Drivers	1.6	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7
Labourers	1.6	2.1	4.2	3.4	0.0	3.4
Outside ANZSCO codes	12.2	11.6	16.7	0.0	0.0	6.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

In order to demonstrate the permanency of this group, respondents were asked in the survey who they travelled with and where they first settled. In the interviews they were also asked how many of their original travel companions were still in Australia. Table 5.12 shows that WHMs predominantly travelled with a partner or spouse, the second largest response was 'Friends' and the third was 'Alone'. The emigration of couples on the WHM visa belies one of its main conditions – that the visa holder does not have a dependent with them at any point of their stay. Obviously this condition is primarily aimed at preventing the entry of dependent children but the fact that so many Irish couples entered Australia on the WHM visa suggests an element of misuse. Only the second and third group, those who travelled with friends or alone, appear to match the image of the 'typical' backpacker. Overall, respondents travelled either with a partner/spouse or in a larger family group which included children. However, significant proportions of each visa cohort travelled to Australia alone and the highest of these were those using a Higher Education or Graduate visa. Almost a quarter of those (24 per cent) who travelled alone, did not know anyone at their destination. These migrants may be among the most vulnerable of newcomers.

Table 5.12: Initial visa held by respondents by travel companions (n=512)

Travel companions	457	WHM	Family	PR
Friend(s)	7.0	31.8	7.7	9.1
Partner/Spouse	28.7	38.1	43.6	31.8
Partner/Spouse and child/ren	36.5	1.2	25.6	40.9
Child/ren	5.2	0.0	10.3	0.0
Alone	22.6	28.9	12.8	18.2
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Irish in Australia data, 2016

Almost a quarter of a million Irish WHMs entered Australia from 2000 to 2015 on the WHM visa. Despite many respondents stating that their main reason for emigration was travel and adventure, employment-related aspirations were evident in the survey findings. Figure 5.6 shows that travel and wanting to experience another culture were important to WHMs while seeking job experience and employment was paramount for those using a permanent residency visa or a Higher Education visa. Escape from Ireland’s economic and political climate rated highly across all groups with the lowest percentage migrating for this reason showing in the backpacker cohort. In interviews, many mentioned that they had not experienced the boom of Ireland’s economy (mostly because they were college students during its prime years) and so had not experienced its bust to quite the same degree as older emigrants.

Figure 5.6: Migration reasons given by respondents matched by entry visa (n=643)



Source: *Irish in Australia survey, 2016*

It is worth exploring the qualitative data surrounding these statistics to give a picture of the human experience underlying the figures. Table 5.13 shows the propensity of respondents to change from the Working Holiday Maker visa to a permanent visa pathway. In this aspect, the empirical data closely mirrors the general data on Irish visa use. Just over 60 per cent of initial 457 immigrants and 57 per cent of the WHM cohort were citizens or permanent residents at the time of the survey compared with 95 per cent of those on Family or Skilled and Regional visas. Almost 38 per cent of permanent arrivals had become citizens as had 29 per cent of Skilled entrants. Almost 40 per cent of those who came as permanent residents had become citizens by the time of the survey.

**Table 5.13: Initial visa entry by permanency and citizenship of respondents at time of survey
(n=650)**

		Citizen %	Permanent %	Temporary %
Initial visa	457	14.6	45.5	39.8
	WHM	20.8	36.3	42.9
	Family	37.5	58.3	4.2
	PR	37.9	62.1	0.0
	Skilled & Regional	29.3	65.5	5.2

Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

A male respondent, aged 25 when he entered Australia on a WHM visa in 2004, came with a girlfriend who was an Australian citizen by virtue of having lived there for five years as a child. He progressed to a de facto visa but when the relationship ended his employer offered a 457 visa. After two years he requested and obtained an Employer Nomination (subclass 186) visa for permanent residency and became an Australian citizen in 2014. He spoke of the intentions of his wider circle of Irish immigrant friends:

*Of all the people I have met, like Irish, I can only really think of one person who actually arrived with work rights, who actually migrated to Australia. She was a teacher and she got the whole thing sorted out before she arrived... but of the 20 people I know [here currently who came as backpackers], she was the only one who planned to do it [stay]...
(Respondent IA936)*

This interview signalled the rapid change in intention which appeared to take place for many backpackers and which became evident in other interviews in comments such as this: *of all the people, a lot of them when they came over, pretty much wanted to stay from day one...*

Another male who emigrated aged 29 on a WHM visa after receiving a redundancy payment had 'no plan' but decided to stay, *'pretty much straight away, I thought 'yeah this is for me' - apart from the heat - I didn't like that so much when I first came but I got used to it. I made the decision pretty quickly'* (Respondent IA1082). A female respondent, aged 23 when she immigrated as a WHM, arrived with her boyfriend in 2010. Postgraduate-educated, she intended to stay in Australia for just a year. She said her boyfriend had no intention of returning to Ireland but that she was not even that keen on applying for the second year visa. However, towards the end of her WHM visa she approached her employer for a 457 sponsorship but the request was declined.

It wasn't until the company said they weren't in a position to sponsor me that I sat back and thought 'you know I DO want to stay here!' It was just kind of falling into my lap and it wasn't until they said 'No' that I realised I did want to stay (Respondent IA996).

A migration agent she met through the Gaelic Athletic Association asked if she had thought to ask for nomination for permanent residency and when she made enquiries she found she was eligible to apply. A bridging visa allowed her time to put an application in and after four a half years in the country she became an Australian citizen. Her motivation for taking out citizenship was the convenience it afforded when entering and leaving Australia as opposed to needing to ensure she had a valid Residents Return Visa if she remained a permanent resident.

Conversely, a 23 year old female backpacker who did have the opportunity of 457 sponsorship to stay in Australia and did not want it, tellingly stated,

What sold it for us to go home was knowing we had the option of [applying for] PR to come back. It's not the end of the world (Respondent IA371).

The change in intention prompted a change in visa and a number of respondents relayed how they moved from backpacker work to one that allowed permanent visa application. Some Working Holiday Makers completed six months with a business, moved away to do regional work to extend the visa, and then returned to the same employer. A female WHM aged 23 when she arrived in Sydney in 2008 reports that she undertook typical backpacker work in a call centre:

I'd a call centre job which was absolutely horrible...so I didn't last long in that – maybe a month? And then I worked for [gym franchise] for six months - that was what I had on my visa and then I went off to do my farm work up near Port Douglas and when I came back I worked for [gym franchise] again.*

*same employer

Organising the job through recruitment agencies satisfied the rule regarding six months maximum employment with one business. One stint was through agency books and another through the employer. Another trick was to rehire an employee through a different recruitment agency as recounted by a 25 year old female backpacker who spoke of her work experience on the subclass 417 visa and reported that,

My six months are up in April because I started in October but the company is re-hiring me through a different agency. They wanted to keep me on and they've been really helpful in that way (Respondent IA371).

A 23 year old who travelled to Queensland with her boyfriend to complete the regional work requirement reported that it,

didn't really work out – so that would have been 2009, the year of the bad floods, so we went up there and then there was no work – all the crops were ruined so we had to get proper, regular jobs up there and just hope for the best. My boyfriend ended up putting

me on his sponsorship because I wouldn't have been able to get the second year so I was quite lucky I had him (Respondent IA1011).

Her partner was a site engineer who got a 457 sponsorship soon after arrival and then went through the Employer Sponsored pathway to permanent residency. Having completed all the necessary paperwork without the use of a migration agent, the couple were rewarded with a quick result: *we got our PR [permanent residency] within 4 weeks and it was the easiest process. We thought there'd been a mistake it was that quick.* They are now citizens.

Visa changes shown in Table 5.14 indicate the relationship between the initial and current visa respectively. Just over 470 respondents provided information which allowed their initial visa to be matched with their current one. Only seven per cent are currently using a WHM visa although 62 per cent entered as backpackers. The numbers holding a 457 visa doubled and PR visa holders trebled. A small increase of three per cent took place in the Family category. Of the 380 respondents who first entered Australia on the Working Holiday Visa, 107 (28 per cent) were on a 457 visa and only 45 (12 per cent) were on a non-Permanent Resident pathway at the time of the survey. Of the remaining 60 per cent, 20 per cent had become Australian citizens. The clearest visa category jump is from a Working Holiday Maker visa to a 457 visa or permanent residency.

Table 5.14: Change from initial visa entry to current visa status of respondents (n=474)

Visa	Initial %	Current %
457	19	39
WHM	62	7
Family	5	8
PR	14	46
	100	100

Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

The qualitative data illustrate the rapid change in 'intention' once a migrant arrived in Australia. Most respondents intended to only stay for the length of time permitted by their entry visa. However, the early experience of Australia changed this for many WHMs. This suggests that research and knowledge about what lay ahead could not take the place of the actual experience of being in Australia. Migrant experiences in work and social life often led these temporary migrants to seek a more permanent and secure immigration status.

5.8 ‘Accidental’ migrants

A number of single Irish Working Holiday Makers in the study developed a romantic relationship with either an Australian citizen or a dual Irish-Australian national, and availed of partner visas to continue the relationship which had the effect of prolonging their stay in Australia. Approximately 7.3 per cent of respondents initially entered on a family visa, while 6.7 per cent held a partner visa at the time of participation.

Interviews yielded an insight into the journey some travellers take through the Australian immigration system. Although migration scholars often write about ‘intent’ with regard to settlement implying that migration is usually undertaken carefully and deliberately, this is often not the case. This research has uncovered the phenomenon of ‘accidental migration’ amongst the Irish, largely made up of WHMs who, by and large, had no intent with regards to settling in Australia when they decided to travel but for one reason or another, ended up staying on a more permanent basis.

A female former backpacker, aged 33 who arrived in Melbourne in 2012, was one of the respondents who did not mean to stay:

I had applied for my visa because I was 30 and thought I might as well apply for it. I had a ticket for 6 weeks and then I was going back to Ireland. I had applied for the HDip [a place in an education higher degree program] for five years in a row and never got it so I had the visa just in case I didn't get the HDip and then I'd stay here (Respondent IA357).²⁷

During that six weeks she met an Australian man and started a relationship. They moved to Ireland while her Partner (Provisional) (subclass 309) visa was being processed and returned to Australia in 2014.

Romance was also part of the experience of a 23 year old female who arrived in Sydney in 2008. She

...came to Australia in December 2008 just for a holiday. I got the Working Holiday Maker visa – because I didn't know you could get a shorter one – but had only planned to stay 6-7 weeks but I ended up meeting my now boyfriend on my first weekend in Melbourne and that was it...(Respondent IA1011).

She arrived on a WHM visa and was travelling with seven girlfriends, all of whom formed relationships with Irish men in Australia, *all bar one – he was Aussie but his parents were Irish.*

²⁷ Irish graduates can apply for a place in a postgraduate degree program and are invited to take part in a panel interview organised by the relevant public sector employment division. One participant mentioned that the panel for her degree had not sat in five years while IA357 describes here waiting more than five years for an opportunity to get an interview.

5.9 Conclusion

There appears to be a tendency among Irish immigrants to Australia to enter on a temporary visa with the intention of staying for the designated length of time their visa allows before returning to Ireland. The consensus from survey respondents was that their migration was long-term even if not definitely permanent. Although the search for adventure was a commonly noted reason for travelling to Australia, underlying this was a desire to gain job experience or employment. For many graduate migrants, relocation was necessary to further their career. Despite being mostly employed at the time of migration and making a proactive decision to emigrate, many of those who left Ireland post-2007 indicated an impelled migration in response to the economic circumstances at that time. Wanting to experience a new culture and a desire to travel were high on the list of reasons for migration and this often corresponded to life context, as backpackers reported that they came because *'everyone was doing Australia'*. Some migrants with permanent resident visas had previously been Working Holiday Makers which signifies the importance of this temporary cultural exchange program for future permanent migration. Notable is the phenomenon of 'accidental' migration where unanticipated events resulted in visa churn from a temporary visa to permanent residency and eventual citizenship. This was despite a general intention to return home at the end of the time permitted by the initial visa. Having examined the reasons for migration and the visas used to enter Australia, the next chapter explores the settlement experiences of respondents.

CHAPTER 6

IRISH SETTLEMENT SUCCESS IN AUSTRALIA

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focusses upon how well recent Irish migrants settle into work and social life by using data from the Irish in Australia survey and from the in-depth interviews conducted with those who remained in Australia. The following sections explore the migrants' prior knowledge of Australia, their information sources and their settlement experiences. They examine the extent to which settlement 'succeeds' through the migrant's ability to construct new social networks through employment, community activity, host community immersion and/or semi-cultural exclusion. Success is measured in terms of contentment with life in Australia coupled with the absence of a desire to return to Ireland. It is important to highlight these two particular elements since many respondents who left Australia reported being happy there but not necessarily content. Life context in terms of age and relationship status should be taken into consideration in determining the impact of new family formations and relationships on the likelihood of long-term settlement amongst younger migrants, especially those using temporary visas.

For many new Irish migrants, settling in Australia was made possible by a determination to accept the newness of much of what they encountered from the point of arrival. One respondent, a 42 year old female, arrived in 2011 on a 457 visa and is now a citizen. She demonstrated the positivity of most migrants:

I've decided this is home and I'm positive about it. Australia has given me an opportunity and welcomed me with open arms and when Australia can't assimilate to me I have to assimilate to Australia. I can't expect it to fit me and my upbringing and my heritage – I'll never lose that because it's precious to me and I'll bring it up in my kids and please god, grandchildren, but I can't sit in a little bubble of just an Irish community, I have to spread my wings a bit (Respondent IA762).

For a 23 year old female respondent who immigrated to Sydney on a WHM visa with her boyfriend in 2010, it was the breakdown of that relationship which allowed her to invest in life in Australia:

I'd have to say it's only in the past six months since my relationship has broken up that I've really committed to my life here... I suppose just letting go of going home now and I know in the back of my mind I could go home tomorrow but I tell myself that I'm not going home so I need to make the best of my life here...(Respondent IA996).

Those who remained appear to have committed to making life in Australia happy and positive and declared that that entailed 'letting go' of Ireland to a degree.

6.2 The settlement intentions of migrants before and after the Global Financial Crisis.

It was found that survey respondents in the period 2000-2015 did not differ greatly in terms of intention to settle in the pre- (up to and including 2007) and post-crash (2008 onwards) contexts. Similar percentages of the 1980-2007 and the 2008-2015 groups said they had initially intended the move to be temporary. Table 6.1 shows that around two-thirds of each group had intended to leave Australia at some point in the future.

Table 6.1: Intention that migration was temporary, by period of arrival.

Did you view the move to Australia as temporary?		
Period of arrival	1980-2007	2008-2015
Yes	65.3	69.5
No	34.7	30.5

Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

A number of factors, such as getting a great job, finding the hot climate agreeable and enjoying other aspects of life in Australia, influenced the change in intention. A number of Irish migrants unintentionally became permanent settlers in Australia through the commencement of a romantic relationship post-arrival. A female 457 migrant who arrived in Brisbane in 2012, highlighted what she saw as the different, gendered, expectations of a new relationship formed in Australia:

...Irish guys know if they marry an Australian then they're committing to staying here but if an Irish girl meets an Aussie guy he needs to say he's willing to move to Ireland because most of the Irish girls, they want to be home to have a family... (Respondent IA999).

A 24 year old male from County Clare put his Australian partner's needs before his own but recognised that this might change:

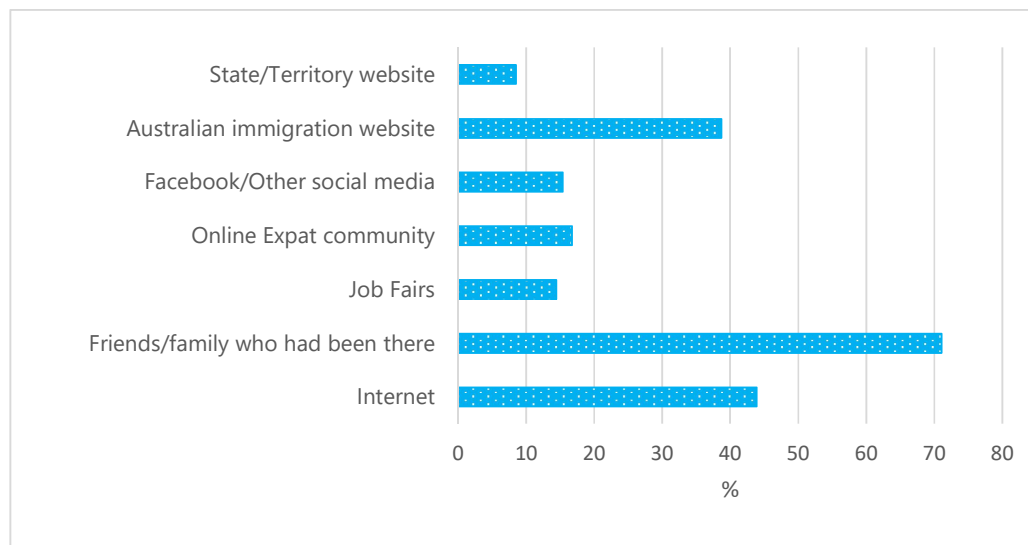
...work opportunities, lifestyle, sunshine, there are a lot of things keeping me here. It doesn't make it any easier ...but as soon as you have a child all that might change. My parents aren't the youngest... (Respondent IA318)

Some migrants did not stay because of a new relationship but ended up coming back to Australia eventually to pursue it and often endured a more complicated migration path as a result of their decision to leave.

6.3 Pre-departure information

The majority of respondents did not research their intended destination very well despite the existence of numerous easily-accessible information sources. Most relied on word-of-mouth recommendations from friends and other network contacts in Australia and few respondents consulted state or federal websites for information on key aspects of living in Australia. Thus, the cost of re-establishing themselves in terms of accommodation came as a shock to many people who, for example, were unaware that the majority of Australian rental properties came unfurnished. This necessitated the purchase of expensive 'big ticket' items such as lounges, beds and whitegoods. Additionally, most property owners require one month's rent in advance and another month's rent as a bond. Such capital layout often quickly depleted a newcomer's funds which encouraged fairly quick labour force participation. Some availed of a network contact for initial accommodation and those who actually took on the backpacker lifestyle often 'couch-surfed' between trips and jobs. Figure 6.1 shows that friends or family who had been to Australia were the primary source of information for migrants followed closely by the internet generally. Around 60 per cent said the information they received was 'Good' or 'Excellent' while 17 per cent rated it 'Poor' and just under ten per cent said they did not seek information before they emigrated. The Australian immigration website, www.border.gov.au, which was consulted by approximately 40 per cent of respondents, currently provides information on visas only.

Figure 6.1: Pre-departure information sources*



*Multiple responses

Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

Migrating 457 visa holders sought information about schools and shipping providers above all else, indicating the inclusion of children in their migration and a wish to bring personal belongings with them (Figure 6.2). Location and suburb advice was important to both backpackers and 457s but for different

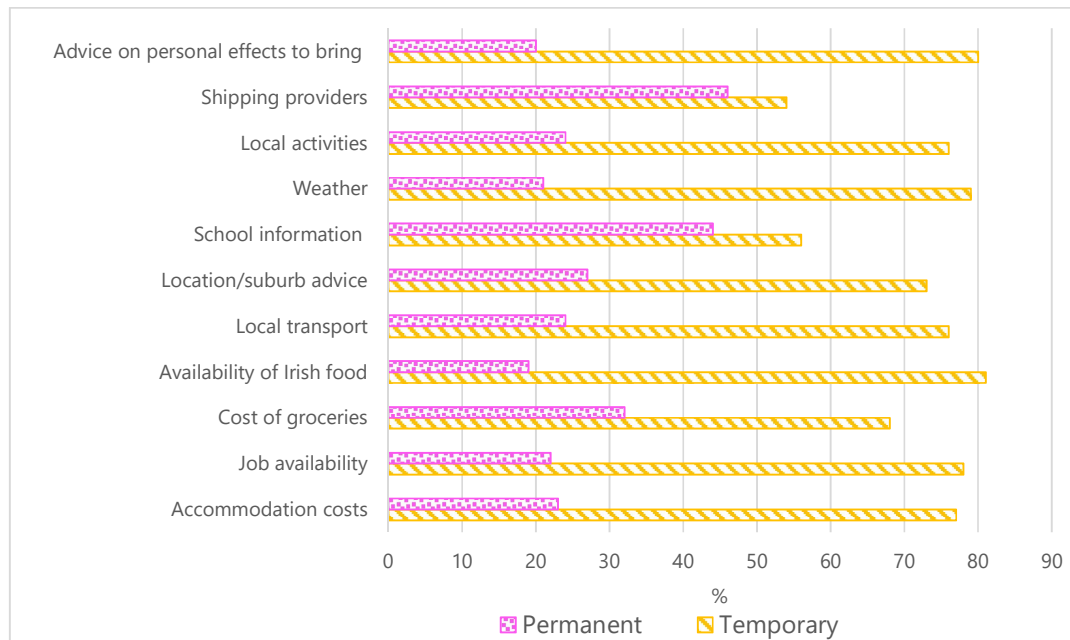
reasons. Employment in a particular place was a condition of the 457 visa for most migrants. For those migrating to Western Australia where the primary applicant would likely be employed on a FIFO contract, living near other Irish FIFO families was an important consideration for the accompanying spouse and children. For other non-FIFO 457s, being tied to a particular job usually meant living within reasonable travel distance of their place of employment and so information on schools and other local amenities was important. For backpackers, cultural and social factors figured in the location decision – close proximity to employment options, other young Irish people and affordable shared housing were important factors.

A 25 year old single female backpacker pointed out that,

When I got here first a friend picked me up at the airport, an Aussie guy and I stayed with him for a while but he lives far away from St Kilda – I wanted to live there because it was like mini-Ireland ... it's a backpacker area and all young people. So I moved to St Kilda and stayed with a friend that I lived with back at home and her boyfriend and they had this huge, like humongous group of Irish friends (Respondent IA464).

The fact that WHMs were concerned with job availability and accommodation costs is unsurprising given the flexibility of the backpacker journey compared with the more organised and rigid 457 or family migration. Those entering on a permanent resident visa sought less information than any other group overall and their focus was on school information and shipping providers. This was possibly because many of them had already lived in Australia at an earlier period as a WHM. The fact that PR visas took longer to obtain may also have meant that information was gleaned over a protracted period and much would have been gained through the visa application process, meaning 'active' information-seeking may have seemed minimal.

Figure 6.2: Advice sought by respondents before departure, by permanent and temporary visa.



*Multiple responses

Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

Given that a decision on whether to stay in Australia on a more permanent basis was made after arrival, the migrant’s expectations and subsequent experience of life in Australia was a pivotal point in the decision-making process around settlement. This involved a myriad of elements but these can be classified under two main headings – settling into a working life and constructing a social life. Some elements overlapped these two factors.

A 25 year old female backpacker who immigrated with her boyfriend, had a Master’s degree in social work and got her first job in Adelaide as a construction site cleaner, reflected on the information she was given before arrival and how it did not match her experience of life in Australia. Although she immigrated using a WHM visa, and at the time of interview, was on a second WHM visa, the ‘typical backpacker’ experience was not what she wanted.

They [people in Ireland] heard all the stories we heard before we came over [but] looking back now those stories were for people who just wanted to come out and party – didn’t mind working and then drinking it [their wages] and that wasn’t the experience we were after...(Respondent IA371).

Despite having friends in Adelaide who had advised her and her boyfriend to start there in order to fulfil the regional work requirement for the second year visa, she recounted a glaring omission in the information they were given:

It was such a shock to the system when you come with \$3000-4000 and in the first week half of it is gone because you had to pay a bond, buy a car and you don't have a job for the first month or two.

For this couple, the balance between employment and a social life was skewed towards bringing in an income to the detriment of enjoyment and constructing a place for themselves in the local community. As this respondent relayed it, their peers were in a similar situation. She described long days – working from 6.30am to 8pm with one day off a fortnight;

I might as well have went over on my own because I never saw him. It was the same for everyone else ... yeah he was making great money but he'd no life. I was on my own every evening in the apartment – those kind of stories are what people should hear... people said at Christmas that I wasn't painting a very good picture of it and I said 'Well I wish someone had painted this picture for me. I would have loved to have heard this before I went over' (Respondent IA371).

When questioned about the likelihood of emigration had she been given more honest information, she replied, *I still would have given it a shot but I'd have been better prepared.* She had difficulty getting work and it took three months to get the cleaning job.

Her story reflects the experience of many of the respondents with regard to the everyday obstacles that migrants in any category could face such as the unanticipated costs of setting up home adding to the financial pressure in the early months of settlement. Her employment experience was like that of some other Working Holiday Makers who took lower-skilled jobs for income but some months later found employment in their area of training, as did this respondent. These experiences are considered in the following section.

6.4 Settling: Employment

According to Robertson (2014, p.1921), deskilling is sometimes a strategic means to gain a visa, or a matter of survival due to barriers to labour market integration in the fields in which a migrant is qualified. The survey findings strongly support the suggestion that this was not the case for the majority of Irish migrants in this study in the long term. Working Holiday Makers had no need to prove any skills or expertise to get a visa and 457 visa holders and migrants on the Skilled Independent visas were sought precisely *because* of their high skills. Since 457 workers came to Australia to fulfil a specific role in the Australian labour market and skilled migrants had qualifications in areas that required additional workers, their employment experiences were fairly standard. More exceptional and indeed, unpleasant experiences are detailed in Appendix 11 where the stories of three Irish 457 families highlight the difficulties which can arise on this long-term but temporary skilled visa, due to misinformation from employers and migration

agents, and assumptions on the part of new migrants. Their experiences involved alcoholism, domestic violence, separation and divorce.

The very fact that 457 visa holders were on that particular visa curtailed any noticeable deviation from the norm – the restrictions of the visa ensured a route into employment and specified the conditions of that employment. The experience of the many backpackers was more varied although even then there was a common pattern of transition - a route from the WHM visa to 457 employer sponsorship.

Uriely (2001, p.4) notes that Working Holiday Makers often took jobs that were not related to their education, training or skills. However, WHMs in this study appeared to have had relatively unfettered access to the labour market, and in many cases only the six month limitation with any one employer hindered them. This was sometimes circumvented by using a recruitment agency as the employer and then changing agencies (which extended the time a migrant could be hired to a particular business) or by offering a 457 sponsorship once employed. By deskilling, many WHMs, most of whom are tertiary educated and have professional work experience, could get a second one-year WHM visa (Tan and Lester 2012). However, regional work for this purpose was undertaken by a very small portion of WHM respondents in this study. The majority moved to a 457 visa through employer sponsorship or deduced that they had the necessary qualifications, experience and attributes to allow an independent permanent residency visa application. This category-jumping from a long-term temporary sojourn to a permanent pathway occurred in many locations around Australia and across many industries. Although a proportion of respondents became residents and citizens through relationships and partner visas, employment was usually the medium of change. Below are relevant excerpts from interviews with a dairy farmer, sports therapist, IT specialist and a nurse which demonstrate the trajectory of the visa journey of many Working Holiday Makers in this study.

6.4.1. The employment experiences of Working Holiday Makers

A male respondent who emigrated from Westmeath at the age of 25 with a degree in agricultural science, came on a WHM visa with four university classmates and arrived in Melbourne in 2007. After working in furniture removal for a couple of months he applied for a job on a dairy farm which was advertised on Gumtree™ and when he was successful, moved to rural Victoria. Two of the women he had been travelling with subsequently joined him at the farm, while the other two friends later got work on a neighbouring farm. He said,

Unbeknownst to us we were going to be using it [the farm work] to get the second year visas – that wasn't really the intention. We'd no intentions either way really. I knew nothing about the second year visa to be honest, just naïve kind of... (Respondent IA414)

The six month employer stipulation was circumvented through a fruit-picking trip, described as *brutal, hard work*, up Australia's east coast to Queensland. He returned to Victoria and resumed working with his former employer but at a different location. Although on a different farm, he lived in his former residence.

He later moved back to the original farm where he was offered Employer Nomination for permanent residency and a managerial position. He and his partner, another classmate from Ireland whom he became reacquainted with in Australia, are both citizens now.

Another respondent, a 24 year old male sports therapist, arrived on a WHM visa in February 2009. His visa journey is one of the lengthier and more convoluted ones and he has held eight visas.

I first came out on the Occupational Trainee visa... then I had a Working Holiday Maker visa, bridging visa, 457, student visa, another 457, the ENS... ..so I ended up doing a bit more study... and I could work 20 hours a week. It's a more expensive way to do it... The 457 isn't really an option for small businesses. So I worked for this guy, a really good guy... for six months or so...he put the 457 through then and it all came through... he agreed to put through the Employer Nomination straightaway rather than wait the two years. We agreed I'd pay for all that myself. The 457 was about \$1000 for the nomination, the PR was \$3000 for the application... I had my permanent visa. ...last September I got citizenship (Respondent IA318).

By contrast, a 25 year old IT Specialist had almost the opposite situation of this in that when it came to a permanent visa option, his sponsoring employer not only paid for his Partner visa application but also provided an immigration lawyer. We should wonder why an employer would pay for a partner visa but the explanation lies in this migrant's visa journey. This respondent arrived in Sydney in 2004 with his girlfriend who was an Australian citizen. He first worked in a call centre but moved on to a landscaping job before securing a help desk job with a large pharmaceutical company where his girlfriend worked. At the time WHMs were curtailed to three months with any one employer. He stated,

..about two months in they said they wanted to figure out a way to keep me and after the three months limit they took me off their books and used an agency... they figured out a way for me to get a visa to stay...because my girlfriend was a citizen they basically paid for us to do the spouse visa and that was very handy. We were pretty lucky (Respondent IA936).

But he reasons that the company made a business decision:

I think from their point of view it was easier to just pay the \$4000 to keep me... I mean it worked out well for me but I think it worked out okay for them as well. Bit of a win-win.

His visa journey did not end there however. The relationship upon which the visa application was based, broke down so his employer put him on a 457. He had five visas in total, moving from the WHM to a spouse visa and then 457. When he was promoted a year later the change necessitated another 457 and then PR. The company paid for the residency application and after 18 months this respondent became a citizen. He quite aptly describes himself as 'lucky'.

I suppose I'm like the poster boy for the Working Holiday Maker visa – what happens when things go right. I know I've been very lucky (Respondent IA936).

Another respondent who arrived in 2012 aged 25 on a WHM visa, was armed with a nursing degree and a Master's and was a registered psychiatric nurse. She travelled for six months and spent some time in Perth where she had friends but then moved to Melbourne and began working.

...as soon as I got here I went for an interview and they sponsored me for the four year visa and then I applied for PR and got that about 2 weeks ago. I'm delighted now I have that security... (Respondent IA419).

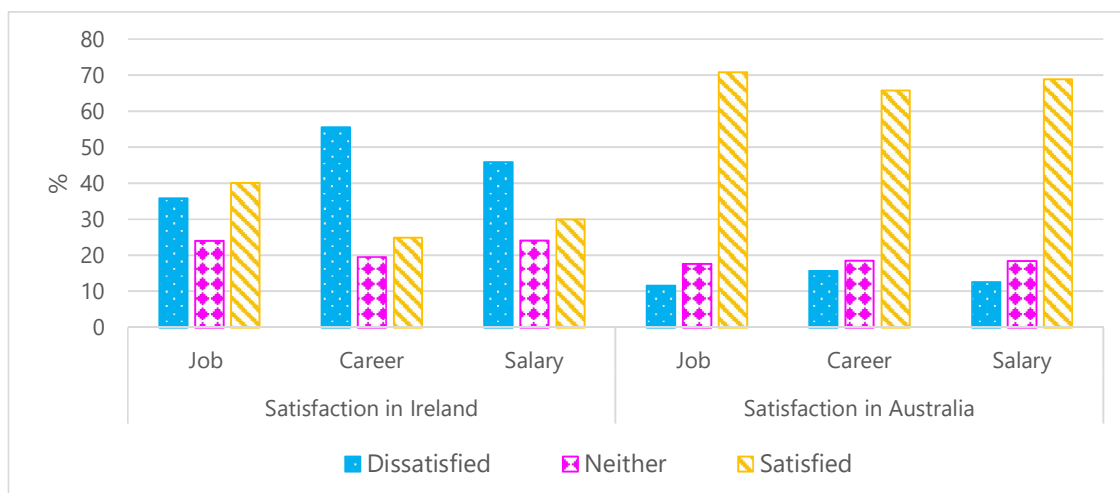
When asked if the hospital was happy to do the 457 sponsorship, she recalled, *they mentioned it straight away... They know they can only keep you for six months and a lot of places would like it to be longer I guess.* She applied for permanent residency independently because she didn't want to feel obligated to stay with her employer but she did stay because of her career prospects. Within six months she became the Associate Nurse Unit Manager and, at the time of interview, was applying for the manager position, an opportunity she said she would never have had in Ireland.

These stories show the pathway that many Irish WHMs took to more permanent status through employment and the 457 visa. Most of them spent less than a year on the WHM visa and few of them undertook traditional backpacker work or deskilled to obtain employment. It is interesting that they arrived at different times, lived in different locations and belonged to different industries so none of these variables explain their similar journeys. It may be worthwhile looking at workplace culture and job, career and salary satisfaction to delve deeper into the apparent career success of temporary Irish migrants in Australia.

6.4.2. Workplace culture and satisfaction

Irish 'work ethic' and acceptance in the workplace was a strong theme of the interviews with both positive and negative indications. Overall, survey respondents rated their job, salary and career prospects more satisfying in Australia than in Ireland. What is most interesting about Figure 6.3 is the clear 'win' for a migrant's career and salary in Australia where the rating of 'Dissatisfied' decreased from around 36 per cent to 11.5 per cent for their job, from 55 per cent to around 15 per cent for career and from around 45 per cent to 12 per cent for salary. However, salary and career progression had much to do with the transition from temporary to permanent migrant as seen from the transcripts below concerning opportunity.

Figure 6.3: Job, career and salary satisfaction of respondents in Ireland and Australia



Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

Many interviewees said that they thought Irish people were hard workers and that this was the reason they stood out in an Australian work environment. A registered nurse who immigrated in 2008 aged 24 year said, *'We're hard workers, highly respected etc. and that's how I came to Australia thinking of myself and other Irish people'* (Respondent IA755).

A male, aged 21 when he arrived in Australia on a WHM visa in 1994, described using 'nounce' and 'gumption' and the ability *'to just get stuck in'* as being all that was required to get ahead (Respondent IA359). He expressed the opinion that the Irish were distinguished by their willingness to *'give it a go'* with no questions asked. He had a varied public service career, with many employment moves made on the basis of *'winging it'*. Another older respondent, a female who arrived in 1988 aged 29, appeared to have a similar temperament: *'We had a lot of 'right place at the right time' but we had no walls in front of us about what we were prepared to do'* (Respondent IA1059).

These excerpts are representative of many survey responses that suggest Irish migrants believe the capabilities and eagerness of Irish people in the workplace are exceptional. What is missing is an appreciation of the fact that migrants, generally, are keen workers and this is, quite logically, the result of two things: a need to support oneself in the absence of access to social welfare support²⁸ and a determination to make their new life a successful one. It may also relate to the higher percentages of Irish people in full-time employment compared with the Australian-born. Success in the workplace quite naturally translated into higher satisfaction. This qualitative data provides deeper insight into the process of career progression and satisfaction. Improved prospects and commensurate salary has a beneficial

²⁸ Welfare payments cannot be accessed for a period of 104 weeks after arrival DHS. (2015). "Availability of welfare payments." from <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/enablers/newly-arrived-residents-waiting-period>

effect on general happiness and the lifestyle one can afford and this is the subject of the following section.

6.4.3. Opportunity

Many migrants recognised that their careers had taken off in directions they could never have imagined in Ireland. One participant was a carpenter from Meath and a former WHM who returned to Australia on a Skilled Independent (subclass 189) visa in 2008 aged 32. He settled in far northern Western Australia. He spoke of the opportunity Australia had afforded his career. After going for a job related to his trade he got a job as a case manager working at a prison:

...basically it was taking prisoners out of the prison and getting bikes off the police and do them up and then they'd bring them out to the [indigenous] communities ...there's no way that would have happened in Ireland, no way! Can you imagine me chipping away around Dublin and knocking on the door of Mountjoy Prison and saying 'Any chance of a job lads?' They'd tell you to cop on... (Respondent IA550).

One of the older respondents in this study spoke of his Australian working life but we catch a glimpse of the personal achievement his employment offered – opportunity realised in Australia that was out of reach in Ireland due to poverty:

If you'd told me 24 years later I'd be a prison officer in Sydney I would have laughed at you...I've been a Senior Investigator in Internal Investigations and that was the first time I went to uni and that was BIG for me! I've now got two uni qualifications... (Respondent IA359).

A female respondent from Dublin who arrived in 2011 on a 457 visa relayed the opportunities migration had given her sons. Her eldest son wants to be a doctor, and is doing a paramedicine degree, something she describes as,

...next to impossible for him to do in Ireland. He would have had to have gone to the UK...The boys have done so well – they've both represented the region and the state in [rugby] national competition – things they never would have done at home...The other one wants to be a physio and the youngest one wants to be an AFL player (Respondent IA762).

These are the very things most migrants seek – the opportunities that are unavailable to them or their children in their home country either through restricted access due to poverty or to social pressures not to be seen stepping out of one's place. This phenomenon is known colloquially as Irish 'begrudgergy'. Our carpenter from Meath probably explains it best:

Back home, they're a bit begrudging like. They talk here about a fair go and a chance? ...It's like Bono on Oprah – did you ever see that one? He says 'You know here in America, someone makes his money and buys a big place up on the hill and everyone looks up and says 'someday I'm going to live up there'? In Ireland they say 'someday I'm gonna get that bastard!'" (Respondent IA550).

A female respondent admits this as a failing of Irish people generally:

One thing that I realised I did not like about my culture is that we are the biggest begrudgers in the world and we can't wait to see someone fail (Respondent IA762).

She remarked on the impact the absence of this had had on her eldest son:

[son] was a very shy, self-conscious child and in the last three years he has just blossomed and become a great young man, so confident... He changed the moment he came here. In Ireland, he was always self-conscious and had no belief in himself...It's that whole thing of no one begrudging you – if you do a great job, they'll say so...

Opportunity for migrants and their children existed in more than one form. It presented not just in jobs and careers and access to education that was not available in Ireland, but it was also to be found in the absence of social resentment of progress and ambition.

This section has demonstrated that the workplace was a major part of settlement for many. This was particularly the case for WHMs who secured employment in their career field and for many the Australian labour market afforded opportunities unavailable in Ireland. Since visa status predetermines the migration experience in the Australian context, and it is inextricably linked to employment as these case studies have shown, it is unsurprising that the analysis concludes that the labour market experiences of Irish migrants are important in the settlement of temporary migrants in Australia. However, the reverse is not necessarily true since Departed Australia respondents had similarly satisfying and rewarding employment experiences in Australia as outlined in Chapter Eight.

6.5 Settling: Social life

Migrants, even those travelling with family members and friends, often find themselves facing an alien social landscape. Where there may be some uniformity or code of practice in the industry to which they belong that can act to stabilise the employment experience, social disorientation, often referred to as culture shock, can present itself in several forms: unfamiliarity with a new country's systems of administration – tax, schools, health care, insurance – as well as its cultural systems – racism, misogyny, religion, social norms – and, in some parts of Australia, extreme climate adaptation is also necessary for migrants from North-western Europe. Quality of life in terms of job, career progression and salary was

explored in the last section, but overall quality of life also depends on a migrant forming or having nurturing relationships, social connections and that elusive and abstract concept, 'happiness'.

This section focuses on settling in socially and explores how new migrants navigate social systems as well as their use of Irish networks in securing employment, finding accommodation and making social connections. In this last aspect the research considers friendship groups and connections with both other migrants and the established Irish community in Australia. It investigates the roles of new online Irish groups and the traditional Irish clubs and associations in helping new migrants settle.

6.5.1. Education, healthcare and everyday issues

Irish immigrants do not have to negotiate a language barrier or visible racial obstacles. Generally, there are few literacy or obvious cultural barriers but a systems knowledge impediment remains palpable – migrants report 'having to learn the day-to-day stuff all over again'. This knowledge deficit generally focuses on three main areas: education, health and 'everyday' issues such as rental bonds and third party car insurance.

The Australian school system with its public, private and independent institutions is peculiar to most Irish migrants as the majority of Irish children of school age attend the free local national school (for those residing in the Republic), or the pertinent free local denominational school (for those from Northern Ireland). In addition, some Australian states require certain visa holders to pay additional fees for access to the state education system. As part of its State Budget in August 2013, Western Australia introduced a charge to 457 visa holders of \$4000 per child per year for enrolment in the state school system, for which Australian citizens pay between \$200 and \$400 per child per year. Private or independent school fees are in addition to the state charge. The fee was reduced to \$4000 per 457 family after action taken by Irish families and others by way of a petition and a threatened boycott of the state, particularly by medical professionals. Similar charges were introduced by the South Australian state government in early 2017 but at the time of writing no audible opposition had been raised to these.

Until 1998, visitors (including 417 and 457 visa holders) from the Republic of Ireland did not have the protection of a Reciprocal Health Care Agreement (RHCA) which allows access to Australia's universal healthcare system, Medicare. While a RHCA has been negotiated between the two countries, it is limited to 'medically necessary' treatment i.e. treatment in a public hospital and subsidised medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, but does not extend to out-of-hospital treatment provided through a General Practitioner – a feature of the RHCA between Australia and the United Kingdom, which can be accessed by those from Northern Ireland.²⁹ The provision and cost of health insurance, strongly recommended by both governments, for those on student or temporary long-stay visas, is a frequent

²⁹ *Australian Parliament Joint Standing Committee on Migration Supplementary Submission No. 83.2.* Joint Standing Committee on Migration 21 September 2011 – additional information (Hansard page 9) Department of Human Services, 2011

topic of online forum conversations. It is a requirement that 457 visa holders take out and maintain high level healthcare insurance, as prescribed by the DIBP under Condition 8501, to insure against the cost of all medical treatment not covered by a RHCA. Additionally, a number of respondents from Northern Ireland complained that Medicare staff would not accept their paperwork as they were unaware that the applicants were actually former residents of the United Kingdom and party to that RCHA. A female 457 visa holder who arrived in Brisbane in 2012, thought this was one area in which immigrants were disadvantaged. Despite having held high-level cover for three years, this was not recognised for her new policy when she became a permanent resident and waiting periods for benefits were enforced.

Another respondent explained the difficulty she and her husband experienced buying a car, navigating Medicare and using an overseas driving license:

It still frustrates the life out of me that there is an assumption that you should know the system and you should know how things work. I said I was going to get 'I am not Australian' on my shirt because I'm fed up with people saying 'you should have known that' and I think 'How would I have known that if no one has told me?' (Respondent IA421).

So while the physical and linguistic differences were negligible, if not non-existent, for Irish migrants in Australia, crucial systems knowledge was often lacking and had to be obtained in order to participate in life at a basic level. This was where unofficial migrant assistance groups in the form of Irish Facebook™ communities, discussed in more detail later, came into their own.

6.5.2. Racism

A number of participants highlighted the racism they had experienced as new Irish migrants in Australia. Unsolicited comments about this were made at the end of the survey when participants were asked to recount the best and the worst parts of their migration experience. Certainly there has been press in recent years which highlighted the Irish as an 'Other' in Australian society, but a partial explanation may lie in the density of the Irish in certain areas. Such a rapid and substantial increase in the Irish population had the potential to influence the perception of Irish migrants in Australian society. In Western Australia, for example, a number of controversial news reports regarding recent Irish immigrants were published. This could be related to the fact that the Irish in Western Australia comprised 21 per cent of the total enumerated Ireland-born population in the country, whilst only ten per cent of the Australian population resided in the state (DIBP 2015e). Irish migration to Western Australia was characterised by high numbers of Irish migrants employed in the state's mining and medical sectors. The former incorporates a large number of FIFO workers with the high wages and rotational schedule commensurate with such a contract. The unstable lifestyle that results from these factors in terms of social isolation, indulgent spending spree returns to the city and substance abuse is noted in the study's data (Respondent DA156). The

preponderance of Irish staff in WA's medical services, which was the subject of a 'Jigging Nurses' cartoon (Chubb 2014), is the result of the recruitment campaigns noted earlier.

When asked about his experience of racism in Australia, one former backpacker, a young sports therapist, clarified that what he experienced was casual racism as opposed to 'real' racism:

*I suppose you look at how it's meant. Are there instances of attacking, vindictive racism?
I'd say no but the casual, joking, yeah and sometimes it can be taken too far
(Respondent IA318).*

Another respondent who arrived in 2008, reported having racist comments directed towards her in both social and professional settings and recounted numerous examples which ranged from being accused of being an alcoholic, to being a member of the IRA, to a general stereotype of the Irish being 'dumb'.

A female 457 migrant who arrived in 2011 usually let Irish 'jokes' and other comments slide but said that,

...if I stand up to it people are a bit shocked. I think it's always been a country to laugh at, we're stupid and drunk...a couple of times I've pulled people up ...I said to them in work 'If I was Chinese and you said something like that I could have you up for racial abuse' and I think that's when they realise they're being racist (Respondent IA762).

Sometimes the racism was not so easy to deal with and one respondent, a female who arrived in 2000 aged 40, reports leaving a job because of the treatment she received due to her nationality.

A number of respondents who answered the question, 'What was/has been the worst part of your migration experience?' noted racism as one of their worst experiences. Comments included:

...feels like the 1980s in regards the tolerance of racism and bigotry

Experiencing racism from Australian people...

The racism and the way I am treated at work...

The racist comments I sometimes get from Australians and the comments and jokes about the stupid Irish...

For some respondents, negative attitudes made them feel they had to 'tone down' their Irishness. Often the reasons given for maintaining a mostly Irish circle of friends included the ability to be themselves, not having to explain colloquialisms, humour not getting lost in translation and an empathy and understanding for their position, not just as a migrant, but as an Irish migrant.

Several respondents reported needing Irish friends in order to maintain their sense of self. One respondent, who arrived in Melbourne in 2005 said, *you feel like you lose a sense of yourself and that's why I think it's good to have Irish friends* (Respondent IA694) and another voiced the understanding he got

from having Irish people in his social circle because *they've grown up the same environment, have the same sense of humour* (Respondent IA318). The next section explores the friendship groups of recent arrivals in order to gauge which one of Berry's (1980) four fields of acculturation applies to new Irish migrants.

6.6 Friendship groups

As stated in Chapter Three, Berry (1980) produced a four-field typology of acculturation to describe the settlement experiences of a migrant group in a new host nation. Those are assimilation, integration, ethnic exclusivity and marginalisation. Integration is the clearest category of acculturation for the study cohort since cultural affinity was an important part of many migrants' social circles. Only a few respondents had no Irish social connections in Australia. These people maintained their Irish identity privately and had little desire to be part of the visible wider Irish community but were not so assimilated as to no longer identify as Irish. Ethnic exclusivity is hardly possible given the geographical spread of the Irish in Australia. Despite their popularity, suburbs such as Bondi in Sydney and St Kilda in Melbourne can hardly be described as Irish ghettos. Given the history of Irish Australia and the longevity of Irish migration, there is little scope for marginalisation, the two cultures being as intertwined as they are.

As Ryan (2011, p.711) notes, the works of Granovetter (1973, 1983) and of Bourdieu (1986), while not focussed on migrants, are important for 'understanding the obstacles which migrants may encounter when trying to access particular kinds of networks'. While the concept of social networks and bonding and bridging capital has been latched on to in migration studies, Bourdieu, the French philosopher who popularised these concepts, focused on the inherent power, dominance and conflict of social networks and the effort required to produce some symbolic or material outcome from them, rather than generalised network contacts.

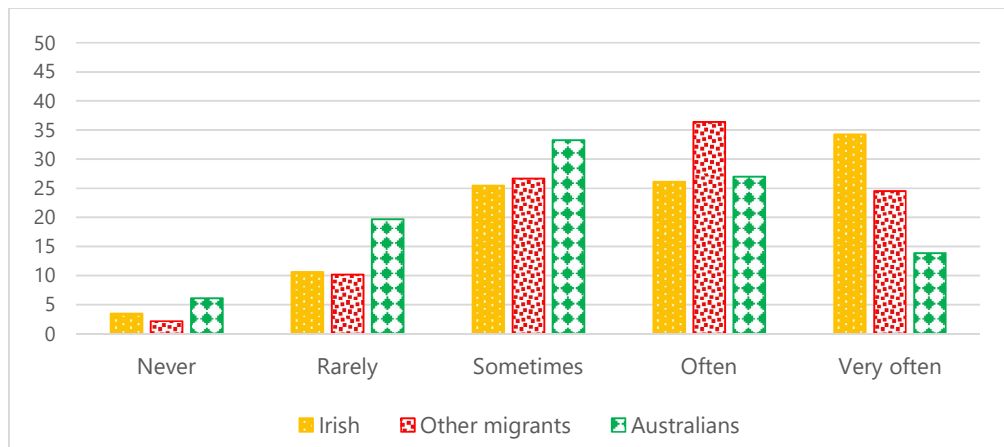
Granovetter's (1973, 1983) 'weak ties' are visible in the qualitative data of this study as respondents talk of getting a job (with no directly relevant experience) through a brother's girlfriend (Respondent DA258) and securing accommodation with a girl from home:

'I ended up staying in a girl's house for two weeks and I think it was the first time I'd even spoken to her! I would have seen her [at home in Ireland] but I wouldn't have called her a friend (Respondent DA156).

The importance of networking for the migrant in a work setting lies in contacts that bridge social distance – what Ryan (2011, p.711) refers to as vertical weak ties. Here Bourdieu's notions of social class, and Ryan's (2011, p.721) conclusion that 'the binary between bonding and bridging [capital] may be too sharply constructed' since 'nationality...was not enough to guarantee close bonds of friendship', outline the importance of the resources that any relationship provides. Strong ethnic ties that result in

ghettoisation or an ethnic enclave are of less use to a newcomer because knowledge is limited in and to that small circle. Weak ties, which bridge the gap between an ethnic group and the wider host society, expand information sources and knowledge. These weak ties may be formed with co-ethnics while close bonds can be formed across ethnic boundaries (Ryan 2011). The durability, or indeed fragility, of strong ethnic ties are important in the Irish-Australia context for two reasons: where the ties remained strong, some participants noted that homesickness had more effect; where ties weakened, usually after gaining employment, or joining sports/activity groups, participants reported widening friendship groups and feeling more settled. Conversely, some migrants in a strong ethnic network reported that settlement was easier precisely because their network understood both their homesickness and the contexts of life in Ireland and life in Australia and were able to point out that the pros generally outweighed the cons of being away from family in Ireland. Around 60 per cent of respondents socialised with other Irish people or other migrants 'often' or 'very often' as can be seen in Figure 6.4. Just over 40 per cent mixed with Australians with the same regularity. Around 20 per cent rarely socialised with Australians.

Figure 6.4: Frequency of respondents' socialisation with different ethnic groups



Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

While many respondents maintained a core group of Irish friends, the majority had a mixture of Irish friends, other migrants and a few Australians in their social circle. The density of Australians in the mix quite often depended on the presence of an Australian spouse or partner.

A female participant who immigrated on a student visa aged 37 and married an Australian was aware of the difficulties her husband had in an all-Irish social situation:

I feel at home when I'm with Irish people, I can talk faster, use my own words – not Gaelic, colloquialisms, but I'm conscious that my husband isn't getting it ... My Irish friends and my Australian friends are a bit separate I suppose ... I only feel it when I see he has the glazed look – I worked in French-speaking countries and in a German group so I understand what it's like to not get the jokes and that (Respondent IA289).

New Irish arrivals often befriended other migrants, including Australians from interstate, who were *'in the market for new friends'* to quote one respondent. Qualitative data suggest mixed experiences regarding the longevity of friend-based travelling groups. Indeed, even some of the couples who travelled together on a WHM visa had gone their separate ways, although both parties remained in Australia.

One former backpacker noted the changed composition of his social circle as time progressed:

It is not as insulated as it used to be. When I first got here we tried our best to make Australian friends but it was just easier to have the English and the Irish. I mean we did make a couple of Australian friends but...I've still got my core bunch of Irish friends, the ones who stayed (Respondent IA936)

Another former WHM had been in Australia for seven years but said her original friendship group of 30 or more migrants remained intact. Many of them had partnered and were now settled. She said *friends become your family and you become closer to people a lot quicker because you need them if anything goes wrong* (Respondent IA1011) and noted the benefit of belonging to a wider Irish community at times of difficulty.

A female from Cork immigrated in 2012 on a 457 visa with her partner. The couple lived with four other Irish people and saw their home as performing a social function for other Irish people. She described her dense Irish network as

...brilliant and we have a lot of common friends and they were travelling and we liked that we could have somewhere everyone could meet up – there have been a lot of Irish bodies through this house! (Respondent IA999).

Irish friendships were not the domain of young backpackers. An older migrant who arrived aged 33 on a Skilled Independent (Subclass 175) visa reported that her social circle in Melbourne was 90 per cent Irish or English.

For some, finding like-minded people or people in a certain demographic/interest group was more important than sharing an ethnicity or cultural identity. While the Irish Mothers groups were widely reported as being helpful in social settlement, one former 457 visa holder who arrived in Melbourne in 2005, said that her

... mum's group³⁰, 50 per cent of us, like there were eight in the group and four of us were not from Australia and of those that were from Australia, two didn't have any family in Melbourne. So that was quite supportive for me... (Respondent IA694).

Likewise, a male respondent from Dublin who arrived in Sydney in 2009 reported that his soccer team, which was comprised of Australians and other migrants, was more suited to him than the GAA club in the area. This was a contingency plan to protect him when his Irish friends inevitably left. He made friends from

...all walks of life – it's great like socialising outside the typical Irish circles you know? ...I could play Gaelic at home and meet Irish people at home – you're not going to meet anyone different playing Gaelic (Respondent IA1082).

A number of respondents reported that it was particularly difficult to break into established adult Australian social circles. Some thought this was because many Australians had strongly established friendship networks from childhood and had 'no room' for new friends unless they had migrated internally themselves. A former backpacker who arrived in Sydney in 2010, stated,

It's very hard to get in with Aussies unless they're from a different state and they've moved to Victoria because obviously you grow up with your friends and you stay with your friends and it's hard to let an outsider in (Respondent IA996).

The example of the Mothers group that had interstate Australians as members gives some substance to this idea since the native women also benefited from the group in the absence of their family and friends. The backpackers' early insularity may have resulted in a semi-ethnic exclusivity in the years between settling into relationships and having school-age children as many respondents thought this was an opening into wider society and a more Australian social scene. A Cavan-born female WHM, who arrived in Melbourne in 1997, noted the importance of the Mother's Group also but described a mostly migrant circle of friends that had no other Irish people. She made many friends through the children at school. Another was quite open about her difficulty in the social context in Australia. Returning to the idea that children were a social lubricant, she stated that

I was home at one point on holidays and everyone was like 'Oh sure have a kid! Because if you have a kid you'll make friends that way' and I'm thinking it's not exactly the best time to be having a child, not being so unhappy... (Respondent IA357).

Transiency seemed to be a reason for social difficulty. Some migrants felt that Australians did not want to invest emotionally in friendships with them because of their temporariness. A 23 year old female WHM

³⁰ First-time mothers in Australia are invited to join a 'Mothers group' by the Child and Youth Health Service. The group consists of women who have had their first child within the past few weeks so the children are usually at similar stages of development. Many women form life time friendships in this group.

from Galway actively sought friends outside the Irish community because she wanted to put down permanent roots in Australia:

...I'm still friends with the [Irish] girls ... because I'm here more permanently I try to look outside that box and look to make Australian friends and do Australian things ...I don't want to look at it as a temporary thing. I look at it that I'm going to be here forever (Respondent IA996).

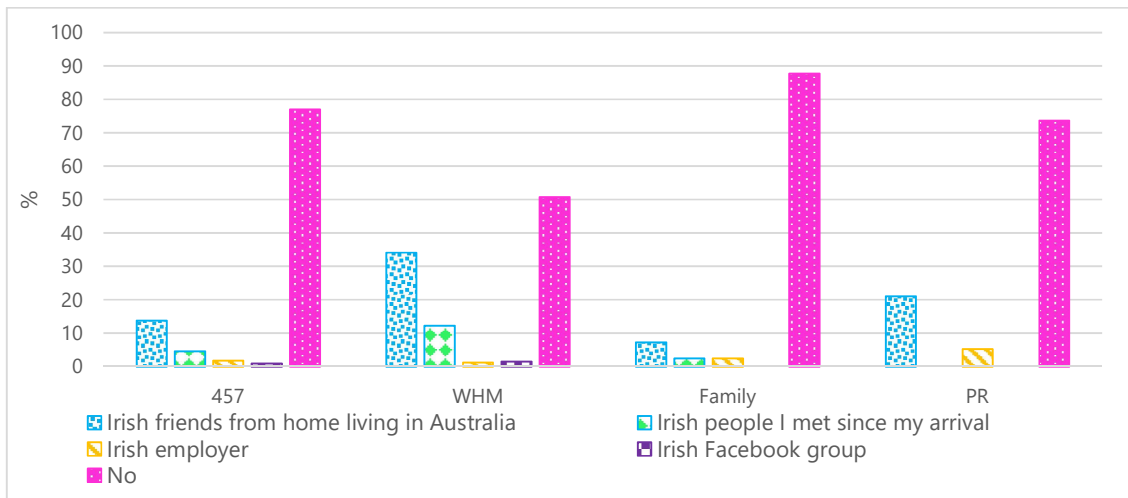
Joining sports groups and participating in activities other than Irish pursuits was used as a way of widening the ethnic scope of the migrant's social circle. For those who preferred a mainly Irish circle of friends, friendships appear to have been based on cultural sameness, the common experience of being a migrant and surrogation of family. However, despite the apparent strength and density of Irish social networks, the survey found that new Irish arrivals derived few practical benefits in settlement from compatriots.

6.7 Irish networks and practical help

The majority of survey respondents (67 per cent) had family or friends in Australia when they emigrated and interview data indicates the importance of migration networks historically referred to as chain migration. The combination of an existing Irish network, and the higher availability of Australian visas in comparison with other non-EU immigration countries, both in terms of numbers and accessibility, could be directly responsible for Australia's increased popularity as a destination for Ireland's emigrants in recent years.

Given this established Irish population, it is surprising to find that newcomers did not receive more help from Irish contacts in terms of finding accommodation or work. Between 50 and 88 per cent of each visa group received no help in finding somewhere to live. Existing friends from home helped around 15 per cent of new Irish migrants overall in finding accommodation (Figure 6.5). This assistance was more prevalent in the WHM group where more than a third of them found somewhere to live through Irish friends. Less than 20 per cent of accommodation assistance was from Irish people that new immigrants had met since their arrival. Facebook™ groups were a source of information but few practical outcomes.

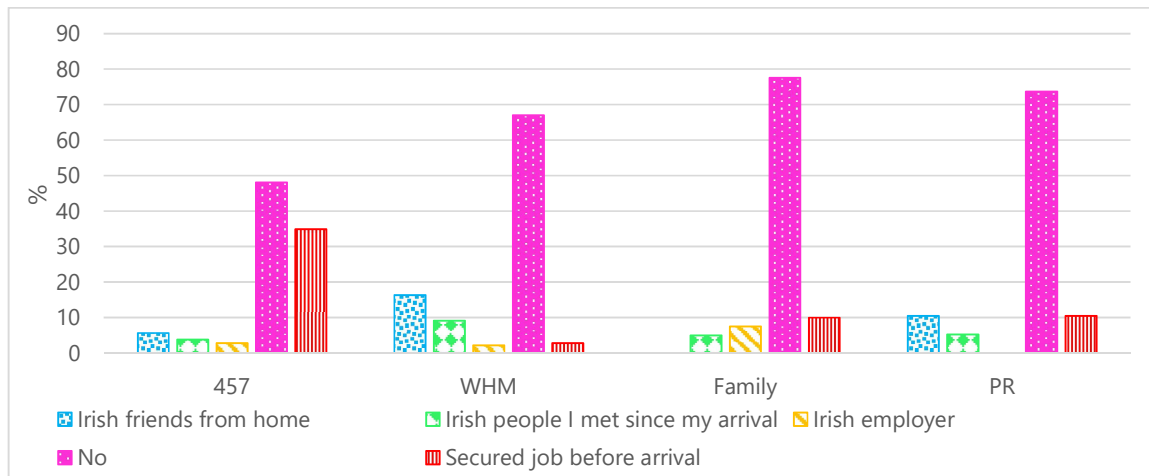
Figure 6.5: Irish network assistance provided to respondents in finding accommodation by visa type (n=559)



Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

Figure 6.6 shows that Irish people were useful in the search for employment for some respondents and around 16 per cent of backpackers received help from their friends from home in this. This group also received the highest amount of assistance from Irish people they had met since their arrival (9.1 per cent). However, almost 50 per cent of 457 workers, 67 per cent of WHMs and around 75 per cent of Family and PR migrants received no help at all with this aspect of life in Australia. Only 35 per cent of 457s had secured a position before arrival as did ten per cent each of the Family and PR migrants and three per cent of backpackers. Having a job organised before they immigrated likely eased the financial pressure as well as the transition into Australian working life for these newcomers. Around 15 per cent of PR migrants secured employment through Irish people they already knew or met. Only five per cent of 457 workers and Family migrants received help from Irish people they met in Australia. Even less assistance came from an Irish employer for those in the Family, 457 and WHM cohorts. Receiving no assistance was the most common answer across all visa categories. That it was lower among 457 migrants was likely because more of them had a job prior to arrival.

Figure 6.6: Irish network assistance to respondents in securing employment by visa type (n=553)

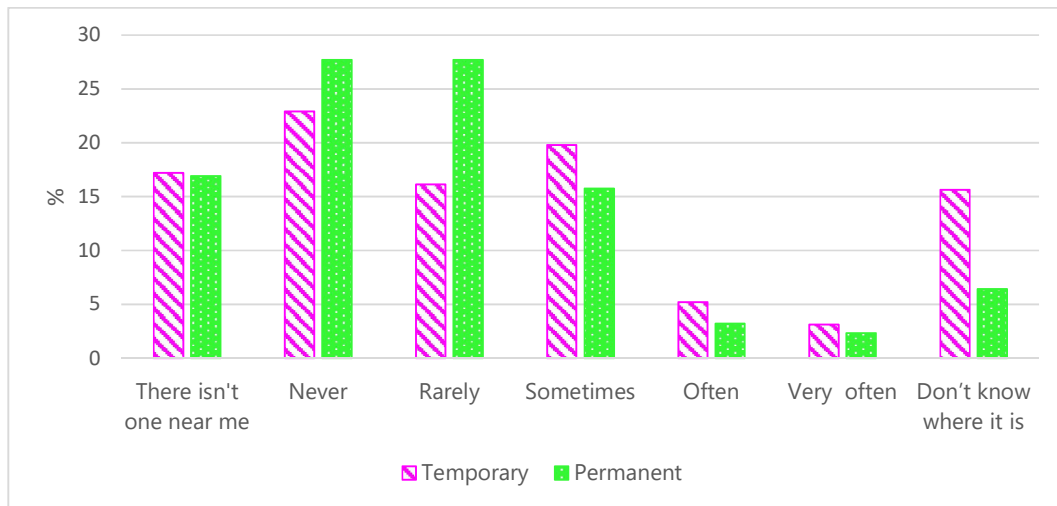


Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

6.8 Established Irish Clubs and new online Irish groups

Traditional Irish social clubs have suffered declining memberships and accusations of irrelevancy in recent years. They vie for support from the voluntary sector against the Irish welfare organisations and other groups which came into existence in the void left by the changing nature of Irish Clubs in the 1990s. Where previously the clubs had fulfilled an unofficial welfare role and were the place to go for new arrivals, particularly in terms of signposting for other services and immersion in the Irish community generally, this capability has been dropped in favour of a purely social role. Survey respondents indicated relatively low participation in established Irish clubs and associations with just eight per cent of temporary migrants and five per cent of permanent settlers involved 'often' or 'very often' (Figure 6.7). Around a quarter of both temporary and permanent migrants never visited their local Irish Club, and 16 and 20 per cent respectively went there sometimes. Fifteen per cent of each did not have a club in their locality. That six per cent of permanent settlers and 16 per cent of temporary migrants did not know where their local club was speaks to the visibility of these associations.

Figure 6.7: Respondents' involvement with local Irish Club (n=535)



Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

One Adelaide-based respondent had been in the local Irish Club once or twice since she arrived in 2008 but preferred not to be involved with solely Irish groups. Another female who had arrived in Queensland in 2000 had tried to become involved in the Brisbane Irish club but found it antiquated.

They weren't people from Modern Ireland. I'd say there were a good few hadn't even travelled to Ireland but their parents had been Irish and they were there to uphold the traditions of our forebears and it was a bit grating (Respondent IA876).

She found it harder to make friends being aged in her 40s - *too young for the seniors clubs and pastimes... It's no man's land in a sense* – and was disappointed because the Irish Club had been somewhere she thought she could make connections.

A 44 year old female in Australia since 1995 had a more positive experience of the local Irish Club she connected to recently:

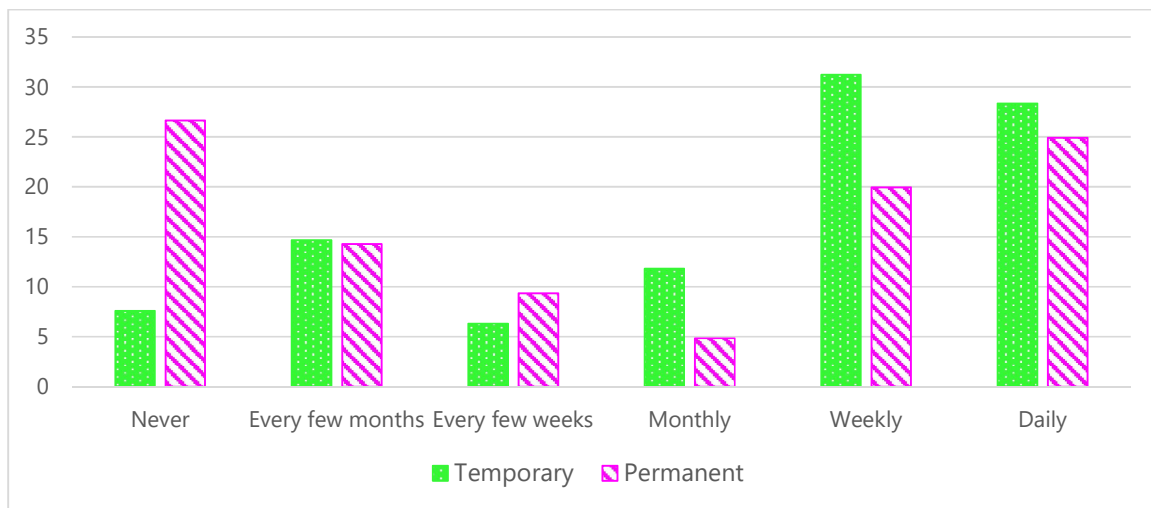
There's a Facebook page that I'm on... it was a way to just find people and then connect... Then there's the Wollongong Irish Society and they're made up of everyone from the age of 65+ so, you know, the last generation that came out. We went to their Christmas dinner dance and I absolutely loved it... (Respondent IA448).

Survey findings suggest that clubs may fulfil a function for older, longer-resident Irish people but there was a sense that existing Irish clubs did not cater for recent arrivals and some thought that club management committees could not relate to the new Ireland they had just left. That they remembered Ireland with 'rose-tinted' glasses was an observation made by O'Connor's participants too (O'Connor 2005a). During the time of the research project the Queensland Irish Club went into liquidation and other

clubs were experiencing declining membership numbers and activity. Also during this time, the Celtic Club in Melbourne was embroiled in a legal battle between members regarding the sale of its iconic Queen Street premises.

Temporary migrants are more regular users of the many Irish in Australia Facebook™ groups with 28 per cent accessing these daily and 31 per cent logging in weekly (Figure 6.8) compared with 25 per cent of permanent migrants who access the groups daily and 20 per cent who do so weekly. More than a quarter of permanent migrants and eight per cent of temporary migrants do not use Irish Facebook™ groups at all and around 15 per cent of each are rare users.

Figure 6.8: Respondents' use of Irish Facebook groups



Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

Many respondents thought that the newer form of Irish 'club' – the many Facebook™ pages and groups established to cater for the Irish online – was a useful one. Although a former 457 migrant who is now a citizen, did not actively participate in many of the Irish Facebook™ groups she had membership of, she did note their usefulness:

I find if you post a question, people go out of their way to respond to you. Really they're very helpful (Respondent IA694).

A 30 year old female spoke of the sense of solidarity of experience that came through Facebook™ posts from other members of the Irish community in Australia:

There are those stories about people who were so homesick and then made a life for themselves and you can see we are all on the same journey (Respondent IA1011).

Few members of the online groups met in person but one exception to this were the Irish Mothers groups – particularly those in Brisbane and Melbourne. A skilled migrant who arrived in 2010 aged 33, was

particularly lonely when her daughter was born as she and her husband were the first of their social group to become parents.

I went to the Irish Mother's Group ... it filled a massive gaping hole in my life because when I had [daughter] I didn't know anyone else and I was off on maternity leave (Respondent IA1048).

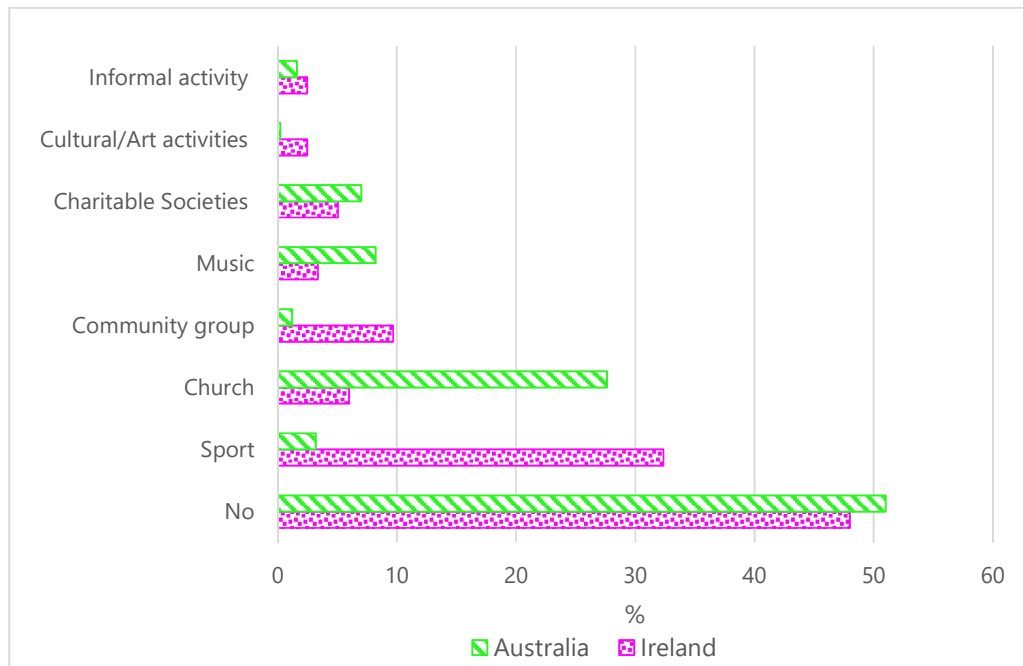
Moving on from participation in specifically Irish activity and community involvement and away from virtual groups, the next section explores general community participation before and after migration.

6.9 Participating in community in Australia

The surveys asked respondents about their involvement in various aspects of community life in both Ireland and Australia to ascertain if they became more involved in organised activity as a way of anchoring themselves in the wider community after migration.

Figure 6.9 demonstrates that the proportion of people not involved in any type of community activity increased by three per cent upon arrival in Australia but charitable, music and church activity also increased post-migration. Cultural activities, community group involvement and sporting activity declined. Involvement in sport declined dramatically post-migration but five per cent of those who participated in sport in Australia did so through the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). However, they participated in rugby, Australian Rules football and soccer but many respondents pointed out that they were not involved with hurling or Gaelic football at home and would not, therefore, seek out GAA clubs in Australia. The higher involvement in church-related activity was a surprising result given the common presumption that church attendance is declining in Ireland and that young people are leading the way on this (CSO 2017, p.73).

Figure 6.9: Respondents' involvement with various interest groups in Ireland and Australia



Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

It is difficult to explain the reconnection with the church since many respondents not only claimed to no longer actively practice their faith but criticised the chokehold that the Catholic Church has on Irish society. One notable Church-related activity is the Bondi Christmas Mass to which many Irish people wear their GAA County jerseys and which concludes with a rendition of the *Fields of Athenry*, a popular Irish ballad (Joe.ie 2014). A 25 year old female respondent gave some indication of the purpose attending church in Australia had for her:

...as a coping mechanism I found myself going to the church just to sit in it ...A bit of quiet time. It's amazing what that does, well for me. I'm at home. I'm in the church. It reminds me, I pretend Dad is sitting beside me and for that hour and a half I'm at home (Respondent IA371).

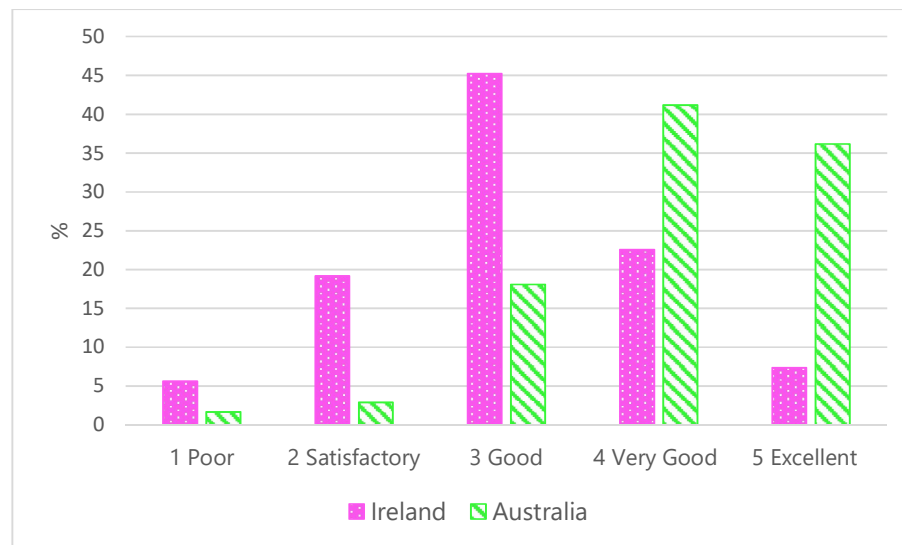
Another offered her reason for reduced social involvement. Previously she had been heavily involved in the Girls Brigade in Northern Ireland but had changed her ways after migrating:

I don't get too involved because I've got a bit precious about my time. I'm not prepared to give up my time – I enjoy my weekends (Respondent IA421).

6.10 Quality of life

Figure 6.10 shows the improvement in respondents' self-rated quality of life in Australia with over two-thirds stating that life in Australia was 'very good' or 'excellent' compared to about one-quarter in Ireland. Although life in Ireland was generally good (45 per cent) and 'very good' or 'excellent' for 30 per cent of respondents, there is a heavier weighting towards the 'Very Good' (41 per cent) and 'Excellent' (36 per cent) end of the scale post-migration.

Figure 6.10: Respondents' assessment of quality of life in Australia and previously in Ireland



Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

Friendships and social connections allowed new migrants to settle successfully and, together with good employment and a decent salary, many respondents noted that life in Australia was about more than just the basics. Respondents noticed less anxiety about the cost of everyday living – not worrying about the cost of groceries and having more disposable income despite high rent.

A female respondent who had returned to Ireland with her husband and young family and then re-emigrated to Australia, said that despite the fact that her husband earned a decent wage, she struggled to survive financially in Ireland:

His wages were actually quite good to what others were earning but each month I was taking money out of our savings account just to keep us going and they charge you for every single thing – there are taxes on everything. (Respondent DA101).

Together with stable employment which not only paid a decent wage but progressed careers, many migrants noted the opportunities in pastime, social activities and lifestyle that were open to them in Australia.

However, there is danger in merely quoting end-to-end quality of life ratings. Just showing an improvement in this self-reported rating could obscure the reality of the migration journey. Migrating to a culturally similar place does not lessen the intensity of the experience. As O'Tiarnaigh (1997, p.128) states, 'many Irish do not initially anticipate the high level of emotional turmoil that is often associated with adjusting to living in a new culture'.

Migration motivation represents a thread through the journey - where leaving Ireland was deemed to be forced in some way, there was more likelihood of negative experiences. This was evident in the comments of a skilled female migrant who arrived in 1988 who talked of the newer Irish migrants and the particular difficulty she saw the older migrants amongst them experience:

*Aged 40 plus with kids in primary school **starting** here trying to buy a house with a mortgage of \$600-700,000 with debt in Ireland. That is a much more difficult start but it also creates a bias that is not about Australia (Respondent IA1059).*

For others, even though 'escape' was their prime motivation, and the journey may have commenced under a cloud of negativity rather than adventure, the migration experience was a positive one overall. de Haas and Fokkema (2013) argue that household models of explanation of migration have been criticised because they tend to obscure intra-household inequalities and conflicts of interest along the lines of gender, generation, and age. Therefore it is important not to lose sight of intra-household differences. For instance, instead of a move to help the family, migration can also be an individual strategy to escape from asphyxiating social control, abuse and oppression within families.

One respondent came to Australia on a Partner visa in 2012 but she partly moved away to escape her home life. She had travelled the world as a child migrant with her family and, during their time in South Africa, it became clear her father was an alcoholic. The family returned to Ireland and the marriage disintegrated. She eventually left to escape her mother whom she thought had a mental illness as well as an addiction to alcohol:

By the time I walked away from the family my mother was a full blown alcoholic and violent with it. I'd had enough and I thought if I stayed my life was going to be over. If I go, I've no idea, but at least I have a shot at it. I didn't see any future for myself (Respondent IA364).

6.11 Possible return to Ireland

Respondents were asked about the likelihood of and their desire to return to Ireland. Just over 38 per cent of the Irish in Australia sample would like to return to Ireland to live, 'very much' or 'quite a lot', 31.4 per cent were unsure and 30.4 per cent did not want to return much or at all. Around 32.4 per cent

thought that return was 'very likely' or 'likely' to happen but 30 per cent were unsure and 37 per cent unlikely to go back to Ireland. The strongest reason for a possible return to Ireland was family-related.

Respondents were asked what would entice them to leave Australia and what prevented them from returning to Ireland. 'Family' and a common response that 'Ireland is home' were the main reason respondents would go back to Ireland. However, there were in fact, more reasons not to return as shown in Table 6.2. The quality of life immigrants enjoyed in Australia was prime amongst these. Negative aspects of Ireland included politicians' handling of the economic crisis and subsequent bailout, as well as high levels of bureaucracy which placed obstacles in the way of returning citizens. Being unable to access similar work opportunities and salaries was also an impediment to return. The lack of infrastructure and poor weather were further barriers for potential returnees. Other disincentives to return included a general negativity around social attitudes in Ireland. These mostly centred on church control and scandal, the autonomy of women and interference in state and civil matters,

Table 6.2: Reasons given by respondents as to why they may not return to live in Ireland (n=108)

Reason	%
Better quality of life in Australia	51.9
Negative aspects of Ireland	13.0
Economic	13.0
Poor quality of life in Ireland	13.0
Social attitudes in Ireland	9.3

Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

A female from Galway who immigrated 2008 aged 37 related one of the hurdles she would face in relation to employment, despite having completed a Master's degree in Dietetics, if she returned to Ireland. Having taken a redundancy from the Health Service Executive she was effectively embargoed for seven years.

...even if I go back with extra qualifications, if I apply for a job with the Health Board or any organisation that receives funding from the Health Board – NGO's, care homes etc., even after seven years, the Minister has to sign off on me being allowed back. How ridiculous is that? So when you have a country that endorses that kind of begrudgery, red tape, bureaucracy – it's that kind of thing that just makes me say 'Why would I want to do that when I can walk into any amount of jobs here?' (Respondent IA289).

One of the respondents who wanted to return to Ireland 'very much' and for whom return migration was 'very likely' was a young female backpacker who emigrated in 2013. She described her social and cultural disconnection in Australia and, despite having an overall positive migration experience, could only

envisage her migration ending in one way. She put it down to simply being Irish and from a tight-knit rural community:

It is such a strong connection, to come from an Irish family – everyone knows everyone's business and it's so strong. To come over here and be separated from it – it's one of the big things I struggle with. Going from knowing someone next door to living in this big, massive suburb where you don't know anyone (Respondent IA371).

She described feeling isolated and we get a sense of the cultural shock she experienced:

It's a completely different world and I think it goes along with that expectation of a similar culture – you're white and, bar your accent, you don't stand out but you wonder how you can feel so out of place, like a fish out of water, in a place like this...

She actively sought the Irish connection through Perth's Irish community, through the Claddagh Association, Irish bars and GAA. Though planning to return to Ireland six months after the interview, she said she had no regrets about her migration experience but what enabled her to leave was knowing she had the option to come back with permanent residency.

Keeping their options open with regard to returning to Australia in the future was a strong theme of many interviews and survey responses. This is more fully investigated in the take up of Australian citizenship in the next chapter.

6.12 Conclusion

Labour market experiences were generally positive for this cohort. There was a significant trend amongst WHMs of seeking career-specific employment and gaining access to a 457 visa through this. A number of agencies are complicit in this category-jumping from a visitor visa to the 457 visa ranging from the Department, through to recruitment agencies and Australian employers generally. Although 457 sponsorship is most obviously beneficial to the migrant, employers gain benefit through being able to retain highly-skilled and qualified staff by assisting their move from a WHM visa to a 457 visa.

Because the immigrating Irish are English speaking and (still largely) white, there is little cognisance of the difficulties they face as migrants. Madden and Young (1993, p.4) report that 'immigrants from the UK and Ireland are generally neglected in immigration research largely because they are not perceived as 'real' immigrants'. Two of the most obvious barriers to successful settlement are removed; they are invisible immigrants to an extent with neither language nor physical differences to alienate them, yet prevalent amongst them is a tendency to live in close ethno-cultural proximity and socialise with compatriots or other migrants more than the resident Australian population. Despite Australia's widely cited strong Anglo-Celtic roots, respondents reported some difficulties breaking into Australian social circles especially

through workplace relationships. One possible consequence of 'sticking with their own', especially amongst recent migrants, is the compounding of feelings of loneliness and distance from home. The reverse of this is a source of empathy and support and the formation of coping strategies through shared experiences. The following chapter explores Irish connections to home, place and society amongst survey respondents.

CHAPTER 7

TRANSNATIONAL PRACTICES OF THE IRISH IN AUSTRALIA

This chapter investigates the ability of migrants to maintain family connections with Ireland through visits and new technology in order to ascertain how return visits and technology assist Irish settlers to maintain social links with Ireland and how strong transnationalism is within this cohort. It explores Irish emigrants' economic participation in Ireland and their political and social connection to Ireland as a geopolitical space. Engagement with Irish life is measured through consumption of Irish media and is taken as an indicator of diasporic identity. Transnationalism and the extension of transnational practice through new communications technology is also briefly considered in this chapter. Transnationalism in this context is 'transnationalism from below' (Smith and Guarnizo 1998) and is not concerned with state-led transnationalism and official Irish diaspora engagement strategies briefly alluded to earlier. This is because respondents generally did not associate themselves with 'the Irish diaspora'.

An abstraction, transnationalism is as much about identity as it is about practice for if there were no link to a homeland post-migration, why would transnationalism persist on the broader societal scale? Family connections are more easily understood. Here 'identity' is aligned to the broader notion of being Irish while 'practice' looks at the narrower channels of personal engagement. The first section therefore, looks at the migrant's engagement with home society, and the second considers personal bonds to home. Later, in light of a discussion about identity, the uptake of Australian citizenship is explored and the reasons for it are questioned in terms of identity as an Australian, loyalty and belonging.

Transnationalism was defined earlier as being concerned with 'occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contact over time across national borders for their implementation' (Portes et al. 1999, p.219). This study gives precedence to González-Rábago and Blanco's (2016, p.862) definition since they 'consider transnational to be any connection, objective or subjective, relating the immigrant with their homeland, in any life area where it may occur (private or public)'. Most importantly, González-Rábago and Blanco expand transnationalism beyond practice to encompass forms of identity which they describe as 'transnational feeling or belonging'.

Irish immigrants in Australia generally lack some of the prescribed defining features of a transnational community such as owning a home in Ireland and regularly remitting money (a small proportion of them do both). However, it is argued here that transnationalism is very much evident in their interest in local and national affairs, their regular consumption of Irish-produced media, and their economic participation

through online shopping and return travel to Ireland.³¹ These aspects are considered in this section which looks at transnational practice that enables migrants to keep in touch with the wider society in Ireland.

The findings show that new technology allows transnational practice to be extended since more forms of transnational practice are now possible. As well as societal involvement at the macro level, micro level participation in Irish life is easier than it has been previously. Hugo's (Hugo 2014c, p.28) point that improved communications technology has 'made it possible to maintain close, strong, immediate and intimate contacts with origin countries' to an extent never before conceivable is considered in this chapter which discusses transnational care-giving and participation in Irish family life as well as transnational personal network maintenance.

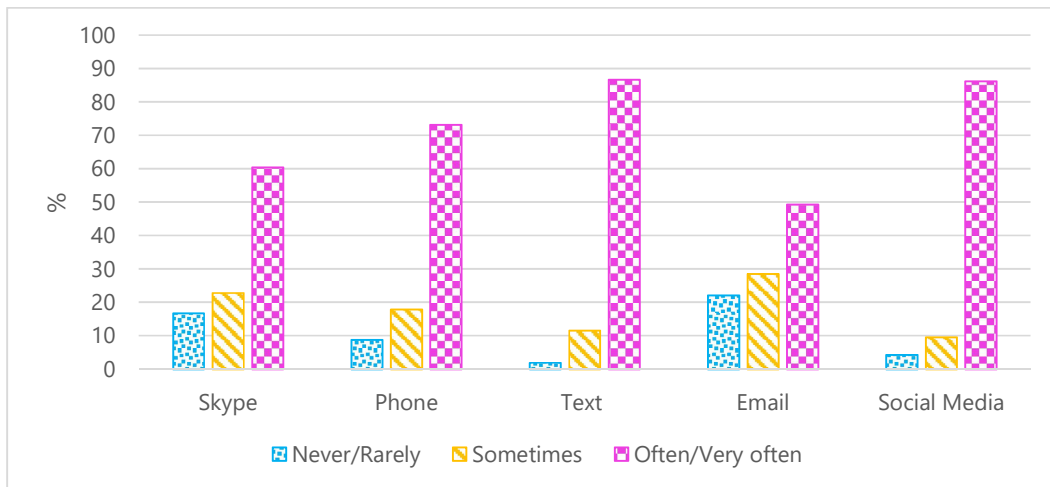
7.1 Keeping in touch with personal networks, family and care-giving

While migrants were once seen as 'doubly absent' and fully belonging in neither home nor host country, neither here nor there (Smith and Guarnizo 1998), the increasing sophistication, availability and use of new communication technologies (de Block and Buckingham 2010) coupled with their declining cost has changed the status of many migrants from relatively absent to distantly co-present (Baldassar et al. 2016). This section looks at the use of the various methods of communication including Skype™, phone, text, email and social media by respondents to determine how new communication technology fosters or enables transnational practice. As it is concerned with personal relationships rather than an emigrant's connection with the Irish state, qualitative evidence is to the fore.

Figure 7.1 shows that texting (including applications such as WhatsApp™) and social media top the list for ways of keeping in touch with friends and family in Ireland for those still in Australia. Social media invariably meant Facebook™. Around 73 per cent of respondents used the phone and 60 per cent used Skype™ often or very often, while half of them used email on a regular basis.

³¹ Owning a home in Ireland here describes a second purchase home, a holiday house, not the family home which could not be sold due to the recession as was the case for the majority of respondents who still have a home in Ireland. However, emigrants who retained the family home were liable for a tax called the Non-Principal Private Residence Charge (NPPR) of €200 per year between 2009 and 2013. Anyone who did not make payment in full by 31 August 2014, or agree settlement terms by that deadline, incurred additional penalties. Those liable for the full period, owed a total of €7,230 taxed on the property as if it were a second home Citizens Information. (2014). "Non-Principal Private Residence Charge (NPPR)." Retrieved 7 May, 2017, from http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/owning_a_home/home_owners/new_local_authority_charges_on_residential_property.html.

Figure 7.1: Regularity of use of various communication methods by respondents*



*Multiple responses

Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

The evolution of personal communication evident in the use of video-calling applications, particularly free services such as Skype™ and FaceTime™ void O’Connor’s (2005a, p.34) argument ‘that while telecommunications facilitate regular contact, the mainly auditory style of this interaction lacks the intimacy and dynamics of face-to-face interaction’. Skype™ was seen as important in facilitating intergenerational contact.

For a former backpacker who is now an Australian citizen and who has no children of his own, his role as an uncle was important:

I keep in touch with them using Skype and WhatsApp – that’s brilliant like. Everyone has a smartphone these days and to keep in touch, they get on the Skype or the video call. I’ve got three young nephews so I can jump on and say hello to them (Respondent IA936).

Likewise, a male partner migrant who now has four Australian-born children aged between three and ten years old, said that the children know their extended family despite never having been to Ireland, because of Skype™: *they are on Skype all the time... They chat to my dad and brother and his kids (Respondent IA283)*. Another demonstrated the value of the video call for transnational grandchildren who talk with their grandparents every day on FaceTime™:

Mum talks to [daughter1] and [daughter2] every morning over breakfast and then when the clocks change they’ll talk to them when they’re in the bath. It’s lovely because last year when we went home with [daughter1] there was no shyness or awkwardness (Respondent IA1048).

A 457 migrant who migrated to Queensland in 2011 relayed how technology had helped during a family bereavement. When her father-in-law passed away in Ireland, they could not afford for the whole family to go back but,

The funeral home had a webcam and they did one part of the service there and we sat up and connected the laptop to the TV and we were part of the funeral. It was like we were there. It was a comfort (Respondent IA762).

Yet another who immigrated in 1995 had the opposite experience when 'attending' a family christening through a church webcam. Despite the occasion being a happy one, it affected her deeply and she described it as '*the most bizarre experience*', and herself as '*hysterical*':

I screamed and I cried. I actually didn't know that was inside of me, that grief. But that tapped into it I tell you, I'd never do it again. I'm even getting choked up thinking about it (Respondent IA448).

Similarly, video call contact caused a young female backpacker emotional difficulty when talking to her parents. She explained the deeper level of engagement that the video call produced for her because she could see her mother:

On the phone it's just a chat but when you can see the person you're noticing everything – oh she looks tired, she looks different. Why does she look different? Is everything ok? It just sets off another wheel in your brain, a kind of panic whereas on the phone you just take them at their word when they say everything is fine (Respondent IA371).

And another who immigrated in 2002 reported the differences she had experienced in the past decade due to technology:

I remember when I came here first ten years ago Skype didn't exist. I was here for a year before I went home and I remember seeing my mum and dad at the airport and thinking "Oh my god they've aged!" but when you see them every two weeks on Skype and then meet them in the flesh it's not such a shock (Respondent IA286).

These excerpts show how important video calling is for the maintenance of strong, close family relationships. While Skype™ and FaceTime™ were generally reserved for family and close friends, wider community contact was facilitated by social media applications such as Facebook™. A female 457 migrant who arrived in 2012, noted that her use of Facebook™ had changed: *my mum wasn't my friend on Facebook or my aunts – it was purely my circle of friends but since I've moved away I've added a lot more people like that on (Respondent IA999).*

Longer-emigrated respondents reported keeping in touch with their local community and reuniting with old friends through Facebook™. One female migrant who has been in Australia for 30 years noted that

half her Facebook™ friends were 'people from home' (Respondent IA346). Another who immigrated in 1995 said,

I often think that if I'd had Facebook 20 years ago I might have settled better! ...I know it's made a big difference. I definitely don't feel as far away... I love Facebook because it keeps me in touch and it keeps everyone in touch with me (Respondent IA448).

As well as the method of communication with Ireland, there were points made about frequency. One migrant reported speaking to her mother at least three times a week and said she often participated in a group conversation on WhatsApp™ with her mum and her sisters, one of whom also lives outside Ireland. Despite having only been back to Ireland twice since 2010 she reported not feeling that she was missing out on anything. She said she could not get home for her best friend's wedding, *I couldn't really go but you can't worry about everything because if you did you'd never get on with life* (Respondent IA996) indicating the perennial dilemma of the emigrant. This was a point made by a female 457 migrant also. She spoke of the difficulty a migrant might experience in settling if they *...think they're missing out on a lot of things at home... you have to either accept that or you don't... We do have to live two lives in that sense...otherwise we would be miserable* (Respondent IA999).

A former WHM who has been in Australia since 2008, admitted that she did not call her mother when she was going through one of *her bouts of depression*, which she described as *completely normal, depression about being away from home and that just doesn't seem to go away, no matter how long you're here, or how well set up you are*. She said,

when I'm in good form I probably talk to them every second day, but if I'm in bad form after a week my mam will ask 'why aren't you contacting me?!' and I'm like 'ah yeah sorry' but I don't want to be ringing when I'm feeling rubbish or whatever. It's better for them – you want them to see and hear your best side (Respondent IA755).

Promoting a positive image of life in Australia through social media is a recognised phenomenon amongst migrants and their audiences. A former backpacker, resident since 2008, admitted that life was *good but I'm not going to be putting up sad photos on Facebook* (Respondent IA1011), thereby indicating how the medium was used by many migrants. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) reported that individuals, by the information they allow others to access about them, can control to a certain extent the impressions others form of them while Zhao et al. (2008, p.1827) noted that Facebook™ users 'attempted to project a self that is socially desirable' and were not in the habit of projecting an image that was 'pessimistic'. However, social media presence has also enabled the continuation of communication with home even in negative circumstances whereas in previous years, migrants who found themselves no better, or indeed significantly worse off post-migration, may have lessened or ceased contact with home. Leavey et al (2004, p.777) sum this up succinctly when they say 'Blighted expectations and a consequent sense of shame prevent return and dilute contact with home'.

Where distance previously disbarred a migrant from assisting with family matters, new, cheaper telecommunication and online capabilities have enabled adult migrant children to assist parents in Ireland with a range of issues. One female respondent had two brothers in Ireland and another abroad but she arranged care for her dementia-stricken father in Ireland from her home in South Australia: *I phone the carers, the Irish health service for my mother trying to sort things out. So I'm up at 11pm here and I ring them* (Respondent IA289). Not just involved in extraordinary events such as critical care, she helped her parents in more practical, everyday ways due to the technology at her disposal: *The technology is there for me to use the Irish businesses so why would I not? I can do mum's grocery shopping in Supervalu and have it delivered.* This could be seen as a gendered issue but a male participant was also able to help his mother from afar: *Sometimes I sort things out for mum over the internet – like I changed her home phone plan for her. And she'd say 'why couldn't your brother do that for me, like he's here?'* (Respondent IA283).

Ryan (2004, p.367) notes that rather than being broken, families are sometimes altered and rearranged by migration. She notes too that family networks are apt to change over the life course as migrants come to focus more strongly on their new home place. Place loyalty is transplanted due to the death of parents at home and the settling of a migrant 'in their new environment [where] loyalty shifts to siblings, children and grandchildren 'over here''. Castles and Miller (2003) have argued that a truly transnational family is very difficult to sustain over time and over the passing of generations. Migrants spoke of their efforts to maintain Irish culture in their families and some mentioned passing Irish cultural values on to grandchildren but there is no data on which to gauge the success of such efforts. Many respondents, in giving their children Irish names and encouraging interest in Irish activities, do so in the hope of staving off the cultural dilution that comes with living away from Ireland. Many respondents felt Irish connections were important in maintaining their sense of self. Leavey et al (2007, p.240) reinforce this point in their research into Irish immigrants in Britain believing that 'the maintenance of an Irish cultural identity was fundamental to most participants' sense of self and many people retained strong emotional ties to Ireland despite being comfortably re-settled'.

In conclusion, the newer methods of keeping in touch and communicating with home, namely video calling and social media, have expanded the avenues of communication rather than replacing more traditional mediums of interaction. As well as increasing the frequency and mode of communication, more recent developments such as social media have broadened the reach of communication by allowing migrants to re-establish contact with the wider home community and reunite with old friends thereby widening their social network. Webcams have provided a real-time link to important family events on the other side of the world and as qualitative data have shown, this has been relayed as both a negative and a positive experience – providing comfort on one hand and magnifying distance and separation on the other. While migrants put considerable time into maintaining both societal and personal contact, it stands to reason that Australian-born children, Irish-Australians, will likely be able to maintain a personal connection to extended family through visits and frequent communication, but a link to wider Irish

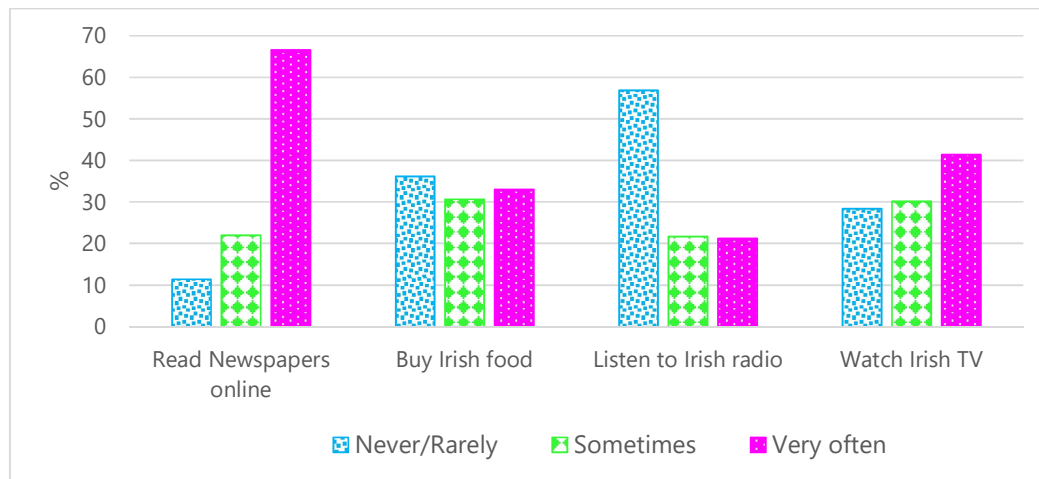
society may be difficult to initiate given the natural inclination to focus on one’s home society, in terms of political and social awareness. Australia is bound to take priority in this scenario.

7.2 Keeping in touch with society

Irish immigrants in Australia maintained links with Ireland in several ways. The most popular form of Ireland-produced media among respondents in Australia was online newspapers (Figure 7.2). More than 60 per cent of respondents read Irish newspapers online ‘very often’ and 40 per cent regularly watch Irish television programmes. Around 20 per cent listened to Irish radio ‘very often’. Regular consumption of Irish food was around 30 per cent. Northern Ireland-born respondents showed less inclination to remain engaged with home media such as online news sources and radio while in Australia than the Republic of Ireland-born although their viewing of home television was similar. One reason for lower engagement with home news sources was given by a respondent from Northern Ireland, who, referring to the ongoing acerbic politics of the region, said ‘I followed the news for about a year and it never changed so I had to unfollow it because it was the same thing all the time and I just thought how could I go back to that?’ (Respondent IA845). However, another participant from the south experienced similar disillusionment:

I got jaded with the whole government thing and there was an unbelievable amount of whinging with the water tax but I have to admit that for the first two years I checked the papers every day... now its maybe once a week (Respondent IA874).

Figure 7.2: Respondents’ consumption of Irish food and media



*Multiple responses
 Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

Respondents who consumed home media did so for a variety of reasons but primary among these was a desire to keep up to date with local and national news events. This occurred through posts by Irish

interest Facebook™ pages that they followed and, for some, a daily ritual of reading an Irish newspaper online. One female respondent from County Kerry said she had *'the Irish Times app. Most mornings I give a quick flick to see what's going on'* (Respondent IA755) and a male from Dublin read the papers,

'Everyday – I read the independent, the Irish Times probably first off and the Journal next - just for the comments and people always giving off about Sinn Fein and Enda Kenny – I always keep up with current affairs at home' (Respondent IA1082).

In this way he received not just the reported news but the viewpoints of fellow Irish people at home and abroad.

For another respondent, cultural values was a reason to avoid Australian radio shows. She listened to Irish radio because commercial Australian radio was unappealing:

I listen to the Ray D'Arcy show and I really feel an affiliation to the craic, I relate to it and I don't like the radio shows here – they're filthy usually... I listen to so much Irish radio – it's so interesting. We were completely engaged in a topic the other night (Respondent IA289).

While keeping up to date with Ireland's current affairs was the main reason for consuming online home media, others noted the substance it provided to personal interactions with family and friends. One said *there's stuff I'd tell my mum and she'd say 'How do you know that? You got that on that bloody Facebook thingy didn't you?' and I'd say 'Yeah'* (Respondent IA283). A former backpacker who had been in Australia for 18 years reported a similar effect:

I read them all – the [Irish] Independent and there's a great section in the Irish Times, Generation Emigration and it's really good. I also listen to RTE – the podcasts are good – I listen to Marion Finucane and mum will tell me things and I'll say 'yeah I know I heard that on Marion this morning'. In the evening I listen to the Irish morning shows and you feel like you're not very far away (Respondent IA275).

This link to politics was important to many respondents. For some, rather than a conversation piece, it was about knowing what they might be returning to in terms of economy, political developments and society. One female participant made it clear that, in her opinion, leaving Ireland did not mean leaving behind her rights as a citizen, simply because she did not know when she would return:

I think if you have an Irish passport and citizenship you should have the right to vote. I have the Independent (Irish newspaper) app and I read that article about people wanting to vote and I read the comments underneath and yeah a lot of them are trolls but the comments were like "F them. They left the country. They shouldn't have the right to vote. They don't give a shit." 'Traitors', all this kind of stuff so obviously there are

people who feel differently but I would think, 'Hello? I could be at home next year like', I don't know! (Respondent IA755)

The sentiment of this statement was widespread amongst respondents and many deliberately maintained several types and levels of linkage to Ireland in case they should return. Such practice gives an indication of the indeterminate nature of the permanency of migration for some people.

Of the available media, Generation Emigration³² articles in the *Irish Times* were particularly popular because they featured stories about the successes, heartaches and lifestyles of Irish emigrants around the world. Both emigrants and those who remained in Ireland regularly commented in this forum and it helped to open up the public conversation both about emigration and between emigrants and the stay-behinds. The *Irish Times* and the *Irish Independent* were often cited as news sources and new technology in the form of RTE Player allowed emigrants to view popular Irish television programmes. Sports fans accessed Gaelic sports through a GAAGo subscription although it was thought expensive. The consumption of Irish media in Australia could be viewed as an alternative, although passive, form of participation in the ethnic community.

Lastly, a benefit of media consumption was the insight it gave to emigrants about how their home place had changed for the better. A male backpacker noted that the 'I Love Belfast' Facebook™ page and short videos such as '36 hours in Belfast' which he accessed through an Irish Times Facebook™ post gave him a new appreciation of his former home:

They upload these videos and pictures of Belfast and it's like "Wow I passed that every day going to work and never looked at it like that" - like the City Hall, all lit up for Valentine's Day in red lights, it looked really beautiful... the (Irish) Times did one as well called '36 hours of Belfast' and it did the old bars, the craic people were having, the restaurants, the food they were serving, all the art centres, all these different places - it really shows Belfast in a good light (Respondent IA855).

Other respondents noted the effect of videos promoted by Bord Fáilte or Tourism Ireland. A Dublin woman felt the tug on her heartstrings: *the Discover Ireland ads, oh god - you'd see that and be bawling your eyes out saying 'I love Ireland!'* (Respondent IA874). Undoubtedly it is family connections which prompt return visits by Ireland's emigrants rather than advertising campaigns, but Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) tourism, which is discussed later, is a profitable boost to the Irish economy.

While the sums of money they send back to Ireland are perhaps not as lucrative as remittances sent by migrants from developing countries, Irish migrants do participate economically in Irish life. Apart from sending mortgage repayments (approximately ten per cent) and paying the Non-Principal Private

³² In November 2016, 'Generation Emigration' was expanded and rebranded to 'Irish Times Abroad'.

Residence tax on their homes, many participants sent money home to family (especially to parents at Christmas time) in the form of gift vouchers or bought presents from online Irish stores such as www.gift.ie. Additionally, many female migrants availed of free delivery from their favourite Irish fashion department stores and purchased much of their wardrobe from Ireland. One of these outlined the manner in which many Irish emigrants contributed to the Irish economy while abroad:

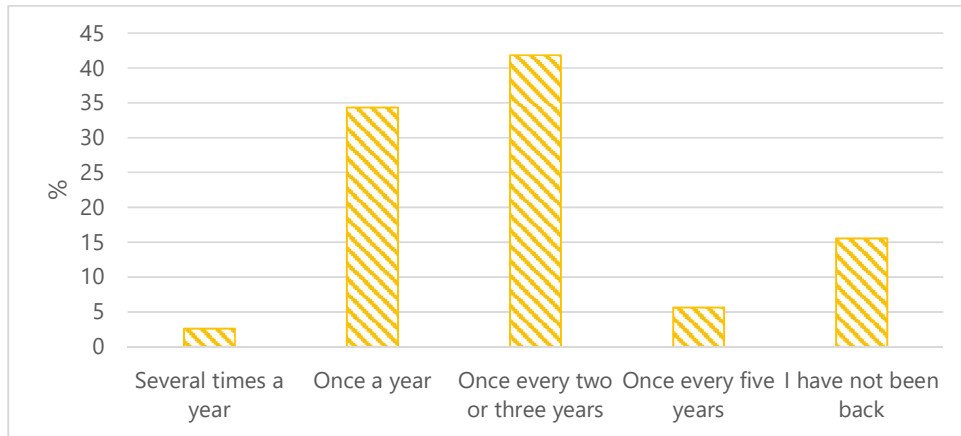
Most people still send their money back home so it's not as if they haven't been contributing to the economy because anyone I know sends back money to their parents, and shopping – like I still buy every single stitch online. So people are still contributing and when it comes to Christmas most people buy vouchers for people at home because it costs so much to post from here. So we're all contributing in some little way (Respondent IA1011).

Occasionally gifts travelled in the opposite direction and a number of respondents reported receiving deliveries of Irish food. The Northern Ireland-born were generally less inclined to seek out particular Irish foodstuffs than their southern counterparts. Two of Australia's largest supermarkets, Coles and Woolworths, recently began to stock some Irish food items and the www.Tastelreland.com website was widely used by respondents. This female from Dublin was one of several respondents who reported receiving 'care packages' from someone in Ireland:

I have a stock of Bisto gravy, oxtail soup and MacDonald's curry sauce which my husband brought back... Once a year my brother sends what he calls his 'care package' – it's filled with chocolate, and the gravy, and stuff for the kids (Respondent IA762).

Other respondents reported stocking up on their favourite Irish items on trips home. Return visits were taken quite often. While a small number of immigrants managed to return several times a year, between 35 and 40 per cent went back once a year and 31 to 42 per cent visited every two to three years (Figure 7.3).

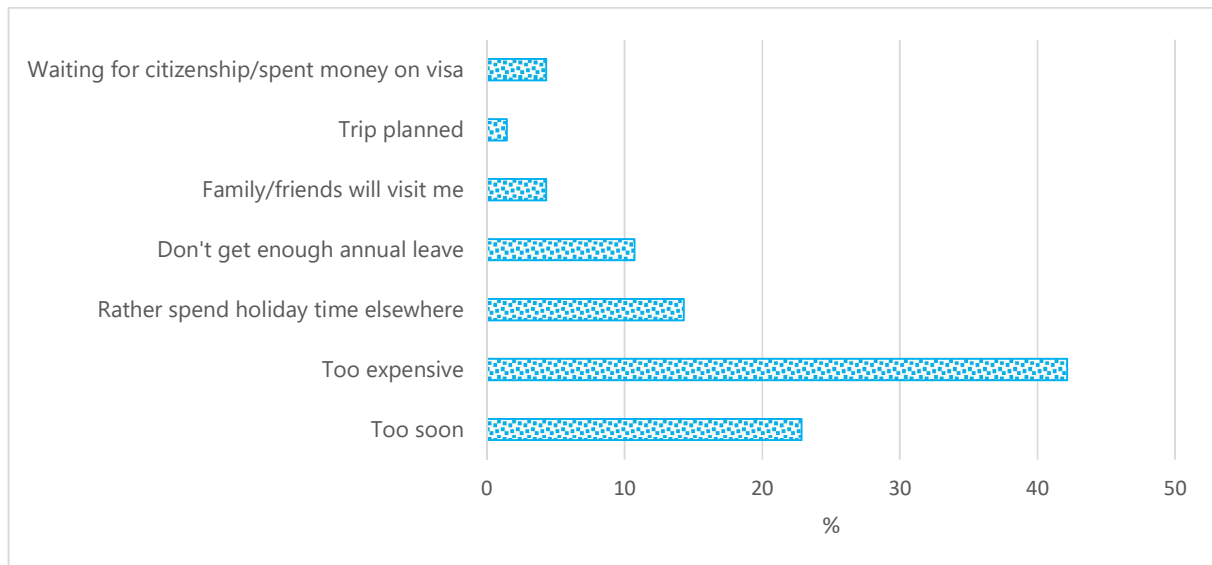
Figure 7.3: Frequency of respondents' return visits to Ireland while in Australia



Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) tourism is noted as one of the economic benefits of a diaspora. Respondents mentioned the prohibitive cost of the journey back to Ireland (42.1 per cent) and 22.9 per cent reasoned that they had not been in Australia long enough to warrant a trip back to Ireland. Around five per cent had spent their money on visas or were awaiting Australian citizenship and could not afford to travel. VFR tourism is a bi-directional process which often sees relatives visit the migrant's host country but only about five per cent of respondents said having friends and family visit them in Australia was a reason they had not travelled back to Ireland (Figure 7.4). Around a quarter of respondents said they did not get enough annual leave to make the journey worthwhile or would rather holiday elsewhere. One trip used the standard annual leave allowance of 20 days which meant there was no leave to visit other places and no opportunity to take a break at other times of the year. Now a permanent resident, this participant had gone back to Ireland once a year since she emigrated in 2009 but said *...we use all our leave to go and that's annoying so we will cut down on that because you want to see other places and it takes up all your leave* (Respondent IA874).

Figure 7.4: Reasons given by respondents for not visiting Ireland*



*Multiple responses

Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016

These links to Ireland through return visits, remitting money in the form of mortgage payments, taxes, cash and gifts and a relatively good knowledge of everyday national affairs are examples of transnational practice amongst Irish migrants in Australia. For many emigrants the strongest transnational link they can possess to their nation as a political entity lies in their ability to vote in referenda or elections while abroad. Currently this is not available to Irish emigrants despite government promises over a number of years to consider the issue and take action on it. The issue of expatriate voting was highlighted during the 2015 Marriage Equality referendum in Ireland when the hashtag #HomeToVote became a politically charged social movement in the form of www.gettheboat2vote.com.³³ Using social media, the founders encouraged Irish citizens living abroad to return to Ireland in order to vote in the referendum. It was a highly effective campaign which brought to the fore the link between citizenship, political participation and identity of the Irish abroad. Voters in the UK and the USA returned and a few travelled from Australia to participate. The issue remains a potent one with a referendum on the right to access abortion in Ireland likely in 2018. In 2017, the #Repealthe8th movement (referring to the Eighth amendment to the Irish Constitution which introduced a constitutional ban on abortion in 1983) looked set to harness the same popular appeal as the 2015 referendum (Kavanagh 2017). The debate will no doubt continue to revolve around the intricacies of the emigrant vote proposal.

Respondents were largely in favour of some form of expatriate voting with less than 18 per cent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the proposal. Just under 20 per cent had no opinion on the

³³ Activists played on the Irish Government's 2014 advertising campaign #HomeToWork which sought to entice emigrants home to aid Ireland's economic recovery.

matter while 22 per cent agreed and 42 per cent strongly agreed with the idea. One migrant, resident in Australia since 2011, reported a reluctance to participate in elections but a desire to be involved in aspects of voting which could change the social fabric of Ireland:

I don't think I should have the right to vote in General Elections. I don't think I should have a say in who should be in government when I'm not there...I would like to think I'd have a say in referenda, yeah, I'd like to have that input (Respondent IA762).

When asked whether pursuing a right to vote for emigrants was a plausible thing to do, another's answer demonstrated the position of many migrants who do not yet hold Australian citizenship:

I really think that it's shocking that we don't have that already. If you take my situation for example: I'm living in and contributing to a society that I can't even vote in and maybe one day I'll go back to Ireland but I can't contribute to the policy decisions that are made now about that. I'm in voting purgatory. I can't vote in anything that affects me either directly or indirectly! (Respondent IA874).

Despite also being an Australian citizen, this participant was in favour of emigrants being able to vote while abroad: *I want to have a vote. Of course. I think we should – again I'm a citizen, I was born there and I paid tax for long enough (Respondent IA1082).*

Another took up the cause of those who had left during Ireland's recession:

...they should have a right to have a say no matter where they are... the people that have had to leave – why should they not have the right to vote in their own country since they probably fully intend on coming back to it? (Respondent IA419).

One female respondent felt that as emigrants with very tangible links to Ireland in the form of property, she and her partner should have some input into policy decisions through a vote...*we both have a house each in Ireland in negative equity so decisions being made are still directly affecting us (Respondent IA1048)* while another believed there was a very valid reason the emigrant vote proposal had been languishing in Ireland: *I'd say they'd be afraid to give the vote to the people who left because the people who left are not going to vote for them [current government] (Respondent IA550).*

Questions remain as to what voting rights will be extended to the Irish abroad – Will they have a say in presidential elections, general elections and/or referenda? Is increased representation required? Should a time limit be imposed? Will the vote be available to all Irish citizens? – and to how the franchise will be extended in a practical sense? Conditions such as five years abroad or permanent residency or citizenship of another country were floated as possible limitations on an emigrant's right to vote in Ireland by the respondents. Irish citizenship and identity was valued highly by the study's participants. Expatriate voting is a tangible element in the abstract notion of citizenship and subsequently, transnational belonging.

7.3 Identity and Citizenship

Given the accepted strength of connections between Irish immigrants and their families, their local communities, and perhaps to a lesser extent, the Irish nation, why did respondents seek Australian citizenship?

Australia's Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948 came into force in 1949 and was amended many times, notably in 1973, 1984, 1986 and 2002. The Australian Citizenship Act 2007 replaced the 1948 Act. Since April 2002, there have been no restrictions (under Australian law) on Australians holding the citizenship of another country. This proved important for respondents to the survey and a number voluntarily stated that they would not rescind Irish citizenship to gain Australian citizenship. Foner (2001, p.31) makes the point that 'dual citizenship may actually encourage immigrants to naturalize' because it averts the symbolic crisis of renouncing their original identity. This appears to be true for the Irish in this study. On the Irish side, when Declan Kelly, the Ambassador of Ireland, was asked about the concept of dual citizenship during the Skilled Migration inquiry of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration in October 2003, he stated that 'We felt we always had to do that [allow dual citizenship] because the government took the view that people had to leave Ireland for economic reasons for most of our history, so we could not deny people the right to return and the right to their citizenship' (2003, p.M169).

In 2015-2016, 114,109 people became Australian citizens by conferral from over 200 countries. Of these, 2,906 people or 2.5 per cent of the total were from Ireland and just over 200 are calculated to have been from Northern Ireland (DIBP 2015d). The proportion of Irish conferrals has steadily increased since 2012-13 when it was 1.9 per cent (1,709 conferrals) of the total (DIBP 2013a, 2014c, 2015f). The great majority of Irish permanent residents progressed to citizenship simply to secure re-entry rights in case of departure. A recent post on an Irish Facebook™ page highlighted that it was not prudent to tell the Department that this was why an application was being made. That a prospective citizen should think an application should not be refused on the basis that the applicant declared an intention to leave Australia immediately indicates the value some applicants attach to it. A former backpacker from Limerick made clear the practical reasons she had for applying to be an Australian citizen:

I think it's kind of a sensible, safety net as well if things don't work out because you have to keep renewing the residency. And for the grandchildren as well so they won't have to go through what we went through (Respondent IA1011)

although she was under the misapprehension that a grandchild could claim Australian nationality by descent (DIBP 2017b).

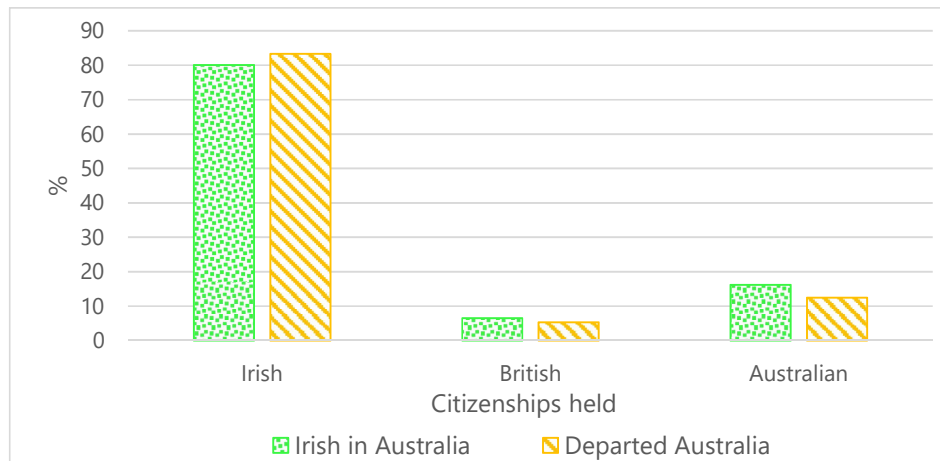
Proposed changes, introduced by the Liberal Turnbull Government in April 2017, could mean immigrants need four years of permanent residency before they can apply for citizenship rather than one year.

Another aspect of the citizenship question is the changing nature of Irish identity. The influx of other nationalities, particularly from 2004 onwards, has changed the ethnic composition of Irish society, and in the process 'Irish' has been redefined. Its ethnic diversity is a very recent evolution and although the diaspora initiative is also new, the idea of Ireland as a prime example of Wimmer and Glick-Schiller's (2003) nation container is a long-standing one which will be difficult to dispel in the popular imagination (should one want to do so). Many immigrants have established themselves in Ireland, gained Irish citizenship and had children born there. For the first time in the life of the Irish State, there are a considerable number of Irish people with dual identities and loyalties to other, origin countries. The number of immigrants with Irish nationality increased from 12,100 to 21,100 in the year to April 2016, an increase of more than 74 per cent (CSO 2016). So within Ireland itself, there is a growing normalcy around the concept of dual nationality.

In the mid-1980s only 26 countries permitted dual citizenship. In 2001 this had increased to 53 but by 2006, 84 nations recognised the right of their citizens to hold citizenship elsewhere (Service 2001, Gamlen et al. 2013, Leblang 2017). This reinforces the effects of globalisation and the idea of a 'borderless world' or post-nationalism, but personal connections undermine this to some degree. While many immigrants fully immerse themselves in Australian society, participate in the economic, social and political life of their adopted home and take citizenship as a token of their loyalty to Australia, the Irish in this study largely saw Australian citizenship as a surety. While the majority viewed an Australian passport as a sensible measure or a convenient option against having to remember to renew their Resident's Return Visa, a few did see it as a pledge to their Australian life, and an option to vote and have a say on who governed them and by what policies.

Klapdor et al. (2009) recognise that in practical terms there is little incentive for immigrants to become Australian citizens since they can access welfare support, Medicare and public education as permanent residents. Reilly and Torresi (2016, p.401) have recently forwarded a case for granting the usually exclusive political rights of citizens to permanent residents, arguing that extending the Australian federal franchise to them could encourage integration and inclusivity in the Australian political community. In support of this they cite the changing nature of citizenship which is no longer simply or strictly defined by place of birth or descent, but by 'the real connections between persons and states' adding that 'residence has necessarily grown in importance for the attribution of rights traditionally associated with full and formal political membership'. However, currently, citizenship affords security from deportation, access to government employment and the right to have an Australian passport. Its symbolic value is in identifying a new Australian as a member of the national community. Figure 7.5 shows that Australian citizenship was quite low for respondents in both cohorts. Just 12.5 per cent of those who left Australia hold its citizenship while 16.2 per cent of those still in the country are citizens. However, given that almost 60 per cent of the Irish in Australia respondents arrived since 2010 it is likely that more of them will access Australian citizenship when they become eligible.

Figure 7.5: Citizenship of respondents by dataset*



*Multiple responses

Source: Irish in Australia survey, 2016 (n=629) and Departed Australia survey, 2016 (n=168)

The intricacy of identity is demonstrated by the fact that many respondents held Irish, British and Australian citizenship. The holding of multiple citizenships suggests that they are held for the benefits they offer rather than any strong feeling of loyalty to the nation. For the majority of respondents their Irish citizenship was primary in terms of identity. Identity can determine how one interacts with the home country at the broader level of society and how engaged one might be in diasporic activity initiated by the origin country government. It also explains the involvement of Irish immigrants in Australia in specifically Irish cultural and sporting activities as discussed earlier. For respondents who are parents, the emphasis was on maintaining an Irish identity and cultural connection for children in the face of their Australianness, while simultaneously recognising that they may one day face the prospect of their child travelling to Ireland to live because of the ability to foster and maintain closer, stronger family connections. One female respondent placed great importance on encouraging links between her three children and the extended family in Ireland but ruminated on the possible result of this in years to come:

Sometimes Australian kids, Australian-Irish kids, do go back to live there for a year with the grannies and aunties...I know so many who have done that and I think "Oh my god! All this heartache and there's a very good chance one of my kids will go back and break my heart (Respondent IA550).

Another envisaged a similar scenario but was more accepting of it:

I'm getting them the Irish passport while they're young so they just keep renewing it – no bother looking for documents and all that. And yeah, if they finish uni and want to

do that gap year – I've got family in Ireland so they can just go and get their PRSI number and off they go (Respondent IA359).³⁴

Conversely, returning parents admitted that their children may one day have to emigrate from Ireland as they did, thereby acknowledging the cyclical nature of Irish migration and the dominance of the emigration culture. In this instance, the Australian passport was seen as providing options for the future. A female former backpacker returned to Ireland with her infant daughter but stayed in Western Australia long enough to get citizenship. When asked about her reason for applying for Australian citizenship she replied, *I only did it for her. I wouldn't have done it otherwise. I'd hate to think she'd go out when she was 21 and I couldn't but went on to say,*

I feel I am partly Australian. I would listen if they were having a referendum or something or if elections were happening. I will get patriotic on Australia Day or if Australia are playing in the World Cup which is weird like because I'm not actually Australian but I tell people I am (Respondent DA403).

A former backpacker from Kerry who arrived in Australia in 2008 referenced the inability to say for certain whether she would stay in Australia or not, saying, *I can go away and come back when I want or my kids can get Australian citizenship (Respondent IA755).* Another admitted her reason for getting citizenship was for peace of mind: *I don't honestly think I feel Australian but it's just after all my visa anxiety I think I need it for security (Respondent IA874).*

A number of respondents stated that they took Australian citizenship because their children (and sometimes, spouse) were Australian and that it was, therefore, important that they be seen to be part of the Australian nation too. This was almost always followed by a discussion on the dual nationality of the children and the importance of also holding an Irish and/or British passport so that children could have work and residency rights in Ireland and mainland Britain should they choose to make use of them when they were older. Fewer people responded that holding Australian citizenship was important to them in terms of the political rights conferred. The right to vote in Australian federal and state elections was described as 'undemocratic' since voting is compulsory for every eligible Australian citizen. A 40 year old female who immigrated in 2000 stated:

I said to [husband] I would get citizenship when Australia becomes a democracy and he looked at me and said 'but it is!' and I said 'No it's not. You are made vote' I found that difficult in the beginning, that you have to vote (Respondent IA876).

This comment is better understood in the context of Ireland which saw a turnout of 70 per cent in the 2011 General Election and where participation is lowest amongst 18 to 24 year olds (CSO 2011b). The

³⁴ Most employers and employees (over 16 years of age and under 66) pay social insurance (PRSI) contributions into the national Social Insurance Fund.

right to participate politically by voting in Australia may not be an incentive for citizenship for Irish immigrants, at least not more so than the passport.

When asked why she took Australian citizenship one respondent said,

...the rules change so often so I think you're better off going the whole way. I mean, what's the point of being a resident? If you leave the country and come back again there's more forms to fill out and there's more than likely going to be another cost so I thought to hell with worrying about that – it's so much easier and I'm always going to be a citizen no matter how many times I leave and come back (Respondent IA996).

Her point is validated by the proposed changes to Australian citizenship likely to occur soon.

Equating seeking Australian citizenship with loyalty to the Australian nation is likely erroneous according to Anderson (1994, p.323) who argues that passport and citizenship are 'counterfeit in the sense that they are less and less attestations of citizenship, let alone of loyalty to a protective nation-state, than claims to participation in labor.' O'Connor (2005a, p.38) stated that 'citizenship uptake is driven by pragmatic considerations and is, therefore, not to be interpreted as an expression of belonging'.

Coupled with the lack of strong commitment to Australia and the fact that no respondents would rescind their Irish citizenship to hold Australian citizenship, the results show a decisive trend towards convenience and re-entry security among this cohort. Some respondents held multiple citizenships but it should be noted that none of the nation-states involved make demands on expatriate members with regards to taxation or military service for example (Bloemraad 2004). Instead, these multiple citizens can avail of diplomatic representation from more than one source and travel more easily to more destinations as EU passport holders. Holding multiple citizenships offers multiple benefits while not demanding much in return.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated a propensity on behalf of Irish immigrants in Australia to maintain complex and close relationships with Ireland. Involvement in Irish life has several levels. Consumption of Irish media assists with societal knowledge, while the evolution of social media has enabled contact with local communities and long lost friends. This was recognised as almost effortless. Economic ties are present in the regular use of online Irish businesses as well as the payment of tax duties on property and the remittance of money to cover mortgage repayments, and as gifts. Deeper personal relations, especially between Irish-Australian children and grandparents in Ireland have been facilitated by the low cost and wide availability of technology that allows video call. This development was seen to have both negative and positive consequences but overall, was welcomed as it reduced unfamiliarity and shyness on

the part of migrant children on return visits home. Close family and friend relationships were also shored up by fairly regular travel back to Ireland with most migrants visiting at least every two to three years. Between visits, many migrants had contact with family members several times a week. The consumption of Irish media allowed migrants to maintain a knowledge of the political and economic situation in Ireland and this, along with dual nationality, produced generally wide support for continued involvement in Ireland's political development in the form of an expatriate vote. Respondents could hold several citizenships and applying for that of Australia was largely a security measure to ensure right of residence in case of return to Ireland and to enable future children to enter Australia so that they did not have to negotiate the immigration system with its costly and complex visa structure.

Having uncovered the demographic statistics and employment and social experiences of the Irish migrants who remained in Australia and having explored the regularity and means of their communication with Ireland, the next chapter is dedicated to those who left Australia.

CHAPTER 8

THE IRISH WHO LEFT AUSTRALIA

8.1 Departing Australia

The Irish story has never been a simple one of one-way, one-time emigration and settlement. While not its primary focus, the return of emigrants and 'boomerang' migration has always been a feature of the trope of Irish emigration. Those who returned to Ireland and then re-emigrated to Australia exemplify the high level of mobility within migration stories, as well as the transnational belonging that migration can induce. Migrant satisfaction in the destination does not preclude return migration since family ties and homesickness can override the economic and lifestyle advantages of migration. Return migration may occur for a myriad of reasons and is not always an indicator of migration failure but of economic, social or emotional circumstances. This chapter examines the motives for return migration and considers the reasons given for departure by those who have returned to Ireland or migrated elsewhere as provided in the Departed Australia survey (n=251). Its aim was to identify the factors which draw migrants into onward or return migration journeys. Given that those who left had similar success in employment and social contexts and rated their quality of life in Australia as highly as those who remained in Australia, what exactly prompted their departure?

8.2 Reasons for leaving Australia

Table 8.1 shows that the most common reason for leaving Australia was 'Family' (35.9 per cent). This included both migrants who were missing family and friends and those who wanted current or future children to be near extended family. Many respondents also wanted their children to experience the same upbringing as they did and to be immersed in Irish culture. Homesickness caused 19 per cent of respondents to leave and no matter what other benefits they accrued from the Australian experience, Australia just was not 'Home'. Economic return or onward migration was a reason for 13.4 per cent of migrants who moved elsewhere or returned to Ireland for a job opportunity. Only 16.2 per cent of migrants left due to visa expiration or difficulty getting re-sponsored on a 457 visa. Just under four per cent of respondents returned to Ireland for educational purposes - they or their partner wanted to pursue a higher degree or they wanted their children to experience an Irish education. A small number (2.1 per cent) left Australia because they felt they did not fit in, and 3.5 per cent wanted to continue travelling. Six per cent went back to Ireland simply because it was 'time to go'.

Table 8.1: Respondents' reasons for leaving Australia ranked (n=142)

Reason	%
Family	35.9
Home/Homesick	19.0
Visa end/issue	16.2
Job	13.4
Time to go	6.3
Education	3.5
Travel	3.5
Did not like Australia	2.1
Total	100

Source: Departed Australia survey, 2016

It is important to note that elements concerned with living in Australia specifically – visas and not liking Australia – played a small part in the decision to leave, amounting to about 18.3 per cent of the total. The greatest driver – family – included the fact that parents were ageing, family members experienced illness, migrant parents needed childcare support and wanted kinship for their children, relationships had broken down in Australia or migrants missed their lifelong friends and social circle. Those who indicated their reason as 'Home/Homesick' comprised 7.1 per cent who said Australia just was not home, 6.3 per cent who were homesick and 5.6 per cent who said Australia was too far away. For some of these migrants, the death of friends and family members in Ireland, while they were in Australia made them acutely aware of the distance between the two places. For this reason, some migrants who were not prepared to return to Ireland chose to move to mainland Europe or the UK. London, which was cited as a better place for employment and wages than Ireland, also had the advantage of being relatively close to home.

As noted previously, not all departing Irish migrants returned to Ireland. Although 80 per cent did go to Ireland, others moved on to new host countries - between one and three per cent went to Canada, USA, other EU countries or Asia, four per cent went to New Zealand and almost eight per cent went to the UK. For those who moved elsewhere, their motivations were a mixture of new opportunities in employment and a desire to live outside Ireland but not to be quite so far away.

Can we link departure from Australia and return to Ireland to the reason for migration and the initial settlement intention? For those who came to Australia on a WHM visa or even the longer-term 457, was not return always part of the plan? It has been shown that settlement intentions changed soon after arrival for many travellers. The next section considers those who left Australia and explores their visa use and settlement intentions.

8.3 Reasons for migration from Ireland to Australia

From 1980 to 2015, the pursuit of travel and cultural experiences were the main reasons for migration and accounted for more than half the responses of those who left Australia as shown in Table 8.2. When data for the period 2000-2015 was analysed separately, travel and culture remain primary reasons for travel but it is only when data are disaggregated into 2000-2009 and 2010-2015 time periods that employment and career related migration becomes clearer as the number who travelled for this reason increased from 32.9 per cent in the earlier period to 42.3 per cent in the later one.

Table 8.2: Respondents' reasons for migration, 1980-2015 (n=187)

Reason	Frequency	%
Employment/Career	70	30.8
Travel/Culture	97	56.3
Family	4	1.1
Escape Ireland's politics/economy	16	11.7
Total	187	100.0

Source: Departed Australia survey, 2016

Travelling or experiencing another culture (47.1 per cent) was the most cited reason for emigration in the 2010-2015 period. Family migration, small in this cohort, decreased further while escape from Ireland's political and economic situation increased from 5.7 per cent to 9.6 per cent. The continuing importance of travel and culture-related immigration in this cohort suggests a significant difference in motivation between these respondents and those who stayed in Australia. Gaining employment was the main reason for migration for almost 55 per cent of Irish in Australia respondents, while travel, as a driver of migration, had halved to just 17 per cent in the second time period. It is likely that when the initially sought-after experiences of cultural exposure and travel had been met there was less reason to stay in Australia.

Figure 8.1: Respondents' reasons for initial migration to Australia, 2000-2009 and 2010-2015
(n=174)



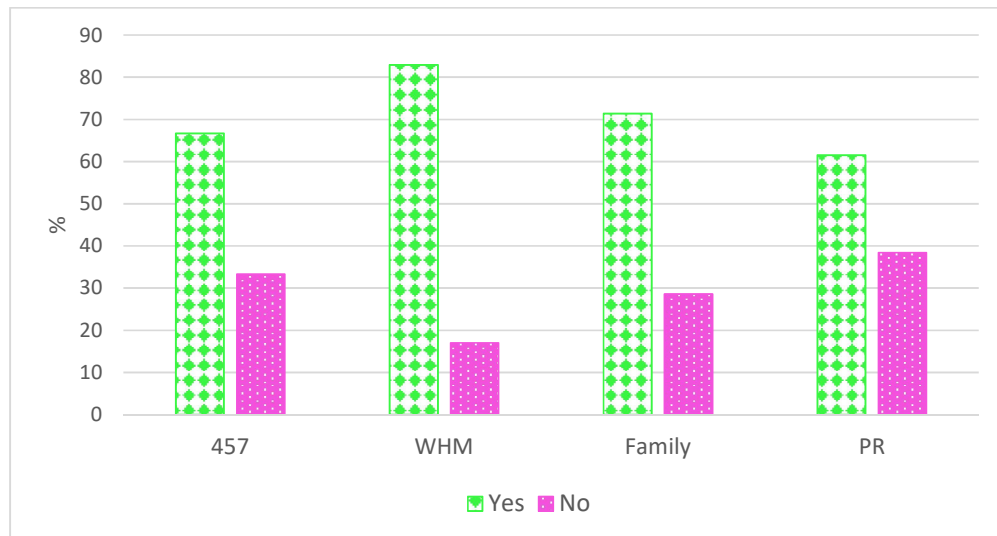
Source: *Departed Australia survey, 2016*

8.4 Visa use and intention

The bulk of respondents who left had entered Australia on a temporary or visitor visa. Part of the hypothesis of this study is matching visa use with settlement intentions. Since these respondents indicated that travel and experiencing a new culture were prime reasons for immigrating to Australia it was expected that they would leave when this aim had been fulfilled. Likewise, for those for whom 'escape' was a migration reason, it is natural that they should consider returning to Ireland when the economic situation in Ireland improved.

Evidence that their departure could be predicted lies in their declared intentions at the point of emigration. The subjectivity of asking respondents to recall their settlement intention has already been pointed out and data show that 28 per cent of Family visa holders and 38 per cent of Permanent Residents were not committed to settling permanently in Australia when they immigrated (Figure 8.2). Working Holiday Makers largely intended their migration to be temporary (83 per cent) as did 67 per cent of 457 visa holders, although the fact that 33 per cent of 457s and 17 per cent of backpackers did not intend to leave Australia at the end of their visa suggests they knew something of the pathways to permanent residency that existed.

Figure 8.2: Respondents' intention that initial migration was temporary by visa category (n=174)



Source: *Departed Australia survey, 2016*

That a greater percentage of those who left Australia had intended the move there to be temporary is reflected in the qualitative data which show that often the migration would not have occurred had it not been for Ireland's economic recession.

A female chartered accountant who had returned to Ireland by the time of the survey, indicated that her initial move was intended to be temporary but added that she *couldn't return after one year as the GFC had happened and job opportunities [in Ireland] were scarce*. A 37 year old teacher who emigrated on a 457 visa with her husband, a civil engineer, who took up a FIFO contract in Western Australia, explained,

I did not want to emigrate. I had a job that I loved. We emigrated so that my husband could get work and we could keep the house we had built. It was totally as a result of the economic situation (Respondent DA235).

They stayed in Perth for just one year of the four years allowed on the 457 visa, the respondent citing the separation caused by the FIFO lifestyle as too much to bear,

In terms of being the wife of a FIFO worker, I found that experience incredibly isolating and lonely. There would have been a greater chance of settling in Perth had I not been separated from my husband for 20 days every month.

Stark's (1991) theory of family migration in the face of economic hardship resounds in migration stories such as this. For some migrants, the natural progression of family life hindered a return to Ireland even when the intention had been to stay only for a short time. A 35 year old female

respondent from County Mayo who came to Australia in 2010 with her Australian husband stated that her migration *was only supposed to be for a year or two but we cannot afford the move home now as the family has increased*. Having children and the cost of a family returning to Ireland, whether permanently or on holiday, was cited as a hindrance to return or re-emigration by several respondents.

8.5 Characteristics of Departed Australia respondents

The demographic profile of respondents who left Australia, shown in Table 8.3, indicates that almost two-thirds of the respondents were female and more than 85 per cent came from the Republic of Ireland. The bulk of these migrants were aged between 20 and 29 years of age when they emigrated. Around half of the males were educated to postgraduate degree and 18 per cent had a postgraduate qualification, while just over ten per cent were trade qualified. More than 40 per cent of females were educated to bachelor degree level or above, compared with 57 per cent of female respondents who stayed in Australia. Of most interest, almost half came on a 457 visa with just over 40 per cent immigrating as a backpacker. A slightly higher percentage of males entered as 457 visa-holders and consequently slightly fewer came on the WHM. Only 1.9 per cent of this cohort used a family visa compared with almost eight per cent of those who stayed. Around 70 per cent of these respondents had a spouse or partner and 32 per cent had children at the time of the survey. Almost 27 per cent had arrived in Australia with a partner or spouse and 36 per cent were accompanied by a spouse/partner and children. Partners were largely born in Ireland or Northern Ireland (77.5 per cent), while around ten per cent were Australian and 12 per cent from elsewhere. More of this group then, were partnered with Irish people than those who stayed in Australia where 69 per cent of partners were Irish, 24 per cent were Australian and around seven per cent were from elsewhere.

Table 8.3: Demographic statistics of respondents who left Australia (%)

	Male	Female	Total
	38.1	61.9	100
Age at time of emigration			
<20	3.6	2.2	2.9
20-24	30.9	45.6	38.2
25-29	45.5	36.7	41.1
30-34	16.4	7.8	12.1
34-39	1.8	5.6	3.7
40+	1.8	2.2	2.0
Place of Birth			
Republic of Ireland	92.5	77.8	85.1
Northern Ireland	7.5	13.3	10.4
UK	0.0	8.9	4.4
Education			
Secondary	9.1	9.9	9.5
Post Leaving Cert/A Levels	3.6	7.7	5.7
Diploma	9.1	15.4	12.2
Trade Certificate/Apprenticeship	10.9	1.1	6.0
Bachelor/Honours degree	49.1	40.7	44.9
Postgraduate Diploma/Masters/PhD	18.2	25.3	21.7
Relationship status			
Married	35.7	35.2	35.5
De facto/Partner	33.9	35.2	34.5
Divorced/ Separated	3.6	1.1	2.3
Never married	26.8	28.6	27.7
Do you have children?			
Yes	29.1	35.2	32.1
No	70.9	64.8	67.9
Initial visa used			
457	51.7	49.4	50.5
Working Holiday Maker	38.2	41.6	39.9
Family	1.1	2.6	1.9
Permanent Residency	5.6	4.5	5.1
Higher Education or Graduate	3.4	1.9	2.7

Source: *Departed Australia survey, 2016*

8.5.1 Age

There were age differences between the two sets of respondents to this study. Almost 80 per cent of those who did not stay in Australia were aged between 20 and 29 years of age at the time of emigration compared with 66 per cent of those who stayed. The median age of Departed Australia respondents was 26 years of age at emigration compared with a median age of 33 years for the Irish in Australia respondents. That returnees emigrated at a younger age suggests that age at the time of departure plays some role in the ability or desire to settle in a new place later on. The age limitation of

some visas was the impetus for some immigrations and for others, age was a reason to consider returning to Ireland.

A 32 year old female accountant from County Mayo and her husband, both former backpackers, had permanent jobs in Ireland but age became a factor in their decision to migrate to Australia on the Skilled Independent (subclass 189) visa in 2008:

he was very busy, had lots on and I was working a permanent job so there was no danger at the time but you never know what might have happened... we were happy! The main reason we wanted to go to Australia was that we were afraid we'd regret it in 10 years' time when we were too old to apply for residency. That was the main reason – at least we could say we did it and it would either work out or it wouldn't. It was eating at us that we needed to go back to Melbourne (Respondent DA428).

This respondent decided to return to Ireland after having a daughter. She got a job in Ireland three weeks into her employment search and, after getting Australian citizenship, the family returned in late 2013.

Earlier in Chapter Five, one respondent made a point about coming to Australia before she turned 30. Conversely, another participant from Sligo, who immigrated in 2013, returned to Ireland *because of age*, arguing that there was an expectation that you would be *'home and professional by the time you're 30 and that's in your head.'* Having returned to Ireland after a year in Australia on the WHM visa, she completed a Master's degree before taking employment in the recruitment sector, unrelated to her higher degree, but using the experience she had gained in Australia.

8.5.2 Education

Table 8.4 shows that the migrants who had left Australia were highly educated compared with average migrant data from the CSO regarding education. Two-thirds of respondents held a qualification at Bachelor degree level or above. Higher numbers of those who left Australia held Bachelor or Honour degrees and PhDs than those who stayed suggesting that once the job market improved, higher educated emigrants returned home or moved elsewhere. Just under 20 per cent were educated to post-leaving certificate level and this category contained almost twice as many males as females. Equal numbers of men and women completed secondary school only and this accounted for 9.5 per cent of the total.

Table 8.4: Education profile of respondents compared with CSO Emigrant data (n=146)

	Departed Australia		CSO Data - average from 2011-2016 ³	
	Females	Males	Females	Males
	%	%	%	%
Higher secondary and below	9.1	9.9	40	37
Post leaving cert ¹	12.7	23.1	10	5
Third level ²	67.3	65.9	44	51

¹ Includes Technical or Vocational, Advanced Certificate or Diploma

² Third level degree or above

³ Average percentage in each education level calculated for the years 2011- 2016 as given in Table 5 Estimated Migration (aged 15 and over) classified by Sex and Education Attainment, 2011 – 2016 Note: 7% of each sex did not state education level

Source: Departed Australia survey, 2016 and CSO (2016)

8.5.3 Employment

Like those who stayed in Australia, respondents who left were mostly employed in Ireland before they emigrated. Table 8.5 shows that more than two-thirds were employed full-time with just nine per cent working in part-time positions, 14.6 per cent identifying as students or homemakers and ten per cent unemployed.

Table 8.5: Employment categories of respondents in Ireland prior to emigration (n=189)

Employment category	Percent
Working full-time	64.1
Working part-time	8.9
Unemployed	9.9
Student/Homemaker	14.6
Other (please specify)*	2.6
Total	100

* casual/agency employment or internship.

Source: Departed Australia survey, 2016

Those who left Australia were employed in similar categories to those who stayed. Table 8.6 shows that the largest group are Professionals (47.9 per cent), followed by those outside ANZSCO Codes (15.3 per cent) while Clerical and Administrative workers (10.4 per cent) are the third largest group. Males dominated the Technicians and Trades Workers and Machinery Operators categories while females were more numerous amongst Managers, Professionals, Clerical employees, Community workers and those outside ANZSCO codes.

Table 8.6: Respondents' ANZSCO employment category in Ireland before emigration (n=144)

Level of employment	Male	Female	Total
Managers	1.9	6.7	4.9
Professionals	46.3	48.9	47.9
Technicians and Trades Workers	14.8	3.3	7.6
Community and Personal Service Workers	5.6	10.0	8.3
Clerical and Administrative Workers	9.3	11.1	10.4
Sales Workers	3.7	2.2	2.8
Machinery Operators and Drivers	5.6	1.1	2.8
Outside ANZSCO codes*	13.0	16.7	15.3
Total	100	100	100

*Includes home workers, students and unemployed

Source: Departed Australia survey, 2016

Table 8.7 shows that there were slightly fewer health workers and more construction and services (mostly clerical and administrative) workers among those who left Australia compared with those who stayed. There were fewer engineers returning to Ireland but considerably more in the student/homemaker category, which is consistent with the intention of WHMs to leave Australia at their visa's end. Females dominated the Services, Health, Finance, Education and Student/Home categories while males were prominent in Construction, Engineering and IT.

Table 8.7: Ranked employment sectors of respondents in Ireland before emigration (n=145)

Sector	Male %	Female %	Total %
Services	20.4	30.8	26.9
Health	5.6	17.6	13.1
Construction	24.1	6.6	13.1
Student/Home	9.3	15.4	13.1
Finance	7.4	12.1	10.3
Engineering*	14.8	1.1	6.2
IT	9.3	3.3	5.5
Education	1.9	5.5	4.1
Hospitality	3.7	5.5	4.8
Unknown*	3.7	2.2	2.8
Total	100	100	100

*Engineering has been combined with Factory/Plant operator to match the Austerity category of Manufacturing and Engineering. Similarly, Trade and Construction is combined. It is not clear how personal services such as beauty therapy are included in the Austerity data. They are included here in Services. The data in the Austerity report does not equal 100 per cent (Glynn et al. 2013, p.39).

**n=103 respondents did not provide ANZSCO code information

Source: Departed Australia survey, 2016

Table 8.8 shows a difference in data for this cohort around job security matched with the reason for emigration compared with the Irish who stayed in Australia. Although employment was still the main

motivating factor for those in temporary or zero hours contracts at around 50 per cent, a higher percentage of those in a permanent or fixed-term position moved for travel or cultural experiences (59.5 per cent). Just under 28 per cent of permanent workers sought employment and nine per cent moved to escape Ireland's political or economic situation while a further 3.6 per cent left for family reasons. More than half (52 per cent) of unemployed migrants left for job-related reasons. Around a third (36 per cent) of unemployed migrants and 47 per cent on variable contracts sought new experiences in travel and culture. Just under ten per cent of the unemployed left because of Ireland's political state or economy.

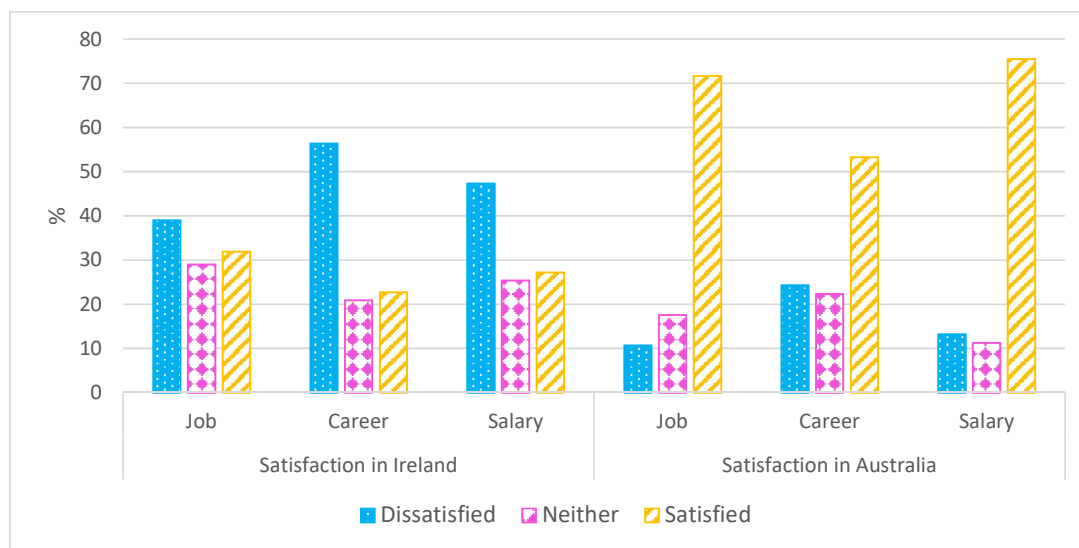
Table 8.8: Contract permanency and migration reason for respondents who left Australia (n=170)

Main migration reason	Contract permanency in Ireland		
	Solid	Variable	Unemployed
Job	27.9	50.0	52.0
Travel/Culture	59.5	47.1	36.0
Family	3.6	0.0	4.0
Escape from Ireland's politics/economy	9.0	2.9	8.0
Total	100	100	100

Source: *Departed Australia survey, 2016*

Since all variables related to satisfaction with job, career and salary improved for Departed Australia respondents we could surmise that work life had little part to play in their decision to leave Australia. It is worth noting also that these respondents had been less dissatisfied with life in Ireland before they emigrated than the respondents who stayed in Australia. Figure 8.3 shows increasing satisfaction with job, career and salary after immigration to Australia. Around 40 per cent of respondents were dissatisfied with their job in Ireland, almost 60 per cent were unhappy with their career prospects and 47 per cent felt their salary was not commensurate with their job. Job satisfaction increased from 30 per cent in Ireland to 70 per cent in Australia, career satisfaction grew from 20 per cent to 53 per cent and the number of people who were happy with their income rose from 27 per cent in Ireland to 75 per cent in Australia.

Figure 8.3: Respondents' job, career and salary satisfaction in Ireland (before emigration) and in Australia (n=169)



Source: *Departed Australia survey, 2016*

A number of respondents who left Australia relayed their employment experiences and how they transitioned from the WHM to a 457 visa and eventual residency. A 28 year old chartered accountant arrived in Melbourne in 2012 on a WHM visa but had no intention of deskilling to access the labour market. She explains her motivation:

I didn't have a permanent job with [Irish bank], it was just a rolling contract. When I was moving over I thought if I didn't get work in my field I kind of wasn't going to stay – I only wanted to go if I was adding to my cv... I went on the Working Holiday Maker visa initially... I got a four month contract with [Australian bank] and I ended up staying there for two agencies – they kept rolling my contract (Respondent DA305)

She was able to access 457 sponsorship within five months through a recruitment company.

...[Australian bank] were keen to keep me on... they started me on another project and wanted to keep me so they talked to [recruitment agency] and they thought the quickest way to progress my visa was just to sponsor me... That was December 2012 and by December 2013 I had my PR. I just applied for it myself. I just wanted to keep my options open.

She returned to Ireland in August 2014 after two and a half years in Australia.

After finishing a degree in Journalism and German at Dublin Institute of Technology, a young female worked a maternity cover contract at a magazine for around seven months before travelling widely.

Having visited New York, Mauritius, Madagascar and cycling around Europe, she spent five months working in Thailand before arriving in Sydney in April 2012 on a WHM visa to stay with her brother who had been in Australia for four years. She was open to the idea of traditional backpacker work,

I was going to do the farm work to give myself the option of the second year and also just to do it for the experience – being out in the middle of nowhere, hopping around the place (Respondent DA258)

However, she worked in a sales job for four months which she got through her brother's girlfriend and then had various jobs – she worked in a ship yard in Botany Bay and drove a forklift in a warehouse in Western Sydney - before taking a temp position as a receptionist for three weeks.

I thought I'll do that and I won't have to wear a hi-vis³⁵ any more, I can wear a skirt and heels. So one day I was in safety boots, hard hat and hi-vis and the very next day I was in high heels, skirt and make-up on... there was a lot of variety being had!

Within two months, the three-week agency position had turned into a 457 sponsorship and she stayed with the company for over two years. She returned to Ireland with her boyfriend in September 2015 after almost four years in Australia. She features later as one of two respondents who had the unusual advantage of taking her job with her when she left Australia.

Like those who stayed, some of these migrants reported a belief in the Irish reputation for being hardworking. A 28 year old Dublin woman who came to Australia on a 457 in 2012, recognised the 'Irish work ethic' as a cultural element of identity:

Some of the senior finance guys in [Australian bank] were Irish and my friends in Melbourne were professionals or tradies – they were all good workers. We're hard workers and it wasn't hard to make a good impression. Head down, have fun but get the job done...I think it's our attitude too ...We show a lot of initiative (Respondent DA305).

A 34 year old male 457 migrant concurred, but put what many viewed as a lower work ethic amongst people other than the Irish, down to the pursuit of a genuine work/life balance:

Australians are probably a bit more relaxed. The work ethic from Ireland and the UK would probably be a bit higher, a bit stronger than the Australian work ethic? Only because Australians do genuinely have a work/life balance compared with what we would have (Respondent DA248).

³⁵ 'Hi-vis' refers to the high visibility clothing required to be worn by workers on construction sites and on factory and warehouse floors by Australian workplace health and safety legislation.

A construction site engineer, he first went to Australia on a student placement in 2008 and returned in 2010 on a Skilled Independent (subclass 175) visa with his partner who had already been to Australia on a WHM visa. They had only just returned to Ireland when he was interviewed for this project. His partner continued to work remotely for her Australian employer and the respondent got a job within six weeks of his return to Ireland. He put his success down to his time in Australia,

...the work experience we got there was unbelievable – massive jobs and when you put that on a CV future employers really focus on that. The professional experience alone was worth the trip (Respondent DA248).

He notes the predominance of Irish employees in his particular sector of the construction industry,

The first job I was in had 12 engineers and about seven of them were Irish. The experience you have in Ireland as a young engineer is more hands-on. In Australia it's more office-based. In Ireland you build more than learn how to financially manage a job so in Australia our construction knowledge was a lot higher but our financial, procedural knowledge was less. I think it's easier to get that procedural knowledge up to speed than to get the construction knowledge. We got the best of both worlds.

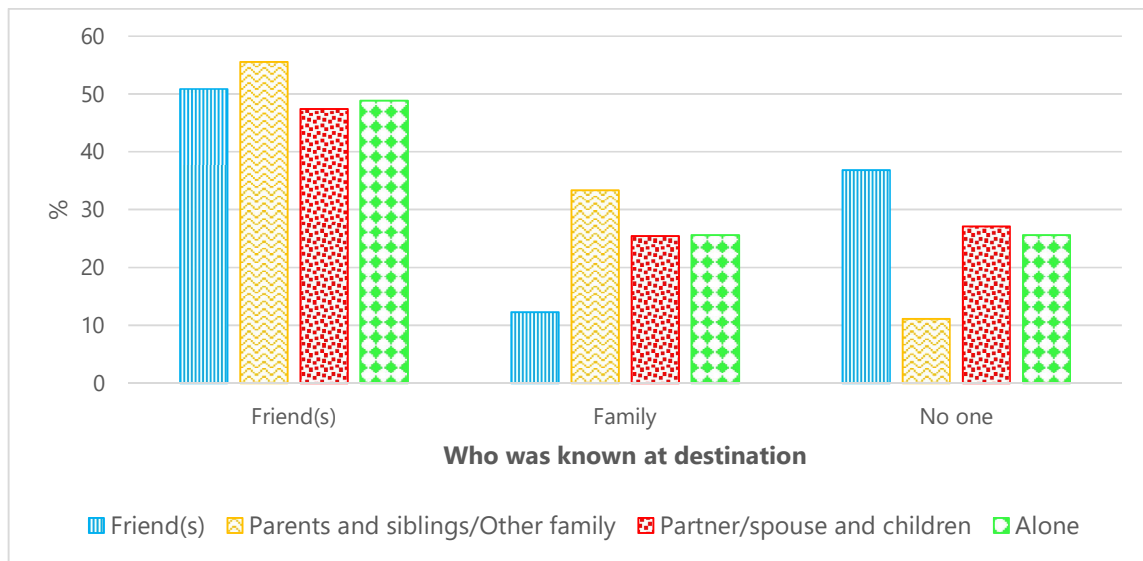
Overall, respondents who eventually left Australia had positive employment experiences and the work place was where they transitioned from visitor to temporary and then permanent visa status. Most respondents enjoyed considerable career success and many earned employment experience which assisted them in gaining employment in Ireland upon their return. From interviews with those who had returned to Ireland or moved elsewhere it appeared they were generally happy and that the employment experience they had gained in Australia had improved their employment and career prospects.

8.6 Who was known at destination

Those respondents who left Australia appeared to have less 'close' support in the form of family and more 'distant' support in the form of friends and acquaintances at their destination than those who stayed (Figure 8.4). Of those who travelled with friends, 50 per cent also had friends at their destination, 12 per cent had family members there and around 37 per cent knew no one else. Those who immigrated with parents or other family members mostly had friends in Australia (55 per cent), while a third had more family members there. Only 11 per cent of those who travelled with parents or other family members did not know anyone else in Australia. Respondents who travelled with a partner/spouse usually had friends (47.5 per cent) at the destination or other family (including extended) members (25.4 per cent), but 27 per cent knew no one in Australia. Of those who travelled

alone, almost 50 per cent had friends awaiting them, while a quarter either had family or knew no one at all. Just over 40 per cent of the total respondents immigrated with a family member while 32.4 per cent travelled with a friend and 26.1 per cent immigrated alone. Conversely, 57 per cent of those still in Australia had travelled with family and around 35 per cent of these also had a family member at their destination. Such a finding would lead one to assume that close family support is a factor in the ability and desire to settle in Australia for these Irish migrants. A clear difference from the Irish in Australia data is the lack of children in the Departed Australia dataset. This is commensurate with the younger age of the Departed Australia respondents at the time of emigration and the demographic data around age of parenthood in Ireland discussed earlier.

Figure 8.4: Respondents' initial emigration companions matched with who was known at destination (n=168)*

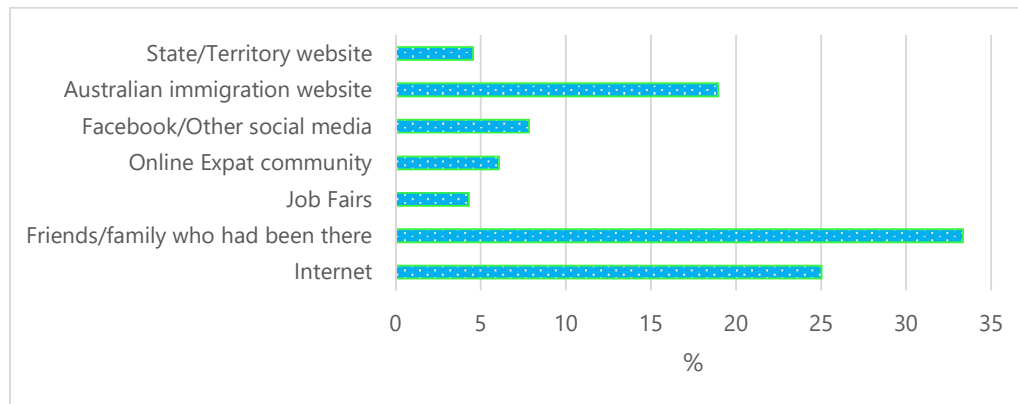


*Multiple responses permitted
 Source: Departed Australia survey, 2016

8.7 Pre-migration information

Like those who stayed, the migrants who left Australia obtained most of their information from friends and family who had lived in Australia (Figure 8.5). The internet generally was the next most used source of information followed by official state or federal immigration websites which were accessed by around a fifth of this cohort. Around 63 per cent said the information they received was 'Good' or 'Excellent' while seven per cent rated it 'Poor' and ten per cent said they did not seek information before they emigrated. Overall, it appeared that lack of quality information was not a contributing factor to eventual departure.

Figure 8.5: Pre-departure information sources used by respondents who left Australia (n=396)*



*Multiple responses permitted

Source: *Departed Australia survey, 2016*

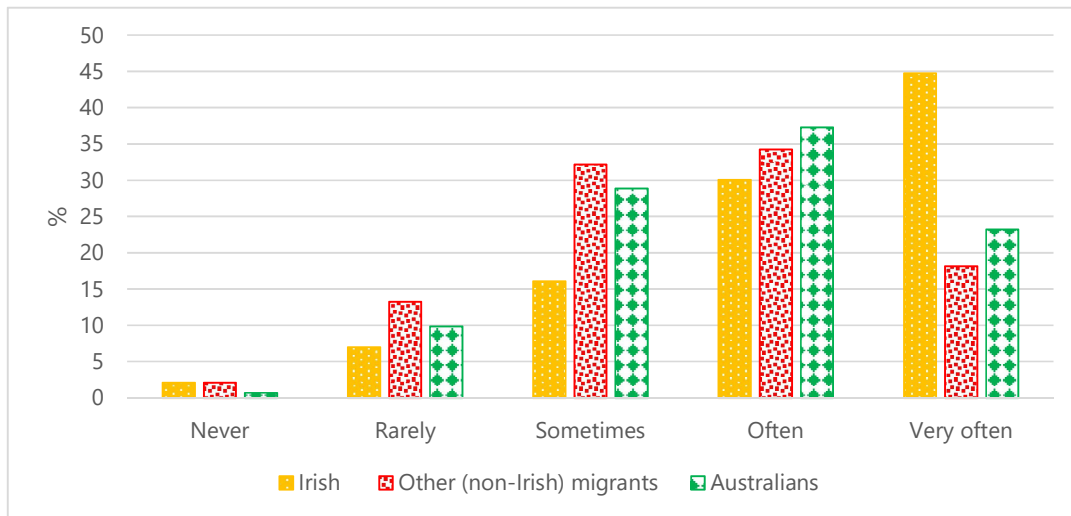
WHMs in the *Departed Australia* dataset had sought more information than their peers in the *Irish in Australia* data set. Family migrants who left sourced information on shipping providers, availability of Irish food and the cost of groceries compared with those who stayed who sought information across all categories more evenly. Those entering on a permanent resident visa sought less information than any other group overall. This is likely because the visa process took longer than a temporary visa would. During this time, applicants would possibly receive information from official sources both directly and in a subtle manner.

8.8 Socialisation, networks and quality of life

Friendships, social networks, securing suitable work and accommodation combine to provide the context for migrants to self-rate their quality of life. This section explores the results of questions on these aspects of life in Australia. Respondents who left Australia socialised with other Irish people more than those who remained (Figure 8.6). Other Irish people were the major source of company for 75 per cent of respondents but around 50 per cent of them also socialised with other migrants and 60 per cent with Australians 'often' or 'very often'. A young female backpacker from Sligo elucidated the conundrum that came with 'sticking with your own'. Many of her friends

*...were struggling... My pep talk was 'Stop living your Irish life out here. Live your Australian life and embrace what it is to be in Australia...' There are two sides to sticking with your own. Homesickness can filter through the group; but the other side is the empathy, because they **get** that you're homesick. ...It's a double-edged sword, it can be a crutch or a burden, either (Respondent DA156).*

Figure 8.6: Respondents' socialisation with Irish and other ethnic groups while in Australia
(n=143)

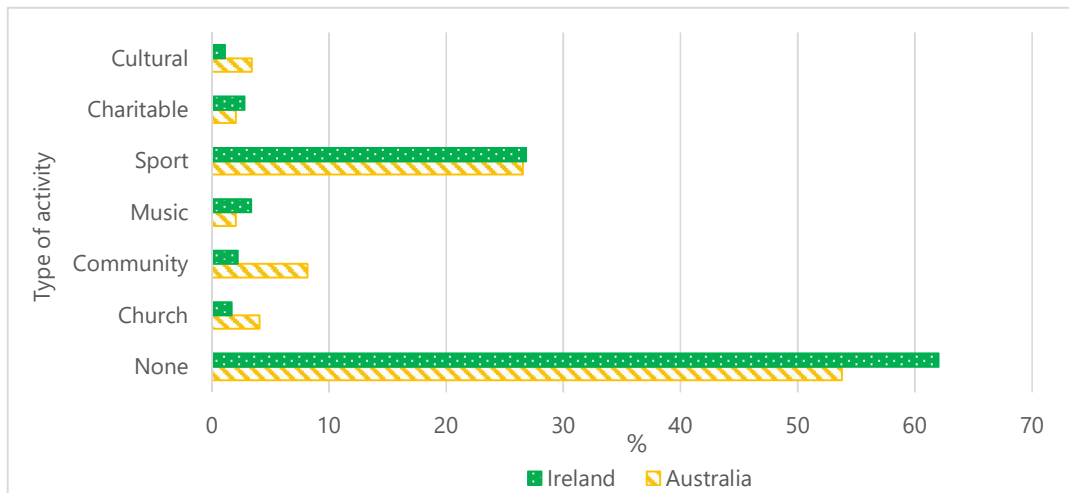


Source: *Departed Australia survey, 2016*

Despite this strong tendency towards ethnic insularity in their friendship groups, these respondents did not participate heavily in organised Irish community activity with almost 50 per cent 'never' or 'rarely' participating, 22 per cent getting involved 'sometimes' and just 28.4 per cent joining in 'often' or 'very often'. One of the benefits of being involved in Irish activities was the surrogacy role these organisations performed in the absence of the home community for those who settled. Not participating, therefore, may have robbed these newcomers of some of the solace these groups provided and could have contributed to their desire to return to Ireland. This is especially likely for the 19 per cent who left due to homesickness.

Figure 8.7 shows that this group were less likely to be involved in some type of community activity in Ireland (62 per cent said 'None') than in Australia (53 per cent said 'None') and community activity increased from 2.2 per cent in Ireland to 8.2 per cent in Australia. Church-related activity increased slightly while that associated with music and charitable work declined a little. Sport remained the same and cultural activity increased marginally to 3.4 per cent. Bar the increase in Church activities, the movement in all other pastimes contradicts that which took place amongst the respondents who remained in Australia. The increased participation in their new community by the Departed Australia respondents and their search for cultural activity is perhaps explained by the fact that these migrants sought cultural experiences and the adventure of travel above all else.

Figure 8.7: Involvement with various interest groups in Ireland and in Australia*

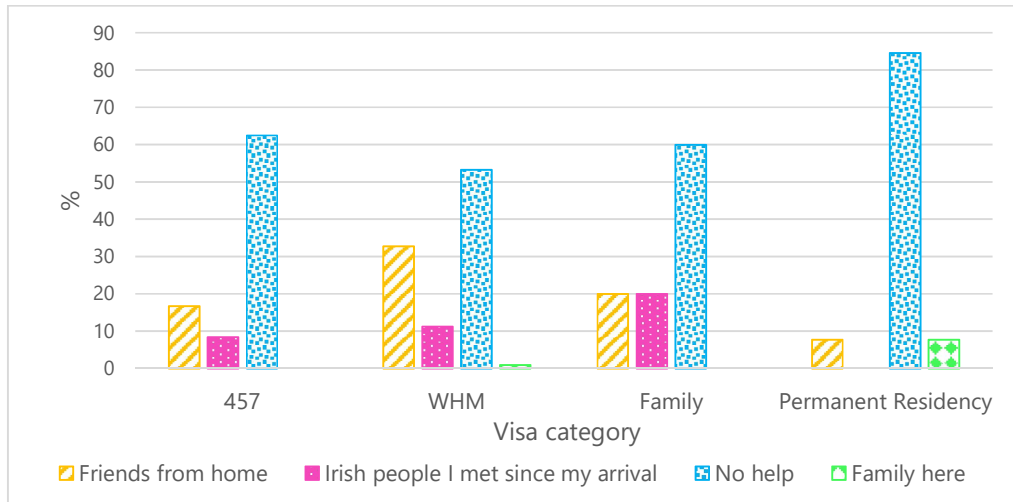


*Multiple responses permitted

Source: *Deported Australia survey, 2016*

The immersion of newcomers in the established Irish community was investigated by asking respondents if Irish people had helped them find work or accommodation. Irish contacts assisted about 31.7 per cent of new Irish migrants in finding accommodation and helped 13.3 per cent of respondents find work (Figure 8.8). The majority had no assistance in either endeavour as 61.5 per cent found accommodation and 73.3 per cent found employment independently. It appears that these respondents had less traction despite spending more social time in Irish circles and this may have contributed to their departure from Australia. Their stronger intention towards temporariness discussed earlier, may simply have meant that they put less effort into establishing support networks amongst either Irish or Australian people.

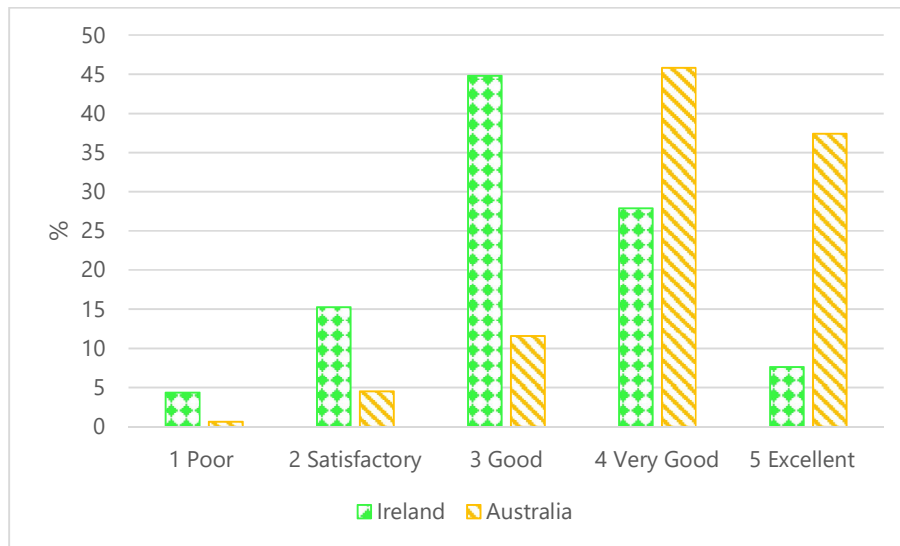
Figure 8.8: Irish network assistance to respondents in securing employment by visa type (n=149)



Source: *Departed Australia survey, 2016*

Career success and social relationships combined to allow respondents to assess their quality of life in Ireland before emigration and in Australia post-migration. When considering quality of life in Ireland prior to emigration, respondents who left Australia had been less dissatisfied with life there - 27.9 per cent had rated life in Ireland 'very good' compared with 22.6 per cent those who remained. Just under half of respondents (44.8 per cent) were satisfied with life in Ireland and almost eight per cent rated their quality of life there as 'excellent'. Figure 8.9 shows that quality of life improved in Australia and was rated 'very good' by 45.8 per cent and 'excellent' by 37.4 per cent of this cohort. Less than five per cent were dissatisfied or rated their quality of life as 'poor' in Australia. Respondents who left Australia recognised that their self-rated quality of life had improved in Australia since more people chose the 'very good' or 'excellent' ratings than had done so when rating life in Ireland prior to migration. Social and employment experiences, higher incomes and career progression all contributed to this increased satisfaction with life.

Figure 8.9: Respondents' quality of life in Ireland before emigration and in Australia post-migration (n=169)



Source: *Departed Australia survey, 2016*

8.9 Children

Less than half (40.6 per cent) of Irish in Australia respondents had children and only one-third of those who left Australia had children at the time of participation in the study. Qualitative data suggest that leaving Australia is more likely for those who have a partner and a family or who wish to start a family. A theme amongst female respondents aged in their mid to late-twenties was the idea that they would return home if they were pregnant or considering having children. A 23 year old female said some friends were *'waiting to have their babies here because of the health system and entitlements and then maybe go home when the child is one or two.'* (Respondent IA1011). Another female former backpacker, now aged 28, said

I can see why some might want to go home but my lifestyle now...if I was having children I wouldn't have that same lifestyle. I can see why people would want to have their family around but in saying that it would be a very hard decision because I know what I would be giving up. For me, I'd be giving up a pretty amazing country. It's a hard one. I think I'd be inclined to, maybe 80%, go home (Respondent IA419)

but qualified that statement with a recognition that returning to Ireland would perhaps subject future children to the emigration fate and would also deny them the opportunities she herself was experiencing in Australia.

...Having travelled so far out it makes you look at Ireland like a drop in the ocean. Like, it's just such a tiny island but there's the thought of bringing kids up there and then watching them go. Like realistically, are they going to want to be in Ireland? And are you providing them with the best? Now in saying that I was quite happy with being brought up there but there are obviously better places as well. So yes it's hard to try and make that decision... (Respondent IA419).

Family composition also plays a part in return to Ireland. A former skilled migrant and now Australian permanent resident relayed how life changed for him and his wife when they became parents and how bringing their young daughter home and seeing her with family made their return decision for them:

Once we had [daughter], our lifestyle changed. We had a small support network and didn't have a babysitter... We came home for six weeks and really enjoyed it. {Daughter} has about 16 cousins here so it was great to see them together. We decided then we'd come home the following year –we'd get our citizenship and get our stuff together and come home (Respondent DA134).

Ní Laoire's work (2007, 2008, 2011) notes how important cultural immersion of their children in Ireland is for migrant parents. Some Irish in Australia respondents, while half wanting to return for this reason, recognised that the Ireland they knew as a child and the upbringing they would like for their children, no longer exists in Ireland due to changing social mores, ethnic diversity and technology. Ní Laoire (2011) argues that return migration is closely associated with child-bearing and child-raising and this is largely borne out amongst the study's participants. Conversely, some migrant parents recognised that life in Australia afforded their children opportunities that Ireland could not. Ní Laoire (2011, p.1255) argues, 'that both staying and returning decisions in families with children are rationalised by parents with reference to their children's best interests.'

Although now returned to Ireland, a female who emigrated aged 37 on a 457 visa, said she did not consider return when she and her husband decided to start a family. She explained that a support network in Ireland was not a realistic prospect for them due to the location and size of her origin family:

...if I'd gone home I would have been up in Dun Laoghaire and my family are down in Clonmel. I was never going to have a big support network around me anywhere. I've spoken to people in the same situation as me and when people talk about dropping the kids off to their parents there is a little bit of envy at not having that. But as I mentioned I am one of 12 and my mother has 43 grandchildren so she's over it. She's done her time. I was never going to have that... (Respondent DA206).

A female 457 migrant who arrived in 2012, said she and her husband would have stayed in Australia permanently but when they had a daughter in 2010 everything changed:

...we knew that by the age of 2 or 3 we would be home... I didn't want her growing up in Australia away from her family. That was the reason... (Respondent DA428)

A young, female WHM, in presenting a case for the 'stayers', said,

If I have kids I'd feel bad raising them over here – there's a lot of that stuff in my head but then again you can't just think of your parents. You have to think of the child and would they have a better life in Australia? ...they probably would, they'd have a great life (Respondent IA755).

8.10 Returning to Ireland

Table 8.9 shows the fluctuating number of Irish nationals who have returned to Ireland over the past five years. After a decline in returnees in 2014 and 2015, it appears that increasing numbers of Irish emigrants are returning home. Many of those returning from Australia would be 'recession migrants', those who immigrated in 2009 and 2010 and who, after five years in Australia may have obtained Australian citizenship. This section looks at the experiences of a mixed group of migrants – a couple, a single woman, a family who migrated several times, a family who stayed in Ireland and two cases where a returning migrant brought their Australian employment with them. These differing stories illustrate the multiple reasons for leaving Australia and the varying experiences of returning to Ireland.

Table 8.9: Estimated immigration to Ireland by country of origin, 2011 - 2016

Year ending April	Immigrants					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
	'000					
Origin						
UK	11.9	8.4	9.7	9.7	10.4	13.8
Rest of EU 15	9.7	10.2	10.3	11.2	10.8	12.3
EU 13	9.8	9.3	11.8	9.8	13.4	10.7
Australia	4.5	4.9	5.3	3.6	2.9	5.5
Canada	1.3	1.6	1.1	1.2	1.6	2.5
USA	3.3	4.9	3.6	2.6	2.2	4.7
Rest of world	12.9	13.4	14.1	22.4	28	29.7
Total persons	53.3	52.7	55.9	60.6	69.3	79.3

Source: CSO (2016)

A 26 year old female from Dublin and her boyfriend emigrated as WHMs in 2011 and returned to Ireland as permanent residents after a number of years in Sydney. Needing to commit to a longer term lease for an apartment finally made them decide to return to Ireland after a year of indecision about staying. Rather than 12 months they asked for nine months. The respondent said:

I knew it was coming but didn't know when... [the lease] would have taken us to December 2015 and it sounded so far away and that was the catalyst – it wasn't that we were going straightaway but we weren't for staying that long either... that's what it took for us to make a decision (Respondent DA258).

A 25 year old female respondent from Limerick is currently on a second year WHM visa in Perth but intends to leave Australia soon. If the return is not positive she says she will apply for permanent residency but is

hoping not to have to go down that route. I'd rather go to England or somewhere closer. I'm more willing to move away from home but I'm not willing to make it so far again (Respondent IA371).

She and her boyfriend decided against applying for permanent residency despite being eligible due to the cost, preferring to spend the money travelling. She distrusted the opinions of people in Ireland who told her there was nothing for her there saying,

...it's coming from people who've never been here and they don't understand the distance ...even when we went home at Christmas, everyone has this perception that you're in Australia, going to the beach and living the great life.

For others, good money, lifestyle and opportunity could not outweigh the pull to be home. For a young woman from Sligo who arrived as a WHM in 2010, the decision to return home was taken in order to reclaim herself. She left a long-term relationship to return to Ireland. She recalls that she

had it all there on a plate – what everyone goes out to Australia for: I had the job with the chance of sponsorship; I had the boyfriend who had the money and who was committed and would have married me in the morning – it was game, set and match. It was our life - we had everything...on the surface ...but underneath it all I was like 'No this is not the life I chose. I'm living your life and what about me?' Not to be selfish like but I needed to do the right thing for me (Respondent DA156).

One female respondent initially came to Australia as a child along with her parents and six siblings. The family moved from County Donegal to country New South Wales where her father was a GP. She had regular contact with family in Ireland as she grew up and spent two years in Galway while on a break from university. She returned to Australia in March 2004 and a month later met an Irish man. They moved back to Ireland in April 2006. They lived in Dublin but the respondent's partner was from Cavan

and travelled back home every weekend to see the family. This pressure was too much and she wanted to return to Australia. This did not happen until 2009 by which time the couple were married and had a child.

It did not go down well at all. It wouldn't have mattered when he'd told them... His father put his foot down, said he wasn't getting his inheritance, he was really upset about it. They're just very traditional Irish – his dad grew up across the road from his home and now his brother lives in that home and his sister lives up the road and there's just a huge expectation on them (Respondent DA101).

In order to lessen the blow of taking their only granddaughter away, the respondent's husband promised to return to Ireland when their daughter was ready for school. Ireland's recession delayed their return:

We couldn't risk going back and not having jobs... then we had another baby and settled really well! ...but that promise was always in the back of our minds and we said yeah we will go back to Ireland when things start to improve.

They returned to Cavan in July 2014 as their daughter was due to start school. While her husband found work immediately she could not get a permanent teaching job since she did not speak Irish. She was miserable:

I started to get absolutely fed up with the weather and the lack of anything to do and spending all weekend with the in-laws. It was awful. I got really down. I think we fought for the rest of the time until we got back here. It got to the point where I said 'I'm not staying and that's it'. I was miserable. I was impatient...It affected my marriage, it affected everything. I was angry all the time, I was resentful towards the in-laws...

and in deciding to return to Australia made a decision which could have cost her her marriage. Her husband reluctantly agreed and broke the news to his parents:

His parents started talking to me about it ...I told them how unhappy I was and how it was hurting our marriage, how we came back to Ireland because we promised them that we would, not because we were unhappy in Australia. I was just really honest... they were devastated and shocked that we were going back again but they were incredibly supportive of it. They knew they had to let us go...

After 15 months in Ireland the return to Australia was a positive one. The respondent's husband got a job which doubled his wages and their relationship is a happy one again.

A Limerick-born male immigrated in 2012 to Sydney on a 457 visa as part of a company relocation in a role intended to expand his company's footprint in the Australasia region. His contract was for up to four years but after two and a half years a suitable position came up in Europe.

[Our] son was born in April 2014 so we saw that as an opportune time to move back really... We could have stayed on but we'd have had a \$1 million mortgage and I didn't fancy having that...we looked at getting PR and the cost to get it - at \$6/7000 we said 'Nah' (Respondent DA248).

Establishing themselves in Ireland was not as easy as he had imagined it would be. In addition to the expense of setting up home again, some things, like renewing electricity and gas accounts seemed to take longer than they should: *We felt it was a little bit more difficult to return to Ireland than it should have been.*

A former WHM from Dublin returned to Ireland as an Australian resident and described completing the Habitual Residency Condition paperwork required by the Department of Social Security in Ireland to enable receipt of benefit payments:

I had to do certain things like print off a bank statement...just prove that I wasn't going back, that I wasn't here for a long holiday and trying to get the dole while I was here – show I had bought a one way ticket. I also printed off a few emails to show where I had said thanks to people in my company for my farewell and inviting people to come and see me in Ireland (Respondent DA258).

Accessing social security in a different county, her boyfriend did not have to provide any documentary evidence that he had returned to Ireland permanently but signed a form and received the applicable allowance. The couple also returned to a rent-free, furnished house – a property which her partner had renovated before he emigrated. Job prospects did not pose a worry because this respondent was one of two interviewees who returned to Ireland with her Australian job.

Before I left the CEO offered to keep me on to do some projects...We thought at the time she could issue me a casual contract but, because I'm no longer a resident for tax purposes, they've gone through [recruitment agency] because they're in Ireland too... so I get paid through them and my company pays them... My sister said 'Who ever heard of coming back with your job?' (Respondent DA258).

A male respondent, born in Derry, Northern Ireland in 1982, immigrated to Melbourne on a Skilled Independent (subclass 175) visa in 2010 with his wife. The couple returned to Ireland in 2015 as Australian residents with one child and another one on the way. They had decided to go back 'no matter what but that was after we knew prospects were improving – things were bad in 2012/13 but they were improving.' They also had the security of returning to Ireland with one wage still coming in.

The respondent's wife worked for an online betting company for three years and they agreed she could work remotely.

That took a lot of pressure off us. She was working full-time for the last six weeks while I was looking... I got a job last Monday...the salary is about half – the money in Australia is phenomenal compared to Irish standards and the cost of living here is less but not half! (Respondent DA134).

Life stage and improved employment prospects for this migrant engineer enticed the family back to Ireland. He admits having been homesick while in Australia even though they travelled back five times between 2011 and 2014. The ability to visit Ireland regularly as a method of maintaining transnational family connections has been explored but this migrant's experience suggests that for some migrants, even very frequent return travel cannot salve homesickness. For many migrants there is no substitute for living in their homeland.

The mass international migrations of recent years have 'entailed one-time return migration, repeat migration, and circular migration, as well as migration for settlement' (Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004, p.1183). While return migration can often be interpreted as an action that signals migration failure, it is a complex matter which can be a reaction to occurrences at home as much as in the receiving country. This section has demonstrated that departure from Australia was rarely connected to experiences in Australia and more often related to the perceived benefits of being close to family in Ireland.

8.11 Conclusion

The analysis shows that distance, both geographical and emotional, from family and friendship networks was the prime motivation for leaving Australia and that immigration policy or social or labour market experiences played a lesser part in the decision for these respondents. Those who left Australia did so largely because Australia could not provide them with what they wished for most – the proximity of their family and friends. These respondents generally had similar social and labour force experiences to the respondents who remained in Australia and all rated their quality of life as improved as were job, career and salary. Foremost among reasons for leaving Australia and returning to Ireland was the desire to bring children up in Ireland amongst extended family and in a familiar culture. For those who left Australia but did not return to Ireland, further travel or job opportunities elsewhere were the prime motivations for an onward journey. Some wished not to live in Ireland but felt the distance between home and Australia was just too great, so they moved to Canada or the UK due to their proximity to Ireland. Others felt that their time in Australia was simply up – they had experienced life there and it was time to move on. Only a small number of respondents left Australia due to visa or employment difficulties and more than half left due to homesickness and missing family.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the results of this work and addresses the original question 'What are the trends and patterns of contemporary Irish immigration to Australia?' It goes on to further explain how and why the tradition of emigration from Ireland to Australia continues, highlights important findings from the empirical data and concludes by outlining future avenues of research.

Migration is one of the dominant themes of Irish social, political and economic history. Traditionally it has been a story of emigration. The opening of European borders and the later boom in the Irish economy saw a trend reversal and for a period from 1991 to 2006 the country experienced unprecedented net migration gains. The death of the Celtic Tiger reversed the migration situation once more and mass emigration again characterised Ireland's migration profile. Although the high numbers of emigrants encompassed many non-nationals, the Irish-born were leaving at the rate of almost 1,000 people per week in 2013. In 2014, when the recession was deemed 'over' and the economic situation was improving, Irish nationals were still leaving at a rate of almost 800 people per week.³⁶ One of the significant differences between the past waves of emigration and recent heightened emigration is the Celtic Tiger. While recessions hit Ireland and accelerated the rate of emigration in the 1950s and 1980s as well as on many previous occasions, no other inter-recession period saw a boom quite like the rise of the Celtic Tiger economy with its unprecedented industrial and economic growth and spike in personal wealth. Some respondents to this study termed newer Irish migrants 'Celtic Cubs' and felt they had a definite air of entitlement about them.

In the Australian context, 'they' did not just come with a sense of entitlement, they came *en masse*. Since 2000, almost a quarter of a million young Irish people have entered Australia on the Working Holiday Maker visa and although numbers declined steeply in 2014-2015, the latest figures show an increase in WHM grants to Irish people (DIBP 2016h). Additionally, approximately 39,000 Irish people were permanent additions to Australia's population since 2008. The visa application represents the 'mechanical' aspect of migration – it is the means of migration and is important insofar as it is able to hinder or enable migration. There are of course, several pre and post-journey aspects to consider; the context and decision-making processes, the financial status of the prospective migrant, existing destination networks, or lack thereof, and the expectations the migrant might have of the host nation.

³⁶ Almost half of the 81,900 people who emigrated in the year to April 2014 were Irish nationals (40,700 persons, or 49.7 per cent). Central Statistics Office, Population and Migration Estimates, April 2014. <http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/pme/populationandmigrationestimatesapril2014/> (accessed 24/08/15)

This study employed an enumerated survey and semi-structured one-to-one interview with a purposive sample of Irish people who had immigrated to Australia between 2000 and 2015 and either settled there or emigrated again. The two surveys – the Irish in Australia and the Departed Australia survey – were similar in that they asked for detailed information on migration enablers and drivers, visa use, settlement intention and travelling companions, as well as use of Irish contacts in securing work and accommodation, general employment and social settlement experiences, transnational practice in keeping in touch with friends and family in Ireland and finally, about intentions to return to Ireland. Both surveys collected the demographic characteristics of respondents, such as age, sex, education and relationship and family status. Survey data was complemented with qualitative data which simultaneously expanded and defined understanding of the issues at hand. The surveys helped to shape the in-depth interviews undertaken with respondents who volunteered to participate further in this study. The responses provided are recognised as subjective but the insights garnered are valuable. This study investigated Irish migration to Australia through recent periods of fast-paced development in technology in the fields of social media, communications and travel. It also encompassed migrants from two different Irish contexts: Ireland’s Celtic Tiger era and its recent economic recession.

9.2 Demographic characteristics and drivers of migration

In order to answer the first research question regarding migration motivators and the characteristics of Australia’s most recent Irish immigrants, the study established the reasons for migration and related them to trends in visa use and the characteristics of respondents.

Two-thirds of the sample was female and predominantly from the Republic of Ireland (82 per cent). The majority of respondents were aged between 20 and 29 at the time of emigration although those who had left Australia were younger overall than those who were currently in Australia at the time of the survey: the median age of each at the time of emigration was 26 years and 33 years of age respectively. Survey respondents were highly educated, with the majority being tertiary educated and around 20 per cent holding postgraduate qualifications. Three-quarters of settlers entered on a visitor or temporary visa as did 90 per cent of those who moved on, but analysis showed that declared settlement intention was largely unpredictable, although for respondents who had left it was more reliable. This was due to the factors that prompted migration in the first instance.

Those who left had immigrated to Australia in search of travel and cultural experiences above all else whilst economic motivation was behind the migration journeys of those who stayed in Australia. For them, the search for employment and career experience was paramount. Significant in the context of the collapse of the Irish economy was the driver of escape from Ireland’s political and economic

situation. This combined with an established emigration culture in Ireland to accelerate Irish migration to Australia but data show that numbers had started to increase before the GFC.

Australia was a popular destination for many emigrating Irish due to both familial links and chain migration mechanisms and the widespread belief that Australia had escaped the worst of the global recession. Ireland's education and training profile meant that its newest emigrants were a good fit for Australia's labour market and its targeted, skilled migration policy. High numbers of professionals and employees in sectors such as healthcare and construction filled labour market need in Australia. An aggressive overseas recruitment campaign by various Australian health agencies and the success of job fairs all over Ireland testify to the gaps which existed in Australian labour force supply. Despite holding high-level skills and in most cases, employment experience, many of these graduate migrants came to Australia on a Working Holiday Maker visa. The majority did not intend to deskill to find employment and, rather than performing typical backpacker jobs, such as agricultural labouring, most sought work in their career field and transitioned to permanent status through their employment.

9.3 Visa use and settlement intentions

Respondents to this study mostly immigrated to Australia on one of two visas – the WHM or the 457 - and only very small numbers used family or other permanent residency options on initial entry. The survey found that the entry visa used was chosen largely due to expediency and cost rather than any indication of settlement intention. Visa use did not appear to be very deeply considered on the most part. The almost natural tendency to choose Australia as a destination, the 'rite of passage' of a gap year there, and the fact that around 70 per cent of respondents had family or friends in Australia meant that migrants relied on word-of-mouth information which was largely rated as good.

Australia's WHM visa is comparatively cheaper than the 457 or the permanent migration programme options. Despite cheaper and closer possible destinations in mainland Europe, the UK and USA, significant numbers of Irish people travelled to Australia even at the height of recession in Ireland. Australia's migration policy permitted transition from visitor and temporary visas to permanent residency. The Australian immigration structure provides streamlined and fast-tracked visa options for skilled applicants and pathways to residency and citizenship. In addition, almost half of permanent applications are now processed onshore. It was found that some respondents used up to eight visas to secure permanency which suggests a good knowledge of this complex visa system. The most important finding was the use of visas by Irish immigrants and their high compliance with the system's regulations and restrictions. Where these were circumvented, as in the case of the six month time limit with any one employer on the WHM visa, the manoeuvring was largely initiated by recruitment agencies and Australian employers rather than the migrant. Data provided evidence that despite

Australia's immigration system's strict focus on highly-skilled migration and specific occupations, a broad spectrum of labour skills was evident through transition from the WHM visa.

It is important to note that many respondents felt that even though they had made a deliberate choice to emigrate, some felt pressure to do so. Mincer's (1977) Economics of Family Migration was certainly an applicable theory in cases where migrants left good jobs in Ireland for the sake of the net gain their family could achieve through moving. Overall the best-fitting migration 'process' theory was Neoclassical II economic theory which recognised micro-level decision-making as the instigator of migration, i.e. the need for adventure or advancement, while taking into account the macro level events, such as economic recession, at play at the initiation phase. Analysis of the empirical data in this study demonstrates that this cohort displays strong elements of 'transnationalism from the ground up' as opposed to engaging with state-led transnational strategies promoted through the Irish Government's 'Global Ireland' foreign policy. Theoretically, this research expands our understanding of transnationalism amongst the Irish in Australia where more recent migrants have enacted a strong trend towards grassroots transnational practice in their use of multi-level connections to Ireland locally, regionally and nationally through electronic media and other online fora. Exploration of the empirical data demonstrates a strong need to participate even virtually in life in Ireland and further, a keen awareness of everyday happenings which was not available to migrants in pre-internet times. In this context, transnationalism has the potential to become more prevalent for first and deeper generations of the Irish diaspora.

Settlement intentions, although subjective in recall, can perhaps be better predicted by taking into account the declared reason for migration. Respondents who had left Australia immigrated in search of travel and cultural experiences and returned to Ireland or moved on when these desires had been satisfied. Likewise, for those who moved to escape the recession and the Austerity regime imposed in Ireland to aid economic recovery, it made sense that when the GFC was over and Ireland's economy started to improve, many would return home. For those who stayed in Australia, job-related migration had been the most prominent driver and although the majority intended to return to Ireland upon the expiration of their initial visa, a number of factors emerged which changed this decision. For many, career prospects improved beyond expectations and employment was the mechanism which enabled category-jumping from temporary to permanent status. For others, unexpected life events such as a new relationship with someone in Australia encouraged a change in intention and a longer-term residency. Changed intentions were, however, facilitated by government policy to an extent since the immigration system provided the mechanisms which allowed a change in status. It is noted also that a proportion of 'permanent' migrants indicated that they did not intend to stay in Australia. This was related to their migration reasons – seeking travel and cultural experience and escape from Ireland's political and economic situation.

A migrant's ability to secure a further visa ultimately determined if they could stay in Australia and their skills and qualifications were primary factors in enabling access to longer-term visas. The

educational and skill profile of respondents ensured that their suitability for the Australian labour market enabled career progression and commensurate income. Although employment was the mechanism for visa transition, the workplace was also a site of success and endorsement. The survey found that Irish migrants faced some difficulty in making Australian friends and, as a consequence, mostly mixed with other Irish people or other migrants. Social ethnic insularity offered both empathy and intensification of feelings around homesickness, and so was both a positive and negative thing. With time, and with the arrival of children, social circles expanded to include more Australians as contact widened through school and associated sports and social activities. Despite a measure of cultural discomfort caused by casual racism and a lack of knowledge around everyday aspects of Australian life such as the Medicare system and school structure, the majority of respondents reported settling in well socially. Settlement proved to be closely connected to employment and social experiences which combined to allow respondents to rate their quality of life in Australia. This was noted as greatly improved when compared with Ireland for both Irish migrants who stayed and those who left Australia.

9.4 Transnational practice

In order to establish how transnational practice manifests among these immigrants and how strong links are with both personal contacts in Ireland and Irish society in general, respondents were asked about the methods and frequency of communication with people in Ireland. Contact was very frequent and links with Ireland existed on several levels due to new communication media. Newer methods, such as Skype™, Facetime™, WhatsApp™ and social media like Facebook™ have expanded the avenues of communication rather than replacing older ways of keeping in touch. Many respondents read Irish newspapers every day online, listened to Irish radio shows and stated that this 'society level knowledge' helped maintain personal relationships as they could chat with parents about news events and felt less distant from 'home' as a result. Other used Facebook™ to renew links with their local community and reconnect with long-lost friends thereby expanding their social networks. Video-calling was the most exalted communication development amongst respondents with Australian-born children since this method allowed visual contact with grandparents who would essentially be strangers otherwise. Its clearest benefit was the eradication of shyness when these children visited Ireland. Frequent travel was noted as a characteristic of these new immigrants and most travelled to Ireland at least once every two to three years with around one-third able to travel annually. This was due to reduced cost and travel times although the ability to go to Ireland decreased as the migrant's family in Australia grew. Technological developments also enabled some forms of care-giving to family members by migrants in Australia – the online purchase of goods and services for example.

Exploring transnational practice in the form of political consciousness brought about discussion of identity through citizenship and it was found that many respondents wanted Australian citizenship in

order to secure re-entry rights in the event that they left Australia, There was little indication that respondents identified as Australian or wished to participate in its political system, although this was the case for some respondents. Irish citizenship was primary in terms of identity and only 16 per cent of Irish respondents in Australia and 12 per cent of those who had left held Australian citizenship at the time of the survey. The qualitative data indicated that this was likely to change since almost 60 per cent of respondents had arrived in Australia since 2010 and so, at the time of the survey, most were not yet eligible for citizenship.

9.5 Drivers of return migration

In the interest of presenting a holistic picture of recent Irish immigration to Australia, data were collected from a sample of migrants who had lived in Australia and then left the country.

Almost 80 per cent of respondents who left Australia returned to Ireland, eight per cent went to the UK, four per cent travelled to New Zealand, and the remainder went to various locations in Asia, the USA, Canada and mainland Europe. It is important to note that these respondents enjoyed similar career and employment success to those who stayed in Australia. They rated their quality of life as greatly improved in Australia compared with that in Ireland. Push factors from Australia were minimal and only 18 per cent left because of difficulties there – visa issues predominated but simply not liking Australia was also cited by a few. The biggest drawcard was family in Ireland. Migrants missed family and friends, wanted to be nearer ageing parents and wanted their children to experience an upbringing similar to their own and with extended family. Homesickness accounted for around one-fifth of departures – for these people Australia was just not home and was too far from Ireland.

Many respondents noted that their time in Australia had improved their career prospects in Ireland after their return and some even managed to retain their Australian employment due to the online nature of their work. Although the majority were happy to be back in Ireland, others had, by the time of interview, already returned to Australia. An inability to settle in Ireland was the result of being unable to find employment or being unable to cope with a lifestyle characterised by inclement weather and a lack of recreational facilities. Others reported being homesick for Australian friends and in some cases, family members. For some, while Australia had been a great experience and one to be cherished, that adventure was now over. Others were not so keen to close the door on Australia and, as either permanent residents or citizens, had the option of returning in the future. It is always possible that current or recent backpackers might return as permanent migrants sometime in the future as was the case for some respondents who had backpacked to Australia in the 1990s. The significance of the Departed Australia data lies in the evidence that it was the pull from Ireland rather than the push from Australia which prompted departure. In addition, the survey found that these migrants immigrated in search of travel and cultural experience rather than for work-related reasons and they then moved on.

Heightened mobility and the fluidity of transnational belonging which can result from migration often means that a migrant finds themselves with two home places rather than one and some respondents acknowledge that they cannot rule out returning to Australia in the future.

9.6 Further avenues of research

There are a number of issues that this research explored that are not dealt with here. The first of these is the applicability of the term 'diaspora' to the Irish in Australia and the ability of the Irish government to reach the community through the existing avenues of the Emigrant Support Programme, its consulates and Australian Embassy. The term 'diaspora' did not appear to resonate strongly with respondents and is largely a concept associated with the generations that follow a migrant. Ireland's diaspora policy was not well-known among respondents and it seemed that those who were aware of it viewed it with some cynicism, believing it overtly targeted the high-income, professional emigrant and largely ignored the 'ordinary' Irish migrant. Rather than feeling connected to the Irish elsewhere as part of a diaspora community, the Irish in Australia sometimes felt 'left out'. This anecdote is supported by the fact that engagement with Irish communities abroad by the Irish government is heavily weighted towards communities in the United Kingdom and the United States, as evidenced by the distribution of the Emigrant Support Programme funds.

Another interesting research possibility concerns the growing Australian diaspora in Ireland following the return of migrants from Australia. Around two per cent of Australia's annual new citizens are Irish, but as this study has evidenced, citizenship is often obtained by Irish immigrants so that they can return to Ireland. When they do return they often bring other Australian citizens with them – a partner/spouse and/or Australian-born children. Ireland's most recent immigration figures note that Australians comprise seven per cent of new arrivals. It is possible that this figure is comprised of mostly Australian spouses since it is widespread practice to get Australian-born infants an Irish passport and Irish nationals would be likely to re-enter Ireland using their Irish passport.³⁷ Thus, a number of Australian citizens live in Ireland and the experience of this community is of interest in the context of studies of the Australian diaspora internationally (Hugo 2006a, Parker 2010).

Finally, aspects of mental health amongst Irish immigrants in Australia, briefly touched upon in the methodology discussion, is pinpointed as a possible future interdisciplinary research project. Homesickness is often considered an inescapable part of the migration experience – 'something we have to deal with', 'get over', 'the migrant's lot'. Isolation and loneliness as a result of the social dislocation caused by migration can be significant stressors for migrants' homesickness and this, in

³⁷ 577 (8 per cent) of the 6,943 passport applications made to the Embassy of Ireland in Canberra in 2016 were for children born since 2013. Child passports are issued with three-year validity so these passports are first-time applications.

turn, can be a precursor to poor health and quality of life for migrants (Victor et al. 2012, Babatunde-Sowole et al. 2016). The seemingly widespread suffering of homesickness among survey respondents led to the inclusion of the Kessler Psychological Distress (K-10) test in a third-stage investigation with participants. It is cause for concern that in a sample of 25 people, six self-reported scores in the 'high to very high' bracket indicating that these respondents are likely to be suffering mild to severe mental disorder. The mental health aspect of migration represents a future research possibility since there are no studies of the effects of migration on the psychological well-being of Irish migrants to Australia.

9.7 Study limitations

A representative sample of Irish people living in Australia on which to conduct this study could not be established. A convenience sample was used which means that the results cannot be generalised to the wider Irish population in Australia but this does not detract from the fact that the sampled population provided fascinating insights into the migration experiences of recent Irish immigrants to Australia. The sampled population was both large and diverse in terms of location in Australia, origin in Ireland and its demographic composition. It is recognised that, had the respondents been sampled differently, different results may have been achieved. The sample is over-representative of females in the Irish community in Australia but females are noted as being more responsive to survey requests in general and it has been noted that females responded to surveys related to homesickness and emigration (Hugo et al. 2003). There was a more balanced response to qualitative interviews between male and female respondents with just over one-third of respondents still in Australia and a quarter of those who had left being male. The sample was also heavily skewed to more recent migrants, with 60 per cent of respondents having arrived from 2010 onwards. There was a bias in this study towards migrants who were highly educated, skilled and English-speaking because of the visa entry requirements of the Australian immigration system. Because of their demographic characteristics, these respondents were highly compliant with the immigration regulations which governed their migration.

There is a perceived bias towards online research but the age of the target community and the fact that Australia's immigration system requires internet and email access meant that the online methodology was most suitable.

9.8 Final word

This study's sampled population demonstrated differences in attitudes towards the permanency of the move to Australia, in habits of socialisation with their own ethno-cultural community and in their intention to return to Ireland compared with earlier studies. That its findings are more in line with the

2013 Émigré Report, *Irish Emigration in an Age of Austerity*, indicates that the characteristics of the trend of migration from Ireland since 2008 differ markedly from the post-1980 period and the years immediately preceding the collapse of the Irish economy. While world systems and other external forces play their part in migration flows, the agency of the individual migrant is important in determining how and where this human traffic flows. This study has demonstrated that economic considerations played a major part in the decision to leave Ireland but lifestyle choices, family considerations, freedom, and adventure balanced these. It suggests that communications technology will affect successful settlement in a positive manner going forward.

One of the most important findings of this study is that Ireland's emigrants met Australia's needs in the study period. Combined with a migration culture and high participation in third level education, young Irish people had a propensity to emigrate and fortuitously 'fitted the bill' of Australia's labour needs. Certain demographics such as industry of occupation and level of education meant Irish people were well positioned to respond to shortages in Australia's health industry or construction sector.

One objective was to explore the high number of visitor or temporary visa holders who became permanent residents or citizens of Australia. This was despite a genuine intention, at the time of emigration, on the part of most temporary migrants, towards staying for the duration of the visa and then leaving Australia. The qualitative data brought to the fore the phenomenon of 'accidental' migration where life course-changing events such as a new relationship changed a working holiday destination into a new home place. Other newly-arrived migrants simply changed their minds quite soon after arriving in Australia and sought accessible pathways to more permanent status through a 457 visa sponsorship or an independent skilled visa application. The findings suggest that Australia's migration policy greatly assists migrants such as these with respect to flexibility in transitioning from temporary to permanent status and its emphasis on skilled migration.

The findings also suggest that the WHM visa was 'misused' to a certain degree given the high skill and qualification level of many migrants and a blatant intention on the part of some visa-holders to avoid typical backpacker jobs in favour of CV-building career positions. This suggests that using the WHM visa was simply a more expedient way of entering Australia. However, keeping in mind the expressed temporary intention and the context in more recent years of the financial crisis, it is not surprising that many migrants opted for the cheapest entry visa. The costs associated with immigrating to Australia indicate just how popular a destination it was for emigrating Irish during this period especially given the closer and cheaper destination options in the EU, Canada and America, notwithstanding the perception that Australia escaped the GFC relatively unscathed. In the broader picture of Australia's immigration policy, the visa churn from temporary to permanent status is noted by the DIBP and little has been done to affect any change suggesting this was an acceptable, indeed, perhaps even welcome outcome for the Australian Government until this point in time. There are now proposed changes that could see the major thoroughfare to permanent residency, the 457 visa, abolished and

replaced with two-year and four-year Temporary Skills Shortage (TSS) visas that do not necessarily lead to permanency.

Although there was a clear focus here on understanding why and how temporary Irish migrants stayed in Australia, equally important is attempting to unravel what motivated onward or return migration. This was especially important in light of the heightened satisfaction across career, job and salary exhibited by both those who stayed and those who had left Australia. Despite achieving relative success in these areas, many migrants opted to return to Ireland. This was primarily for family-related reasons. Those with ageing parents sought to be near them. Having children in Australia or planning a family inevitably raised the question of where a child should be raised. While some who remained in Australia opted for what they saw as a better lifestyle and wider range of opportunities there, as well as an escape from the confines of Irish society, for others, having an extended family circle close by and having their children experience a similar upbringing to themselves, despite Ireland's changed society, prompted some migrants to return to Ireland. Survey respondents largely had an Irish spouse or partner which increased the likelihood of return to Ireland since both parties had a connection to Ireland. Overall, practical considerations such as employment prospects and accommodation were secondary to fulfilling what were primarily emotional needs related to homesickness and proximity to family. For some migrants there was a wish to live outside Ireland but not in a place as distant as Australia. For this reason, the UK was a popular place of onward migration.

The advancement and relative affordability of certain technologies, specifically air travel and new communications technology, have enabled migrants to maintain or commence transnational relationships. Those who migrated decades ago have been able to reconnect to their home town and local community, as well as reignite old friendships through media applications such as Facebook™. For newer migrants, close contact with friends and family has continued with social media and direct communication applications such as WhatsApp™ which enables group conversation that was widely used by respondents. Real-time newsfeed and online newspapers facilitated the maintenance of knowledge of local and national news and current affairs. While this was a factor in everyday, transnational conversation as emigrants could participate knowledgeably in discussions of local or national importance, this knowledge was raised as a reason why emigrants expected some form of expatriate political participation in Ireland. Against those who sought to deny an emigrant vote, a common response contained numerous elements: it was suggested that some recent emigrants had been impelled to leave because of the state of the Irish economy and it was possible they would return; some were still paying property tax in Ireland and subject to laws and policies over which they had no control in the form of a vote; and, finally, some felt they should have a say in the future of the Ireland they would return to.

Frequent return visits were possible with most migrants returning at least once every two to three years. Income and stage of life played a part in this as the affordability of return trips decreased as family size increased. Combined with video-call technology, going 'home' was believed to be key to

maintaining and constructing an Irish or Irish Australian identity for diasporic children. Irish cultural activity was often fostered by migrant parents in Australia as part of this. Questions of identity were explored in the take up of Australian citizenship and some respondents felt their Australian citizenship was important in terms of the family unit, especially where there were Australian-born children or an Australian-spouse. For others, rather than demonstrating loyalty to Australia or a desire to participate politically, obtaining citizenship was largely a method of securing residency status and providing an option for future re-entry in the event of return to Ireland. Respondents were not willing to rescind their Irish citizenship to get Australian citizenship.

Conclusion

This thesis serves as a snapshot of Irish immigration to Australia in recent years. In covering the recent period from 2000 it marks the end of an era as immigration visa changes loom. Recent developments in Australian immigration policy, such as the abolition of the 457 visa and changes to citizenship criteria, will undoubtedly have an effect on some respondents and on those who emigrate from Ireland to Australia in the future. While it is difficult to predict exactly what the effect of these changes will be, the pathway from visitor or temporary visa to permanency that the 457 represented, and which was well-trodden by the respondents here, has clearly been compromised. It is likely there will be a commensurate effect on citizenship take up also as the increased time requirement as a permanent resident may affect their willingness to stay in Australia to get citizenship for those for whom it is merely a safety net.

To conclude, this study has captured the experiences of a small proportion of the thousands of Irish immigrants in Australia. Through the technological developments of the past decade or so we can see that the migrant experience is forever changed due to the intimacy afforded by new, cheaper, widely available communications technology and the affordability of international travel. One explanation for the high level of Irish migration to Australia is that the pathways to temporary migration were very open, and there was also a high degree of mobility possible between visa streams, leading ultimately to permanent residency. Most notable here is the phenomenon of Working Holiday Makers who transitioned quickly and rather seamlessly to a permanent visa pathway. In general, social settlement was successful and many Irish migrants maintained close friendships where Irish and other migrants predominated. A small proportion of respondents sought little or no connection to other Irish migrants or cultural associations, yet still self-identify as Irish, and were able to access the surveys on which this study is based. Success in the labour market facilitated permanent residency through 457 visa sponsorship and career advancement was one of the most obvious advantages of emigration.

Improvements in job, salary and career and an overall better quality of life did not prevent return migration. For the majority of returnees, a need to be closer to family networks and a desire to have

their Australian-born children grow up in Ireland were the prime motivators for return migration. The uptake of Australian citizenship allowed many of those who left to re-emigrate safe in the knowledge that return to Australia would be a future option. For those who remained in Australia, while Ireland will always be home, Australia is their preferred residence. Return is not currently desired for different reasons; some do not have a supportive family network in Ireland and life with children there would be no different to life in Australia; others recognised that desirable employment would probably mean living in Dublin where housing is scarce and expensive. This fact also precludes close proximity to family for anyone who originates from anywhere except Dublin.

Although adventure and employment were the two primary motivators for migration, circumstances in Australia in terms of career opportunity and life events such as relationships and having children cemented settlement. When questioning whether economic benefits related to income, work/life balance and lifestyle outweighed emotional factors surrounding family ties in Ireland in the long-term settlement of Irish people in Australia, the answer is not as simple as 'Yes' or 'No' for a myriad of reasons. The majority of respondents were aged between 22 and 29 when they emigrated. This is a period when many people form relationships and their own nuclear families. Where a relationship forms with a non-Irish partner, the inclination to live in Ireland permanently can lessen. When a relationship produced children, some migrants opted to return so children could benefit from relationships with the wider family circle, while others decided they could have the best of both worlds: Australia could provide their children more opportunity in terms of experiences and lifestyle, and communication technology developments could provide familial connections. For a minority, emotional ties to Ireland had no bearing on their decision to settle or return to Ireland. Pragmatic decisions about career development encouraged onward migration and some relished experiencing new cultures and environments. Many of those who opted not to settle in Australia permanently did not return to Ireland but moved somewhere closer to home. Australia's distance was a negative factor for some – it is simply too far away. Overall, the Irish migrant experience in Australia in the period from 2000 was a strongly positive one. Current proposed immigration policy decisions, should they be legislated and enacted, could change the pathways to permanence demonstrated in this thesis. However, given Australia's focus on skilled migration, it is likely that high levels of Irish migration to Australia will continue as Irish people, skilled, highly educated and motivated, seek adventure, change and new experiences.

Appendices

Appendix 1

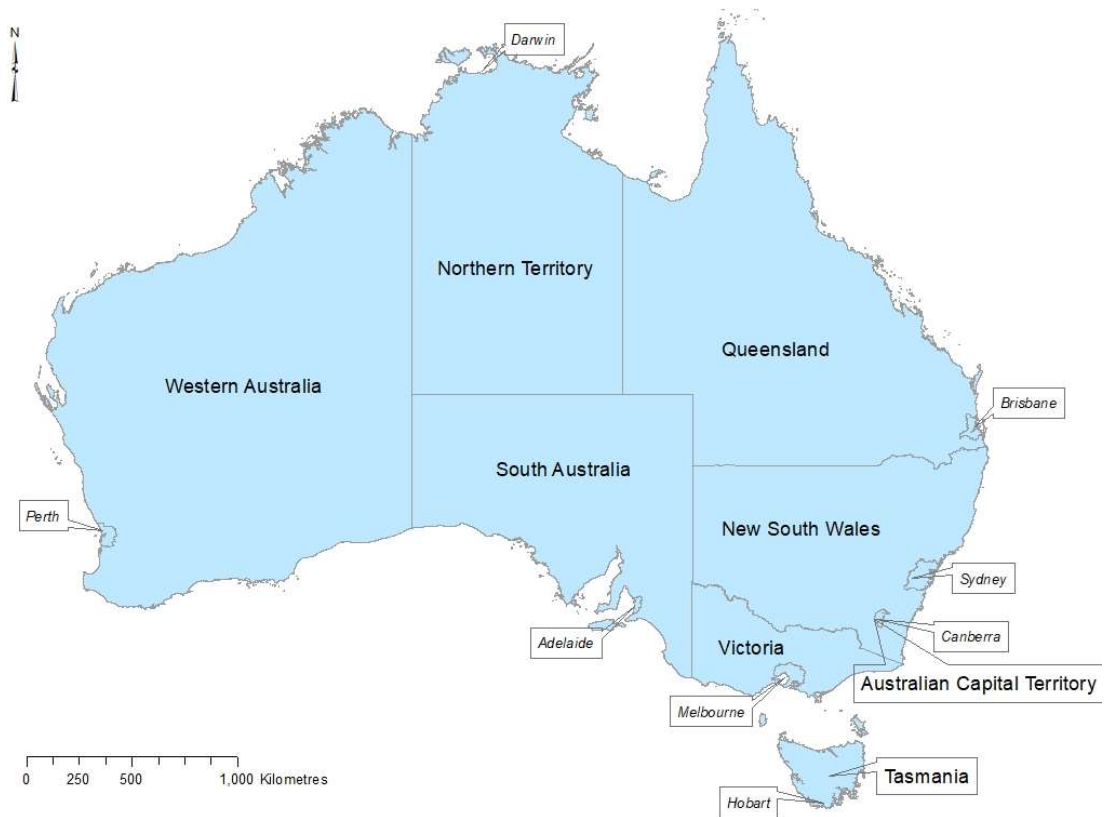
Map of Ireland



Source: https://www.uni-due.de/IERC/IERC_Maps_of_Ireland.htm

Appendix 2

Map of Australia



Source: Prepared by Julia Law, Centre for Housing, Urban and Regional Planning (CHURP), University of Adelaide.

Appendix 3

Irish in Australia Survey

Emigrating to Australia: the experiences of contemporary migrants

1. A study of contemporary migration to Australia

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey. Its purpose is to gain some insight into the reason/s people leave Ireland/Northern Ireland and move to Australia and the various experiences of migration. The collected data will be de-identified, aggregated and stored securely.

HREC Approval No:H-2014-234

Purpose of the study: This study is being undertaken to gather data from persons who have travelled from Ireland/Northern Ireland to Australia on a long-term temporary or permanent visa. The data will be used to investigate the impact of immigration policy and social media and technology on the migration experience. Impact is measured in terms of return visits to Ireland, migrants' perceptions of connectedness to 'home' and the settling in process with regard to family, social networks and working life. Pre-migration sources of information about Australia and measuring expectations against the reality of migration are also covered.

A central aim of this research is to determine what, if any, barriers to successful settlement exist for migrants from Ireland/Northern Ireland. The research is being undertaken as part of a doctoral study by Fidelma Breen.

This online survey should take between 5 and 10 minutes to complete and requires either a tick or a few words as a response to the questions. Please try to finish it. Partial surveys can be used but completed ones give a better foundation to the study. The study is completely confidential and whatever is reported in the study will not identify you in any way. All analysis of responses is undertaken at an aggregate and not an individual level. Once the survey data has been analysed, results will be made available for your viewing upon request.

At the end of the survey you will be asked if you would like to participate further in this study in the form of an interview conducted in person or by phone. If you could help in this regard, please leave your details in the space provided.

We are extremely grateful to you for taking the time to be part of this research. As a migrant from Ireland/Northern Ireland your participation is invaluable.

If you have any questions or would like more information please contact one of the researchers listed below. Once again, thank you for your participation.

Professor Graeme Hugo: Graeme.hugo@adelaide.edu.au or (08) 8313 5646

Fidelma Breen: Fidelma.breen@adelaide.edu.au or (08) 8313 4736

By continuing with the survey you indicate that you have read and understood the information given and meet the following inclusion criteria.

The inclusion criteria for the study are as follows:

- Participants must be over the age of eighteen
- have migrated from Ireland/Northern Ireland
- have travelled to Australia on a long-term temporary or permanent visa.

The study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Adelaide (approval number H-2014-234). If you have questions or problems associated with the practical aspects of your participation in the project, or wish to raise a concern or complaint about the project, then you should consult the Principal Investigator. Contact the Human Research Ethics Committee's Secretariat on phone (08) 8313 6028 or by email to hrec@adelaide.edu.au. If you wish to speak with an independent person regarding concerns or a complaint, the University's policy on research involving human participants, or your rights as a participant. Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

If I want to participate, what do I do? Viewing online? Continue with this electronic survey until

completed
Participating in the survey in

* 1. Participation consent. If you have departed Australia please take this survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DepartedAustralia>

- Yes, I consent to taking this survey. I have emigrated to Australia and am currently living in Australia.
- No, I do not meet the inclusion criteria

Emigrating to Australia: the experiences of contemporary migrants

2. VISA

* 1. On which visa did you enter Australia for the first time?

- Contributory Parent visa (subclass 143)
- Higher Education Sector visa (subclass 573)
- Postgraduate Research Sector visa (subclass 574)
- Partner (Provisional) visa (subclass 309)
- Partner (Migrant) visa (subclass 100)
- Prospective Marriage visa (subclass 300)
- Training and Research visa (subclass 402)
- Student Guardian visa (subclass 580)
- Temporary Work (Skilled) visa (subclass 457)
- Skilled Independent visa (subclass 189)
- Business Innovation and Investment (Permanent) visa (subclass 888)
- Working Holiday visa (subclass 417)
- Temporary Work (Long Stay Activity) visa (subclass 401)
- Employer Nomination Scheme (subclass 186)
- Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme visa (subclass 187)
- Skilled Nominated visa (subclass 190 – no longer requires formal qualifications in trade)
- Skilled—Recognised Graduate visa (subclass 476)
- Skilled Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 489)
- Business Owner visa (subclass 890)
- State/Territory Sponsored Business Owner visa (subclass 892)
- Other

Other (please specify)

2. Which visa from the list above applies to your partner (if you have one)

* 3. Which visa do you currently hold?

4. When does this visa expire?

5. What do you intend to do when this visa expires?

6. Did you sit an English language proficiency test?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

7. If Yes, how many times did you attempt the test?

8. Please feel free to comment below on your experience of the visa application process and the conditions attached to your visa/s

Emigrating to Australia: the experiences of contemporary migrants

3. LEAVING IRELAND/NORTHERN IRELAND

1. What year did you leave Ireland/Northern Ireland?

2. Where did you go when you left Ireland/Northern Ireland?

3. If you have migrated more than once, please provide more information in the table below:

Country	<input type="text"/>
Dates of residence	<input type="text"/>
Reason for moving to this place	<input type="text"/>
Job held there (by you or by partner)	<input type="text"/>
Country	<input type="text"/>
Dates of residence	<input type="text"/>
Reason for moving to this place	<input type="text"/>
Job held there (by you or by partner)	<input type="text"/>
Country	<input type="text"/>
Dates of residence	<input type="text"/>
Reason for moving to this place	<input type="text"/>
Job held there (by you or by partner)	<input type="text"/>

* 4. What was the MAIN reason you left Ireland/Northern Ireland? Please feel free to expand on your reasons for leaving in your next answer.

- To gain job experience
- To find a job
- To travel
- To experience another culture
- For family/relationship reasons
- To escape the political climate
- To escape the economic situation
- Other

Other (please specify)

* 5. Did you leave Ireland/Northern Ireland MAINLY because:

- You wanted to
- You had to

Comment

Emigrating to Australia: the experiences of contemporary migrants

4. EMPLOYMENT IN IRELAND/NORTHERN IRELAND

* 1. What was your main occupation in Ireland/Northern Ireland?

* 2. Before you left Ireland/Northern Ireland, how would you have described your employment status? Please select one

- Working full-time
- Working part-time
- Long-term Unemployed (more than 1 year)
- Short-term Unemployed (less than 1 year)
- Student
- Looking after home/family
- Retired
- Other (please specify)

3. What type of contract did you have?

- I was not working
- Temporary
- Fixed-term
- Permanent
- No contract
- Does not apply
- Other (please specify)

4. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

My work in Ireland/Northern Ireland was suitable for someone with my qualifications and skills

- Yes
- No
- Does not apply

5. Before you left Ireland/Northern Ireland, on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest, how satisfied were you with your:

	Very dissatisfied 1	2	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied 3	4	Very satisfied 5
Job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Salary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career prospects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Does not apply? (please type Yes in comment box below)

Emigrating to Australia: the experiences of contemporary migrants

5. LIVING AND SOCIALISING IN IRELAND/NORTHERN IRELAND

1. In the property you lived in prior to leaving Ireland/Northern Ireland, were you:

- Renting
- The owner with a mortgage
- Living with parent(s)

Other (please specify)

* 2. Prior to departure, did you live: Please select all that apply

- Alone
- With child/children
- With parent(s)
- With other family member(s)
- With housemates/flatmates
- With partner/spouse
- Other

3. Were you involved with any organised local community activity in Ireland/Northern Ireland before departing (e.g. sport, music, societies, church)?

- No
- Church (give details below)
- Sport (give details below)
- Music (give details below)
- Community (give details below)
- Charitable Societies (give details below)
- Cultural/Art activities (give details below)
- Informal activity (such as book club) (give details below)

Other (please specify) or comment on above answer

4. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest, how would you rate your quality of life in Ireland/Northern Ireland before departure?

	Poor 1	2	Satisfactory 3	4	Excellent 5
Quality of life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Emigrating to Australia: the experiences of contemporary migrants

6. YOUR MIGRATION DECISION

1. What prompted your decision to migrate?

2. Did you view the move as a temporary one?

Yes

No

Please explain

3. How influential on your decision to leave was Ireland/Northern Ireland's economic situation:

Not at all influential

Slightly influential

Moderately influential

Very influential

Extremely influential

4. Did you source information about Australia from any of the following?

Internet (please give examples of sites you may have used for this)

Friends/family who had been there

Job fairs

Online expat community

Facebook or other social media sites

Australian Immigration website - www.immi.gov.au

State/Territory websites

Please specify

5. About which of the following did you seek information?

- Accommodation costs
- Job availability
- Cost of groceries
- Availability of Irish/British foods
- Local transport
- Location/suburb advice
- School information (private/public school system)
- Weather
- Local activities
- Shipping providers
- Advice on what personal effects to bring and what's best bought on arrival
- Currency exchange

Other (please specify)

6. Did you discuss moving to Australia with members of online groups before arrival?

- Yes
- No

Please specify which ones:

7. Please comment on the accuracy and usefulness of the information you received before migrating

Emigrating to Australia: the experiences of contemporary migrants

7. YOUR MIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

* 1. How old were you when you moved to Australia?

* 2. Did you leave with:

- Friend(s)
- Parent(s)
- Child/children
- Immediate family (e.g. brother)
- Extended family (e.g. cousin)
- Partner or spouse
- Alone

3. Did you have people you already knew living in the location you moved to?

- Yes, friend(s)
- Yes, immediate family (e.g. sister)
- Yes, extended family (e.g. cousin)
- Yes, partner or spouse
- Yes, Other
- No

Other (please specify)

* 4. When you came to Australia did you intend to apply for permanent residency?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

Other (please specify)

5. When you came to Australia did you (or do you) intend for other family members to follow you?

- Yes
- No
- Had not considered it

If Yes, who? Have other family members followed you to Australia?

Emigrating to Australia: the experiences of contemporary migrants

8. LIVING IN AUSTRALIA

1. Where are you living currently?

- New South Wales
- Victoria
- South Australia
- Western Australia
- Tasmania
- Queensland
- Northern Territory
- Australian Capital Territory

2. Please list the places you have lived in Australia

Town/State	
Dates of residence	
Reason for moving	
Job held there (by you or by partner)	
Town/State	
Dates of residence	
Reason for moving	
Job held there (by you or by partner)	
Town/State	
Dates of residence	
Reason for moving	
Job held there (by you or by partner)	
Town/State	
Dates of residence	
Reason for moving	
Job held there (by you or by partner)	
Town/State	
Dates of residence	
Reason for moving	
Job held there (by you or by partner)	

3. Did Irish/Northern Irish contacts help you to find somewhere to live in Australia?

- Yes, Irish/Northern Irish friends from home
- Yes, Irish/Northern Irish people I met since my arrival
- Yes, an Irish/Northern Irish employer
- Yes, an Irish/Northern Irish/expat facebook page/group or online forum - please provide name/s in "Other" below
- No

Other (please specify)

4. In the property you currently reside in, are you:

- Renting
- The owner
- Other (please specify)

5. Currently, do you live: * Please select all that apply

- Alone
- With child/children
- With parent(s)
- With other family member(s)
- With housemates/flatmates
- With partner
- With spouse
- Other (please specify)

6. Are the people you are living with: please select all that apply

- Irish/Northern Irish only
- Australians only (apart from you)
- Non-Irish/Northern Irish migrants only (apart from you)
- A mix of Irish/Northern Irish and other migrants
- A mix of Irish/Northern Irish and Australians
- Other (please specify)

7. Thinking about the cost of living in Australia:

	Yes	No
Do you consider the cost of living high in Australia?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you regularly compare the cost of items in Australia with those in Ireland/Northern Ireland?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please comment if you wish to

8. Thinking of sending money to Ireland/Northern Ireland:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
How often do you send money home to family in Ireland/Northern Ireland?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How often do you send money back to Ireland/Northern Ireland to repay a mortgage?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Emigrating to Australia: the experiences of contemporary migrants

9. SOCIALISING IN AUSTRALIA

1. Thinking about your social activity, how often do you:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
socialise with Irish/Northern Irish/British people?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
participate in organised Irish/Northern Irish/British community activity (e.g. sport, music, culture)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
socialise with Australians?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
socialise with other, non-Irish/Northern Irish/British, immigrants?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Are you involved with local community activity in Australia?

- No
- Church (give details below)
- Community (give details below)
- Music (give details below)
- Sport (give details below)
- Charitable Societies (give details below)
- Cultural/Art activities (give details below)
- Informal activity (such as book club) (give details below)
- Other (please specify)

3. Do you visit the local Irish/British Club?

- There isn't one near me
- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often
- Don't know where it is

4. Please give examples of any activities in which you participate related to the Irish/British Club?

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10. WORKING IN AUSTRALIA

1. Are you or your partner a FIFO (Fly in, fly out) worker?

- Yes, both of us
- Yes, me
- Yes, partner
- No

Please comment

* 2. How would you describe your present employment status?

- Working full-time
- Working part-time
- Unemployed
- Student
- Looking after home/family
- Retired
- Unable to work due to illness/disability

Other (please specify)

3. If you are a student, at what institution are you studying? Please provide the name of the course/degree and area of study.

Institution of study:

Program: (e.g. Bachelor)

Area of study:

4. To what extent would you agree or disagree: My work in Australia is suitable for someone with my qualifications and skills.

- Yes
- No
- Does not apply

5. Considering your industry/occupation, do you think wages are higher in Australia?

- Yes
- No

Please comment if you wish to

* 6. Did Irish/Northern Irish contacts help you to find work in Australia?

- Yes, Irish/Northern Irish friends from home
- Yes, Irish/Northern Irish people I met since my arrival
- Yes, an Irish/Northern Irish employer
- Yes, an Irish/Northern Irish/expat facebook page/group or online forum - please provide name/s below in "Other"
- Yes, an employment agent
- No
- No, I secured a job before I came

Other (please specify)

7. If you secured a job before arrival, did your employer provide relocation expenses?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please provide details:

8. Is employment with a specific employer or within a specific industry/trade/occupation a condition of your current or previous visa?

- Yes
- No
- Please explain

9. On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest, how satisfied are you with your:

	Very dissatisfied 1	2	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied 3	4	Very satisfied 5
Job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career prospects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Does not apply? (please type Yes in comment box below)

* 10. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest, how would rate your quality of life in Australia?

	Poor 1	2	Satisfactory 3	4	Excellent 5
Quality of life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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11. CITIZENSHIP

1. Are you an Australian citizen?

Yes No

2. If Yes, what year was citizenship granted?

3. If No, why haven't you applied for Australian citizenship?

4. Do you plan to apply for Australian citizenship (for those who do not already have it)?

Yes
 No
 Unsure

5. Why did you/will you apply for Australian citizenship?

Emigrating to Australia: the experiences of contemporary migrants

12. KEEPING IN TOUCH

1. Thinking of keeping in touch with Ireland/Northern Ireland, how often do you:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
read Irish/Northern Irish/British newspapers online?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
buy Irish/Northern Irish/British foods online or where you live?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
watch Irish/Northern Irish/British cable/internet tv	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
watch Irish/Northern Irish/British cable/internet tv or	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
listen to Irish/Northern Irish/British radio stations?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
skype friends and family in Ireland/Northern Ireland?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
phone friends and family in Ireland/Northern Ireland?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
text friends and family in Ireland/Northern Ireland (including using Facebook Messenger)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
email your friends and family in Ireland/Northern Ireland?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
keep in contact with friends and family in Ireland/Northern Ireland via social network sites?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please list the social media and/or apps you use to keep in touch

2. How often do you use Irish/British/Expat Facebook pages/groups?

- Never
- Every few months
- Every few weeks
- Monthly
- Weekly
- Daily

3. How often do you meet/socialise with other members of online Irish/British/Expat groups?

- Never
- Every few months
- Every few weeks
- Monthly
- Weekly
- Daily

4. Please give example/s of any activities in which you participate related to online groups

Emigrating to Australia: the experiences of contemporary migrants

13. RETURNING TO IRELAND/NORTHERN IRELAND

* 1. On average, how frequently do you return to Ireland/Northern Ireland:

- I have not been back
- Several times a year
- Once a year
- Once every two or three years
- Once every five years

2. If you have not yet returned, which of the following factors prevent you from returning?

- It's too soon to go back
- It's too expensive
- I would rather spend holiday time/money visiting other places
- I don't get enough annual leave to visit Ireland
- Family/friends visit/will visit me this year
- Other (please specify)

3. Would you like to return to live in Ireland/Northern Ireland?

- Very much
- Quite a lot
- Not sure
- Not that much
- Not at all

Please comment as to why/why not:

4. How likely is it that you will return to live in Ireland/Northern Ireland?

- Not likely at all
- Unlikely
- Not sure
- Likely
- Very likely

5. What would increase your chances of returning to live in Ireland/Northern Ireland?

6. What would make you leave Australia?

7. For respondents with a visa of a fixed duration, do you intend to:

- Does not apply
- Extend your visa if possible
- Return to Ireland/Northern Ireland when visa expires
- Migrate to another country when visa expires
- Stay no matter what
- Other (please specify)/Comment:

8. To what extent do you agree or disagree

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The Irish/British government provides adequate support for emigrants overseas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Irish/British government is doing its best to tackle the causes of emigration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expats should be eligible to vote in general elections in Ireland/Northern Ireland	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

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14. HOMESICKNESS

* 1. Do you experience homesickness?

Yes

No

Comment if you wish to:

2. Does homesickness (experienced by you or a family member) negatively impact your life in Australia?

Yes

No

Sometimes

Not sure

Please explain

3. Do you think you would use the services of a migration counsellor? (someone to talk through feelings of separation, anxiety, loneliness etc with)

Yes

No

4. Would your use of a migration counselling service depend on cost/Medicare subsidy?

Yes

No

Please comment if you wish to

5. Do you think it would be useful for a migration counsellor to have a cultural background similar to a user of the service?

6. Are you aware of support organisations in Australia for migrants from Ireland/Northern Ireland?

Yes

No

If Yes, what organisation/s do you know of?

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15. SUMMING UP YOUR MIGRATION EXPERIENCE

1. What has been the worst part of your migration experience?

2. What has been the best part of your migration experience?

3. Are there other aspects of your migration experience would you like to comment on?

Emigrating to Australia: the experiences of contemporary migrants

16. About You

* 1. Are you:

- Male
- Female
- Transgender

2. Sexuality

- Heterosexual
- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Transgender
- Queer
- Other

* 3. What year were you born?

* 4. Where were you born?

5. What is your nationality? If you have more than one nationality, please tick all that apply.

- Irish
- British
- Australian
- Other (please specify)

6. Relationship status:

- Married
- De Facto
- Partner
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated
- Single
- Other (please specify)

7. If you are married or with a long-term partner, is this person:

- Does not apply
- Irish/Northern Irish/British-born
- Australian-born
- Other (please specify)

* 8. Do you have children?

- Yes
- No

9. How many children do you have?

10. How old are your child/ren?

* 11. What was the highest level of education/training you had completed prior to leaving Ireland/Northern Ireland?

- Lower secondary
- Upper secondary
- Post Leaving Certificate/A Level course
- Diploma
- Completed Apprenticeship/Trade Certificate
- Bachelor/Honours Degree
- Postgraduate Diploma/Masters
- PhD

Other (please specify)

* 12. What year did you finish this education or training?

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17. Survey feedback

1. Do you have anything you would like to add, either about the survey or your migration experience?

2. If you would you be willing to discuss these issues in more detail through a personal interview with the researcher via phone, skype or in person, please provide your contact details below. The interview should take no more than one hour of your time and will be held at a time and venue most suitable for you.

Name

Mobile number

Email address

* 11. What was the highest level of education/training you had completed prior to leaving Ireland/Northern Ireland?

- Lower secondary
- Upper secondary
- Post Leaving Certificate/A Level course
- Diploma
- Completed Apprenticeship/Trade Certificate
- Bachelor/Honours Degree
- Postgraduate Diploma/Masters
- PhD

Other (please specify)

* 12. What year did you finish this education or training?

Emigrating to Australia: the experiences of contemporary migrants

17. Survey feedback

1. Do you have anything you would like to add, either about the survey or your migration experience?

2. If you would you be willing to discuss these issues in more detail through a personal interview with the researcher via phone, skype or in person, please provide your contact details below. The interview should take no more than one hour of your time and will be held at a time and venue most suitable for you.

Name	<input type="text"/>
Mobile number	<input type="text"/>
Email address	<input type="text"/>

3. If you do not wish to be interviewed but do not mind completing a very brief survey in twelve months' time please leave your contact details below. Thank you

Name:

Mobile Number:

Email address:

4. If you have or have had a visa which was attached to employment would you permit us to contact your employer?

Yes

No

5. If Yes, please provide contact details for the employer:

Company Name

Contact Person

Mobile Number

Email address

Appendix 4

Departed Australia Survey

Departing Australia: the experiences of Irish migrants

1. A study of contemporary Irish migration to Australia and reasons for departure

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey. Its purpose is to gain some insight into the reason/s people leave Ireland/Northern Ireland and move to Australia and the various experiences of migration.

The collected data will be de-identified, aggregated and stored securely.

HREC Approval No: H-2014-234

Purpose of the study: This study is being undertaken to gather data from persons who have travelled from Ireland/Northern Ireland to Australia on a long-term temporary or permanent visa and departed from Australia again. The data will be used to investigate the impact of immigration policy and social media and technology on the migration experience. Impact is measured in terms of return visits to Ireland, migrants' perceptions of connectedness to 'home' and the settling in process with regard to family, social networks and working life. Pre-migration sources of information about Australia and measuring expectations against the reality of migration are also covered.

A central aim of this research is to determine what barriers to successful settlement exist for migrants from Ireland/Northern Ireland. The research is being undertaken as part of a doctoral degree by Fidelma Breen.

This online survey should take between 15 and 20 minutes to complete and requires either a tick or a few words as a response to the questions. Please try to finish it. Partial surveys can be used but completed ones give the study a stronger foundation. The study is completely confidential and whatever is reported in the study will not identify you in any way. All analysis of responses is undertaken at an aggregate and not an individual level. Once the survey data has been analysed, results will be made available for your viewing upon request.

At the end of the survey you will be asked if you would like to participate in a personal interview conducted by phone or in person. If you could help in this regard, please leave your details in the space provided.

We are extremely grateful to you for taking the time to be part of this research. As a migrant from Ireland/Northern Ireland your participation is invaluable.

If you have any questions or would like more information please contact one of the researchers listed below. Once again, thank you for your participation.

Professor Graeme Hugo: Graeme.hugo@adelaide.edu.au or (08) 8313 5646
Fidelma Breen: Fidelma.breen@adelaide.edu.au or (08) 8313

If you proceed with the survey you indicate that you have read and understood this information and meet the following inclusion criteria.

The inclusion criteria for the study are as follows:

Participants must

- be over the age of eighteen
- have migrated from Ireland/Northern Ireland
- have travelled to Australia on a long-term temporary or permanent visa
- have since departed Australia

The study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Adelaide (approval number H-2014-234). If you have questions or problems associated with the practical aspects of your participation in the project, or wish to raise a concern or complaint about the project, then you should consult the Principal Investigator. Contact the Human Research Ethics Committee's Secretariat on phone (08) 8313 6028 or by email to hrec@adelaide.edu.au. If you wish to speak with an independent person regarding concerns or a complaint, the University's policy on research involving human participants, or your rights as a participant. Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

If I want to participate, what do I do?

- Viewing online? Continue with this electronic survey until completed

Participating in the survey indicates that you give your consent to be part of this research project. If you give your consent to participate in the survey please click the button below.

* 1. Participation consent. If you are still living in Australia and do not intend to leave in the immediate future please take this survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/IrishInAustralia>. Thank you.

- Yes I consent to taking the survey. I have emigrated to Australia but have since departed (or will within the next few months)
- No, I do not meet the inclusion criteria

Departing Australia: the experiences of Irish migrants

2. CURRENT PLACE OF RESIDENCE

1. Where do you live now?

Departing Australia: the experiences of Irish migrants

3. VISA

* 1. On which visa did you enter Australia for the first time?

- Not applicable
- Contributory Parent visa (subclass 143)
- Higher Education Sector visa (subclass 573)
- Postgraduate Research Sector visa (subclass 574)
- Partner (Provisional) visa (subclass 309)
- Partner (Migrant) visa (subclass 100)
- Prospective Marriage visa (subclass 300)
- Training and Research visa (subclass 402)
- Student Guardian visa (subclass 580)
- Temporary Work (Skilled) visa (subclass 457)
- Skilled Independent visa (subclass 189)
- Business Innovation and Investment (Permanent) visa (subclass 888)
- Working Holiday visa (subclass 417)
- Temporary Work (Long Stay Activity) visa (subclass 401)
- Employer Nomination Scheme (subclass 186)
- Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme visa (subclass 187)
- Skilled Nominated visa (subclass 190 – no longer requires formal qualifications in trade)
- Skilled—Recognised Graduate visa (subclass 476)
- Skilled Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 489)
- Business Owner visa (subclass 890)
- State/Territory Sponsored Business Owner visa (subclass 892)

Other (please specify)

2. Which visa from the list above applied to your partner (if you have one)

3. Please feel free to comment below on your experience of the visa application process and the conditions attached to your visa/s

Departing Australia: the experiences of Irish migrants

3

4. LEAVING IRELAND/NORTHERN IRELAND

1. What year did you leave Ireland/Northern Ireland?

2. Where did you go when you left Ireland/Northern Ireland?

3. If you have migrated more than once, please provide more information in the table below:

Country	<input type="text"/>
Dates of residence	<input type="text"/>
Reason for moving to this place	<input type="text"/>
Job held there (by you or by partner)	<input type="text"/>
Country	<input type="text"/>
Dates of residence	<input type="text"/>
Reason for moving to this place	<input type="text"/>
Job held there (by you or by partner)	<input type="text"/>
Country	<input type="text"/>
Dates of residence	<input type="text"/>
Reason for moving to this place	<input type="text"/>
Job held there (by you or by partner)	<input type="text"/>

* 4. What was the MAIN reason you left Ireland/Northern Ireland? Please feel free to expand on your reasons for leaving in your next answer.

- To gain job experience
- To find a job
- To travel
- To experience another culture
- For family/relationship reasons
- To escape the political climate
- To escape the economic situation
- Other

Please specify

* 5. Did you leave Ireland/Northern Ireland MAINLY because:

- You wanted to
- You had to

Comment

Departing Australia: the experiences of Irish migrants

5. EMPLOYMENT IN IRELAND/NORTHERN IRELAND

* 1. What was your main occupation in Ireland/Northern Ireland?

* 2. Before you left Ireland/Northern Ireland, how would you have described your employment status?

Please select one

- Working full-time
- Working part-time
- Long-term Unemployed (more than 1 year)
- Short-term Unemployed (less than 1 year)
- Student
- Looking after home/family
- Retired
- Other (please specify)

* 3. What type of contract did you have?

- I was not working
- Temporary
- Fixed-term
- Permanent
- No contract
- Does not apply

4. To what extent would you agree or disagree: My work in Ireland/Northern Ireland was suitable for someone with my qualifications and skills.

- Yes
- No
- Does not apply

5. Before you left Ireland/Northern Ireland, on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest, how satisfied were you with your:

	Very dissatisfied 1	2	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied 3	4	Very satisfied 5
Job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Salary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career prospects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Does not apply? (please type Yes in comment box below)

6. LIVING AND SOCIALISING IN IRELAND/NORTHERN IRELAND

1. In the property you lived in prior to leaving Ireland/Northern Ireland, were you:

- Renting
- The owner with a mortgage
- Living with parent(s)

Other (please specify)

* 2. Prior to departure, did you live: Please select all that apply

- Alone
- With child/children
- With parent(s)
- With other family member(s)
- With housemates/flatmates
- With partner/spouse
- Other

3. Were you involved with any organised local community activity in Ireland/Northern Ireland before departing (e.g. sport, music, societies, church)?

- No
- Church (give details below)
- Sport (give details below)
- Music (give details below)
- Community (give details below)
- Charitable Societies (give details below)
- Cultural/Art activities (give details below)
- Informal activity (such as book club) (give details below)

Other (please specify) or comment on above answer

4. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest, how would you rate your quality of life in Ireland/Northern Ireland before departure?

	Poor 1	2	Satisfactory 3	4	Excellent 5
Quality of life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Departing Australia: the experiences of Irish migrants

7. YOUR MIGRATION DECISION

1. What prompted your decision to migrate?

2. Did you view the move as a temporary one?

- Yes
 No

Please explain

3. How influential on your decision to leave was Ireland/Northern Ireland's economic situation:

- Not at all influential
 Slightly influential
 Moderately influential
 Very influential
 Extremely influential

4. Did you source information about Australia from any of the following?

- Internet (please give examples of sites you may have used for this)
- Friends/family who had been there
- Job fairs
- Online expat community
- Facebook or other social media sites
- Australian immigration website - www.immi.gov.au
- State/Territory websites

Please specify

5. About which of the following did you seek information?

- Accommodation costs
- Job availability
- Cost of groceries
- Availability of Irish/British foods
- Local transport
- Location/suburb advice
- School information (private/public school system)
- Weather
- Local activities
- Shipping providers
- Advice on what personal effects to bring and what's best bought on arrival
- Currency exchange

Other (please specify)

6. Did you discuss moving to Australia with members of online groups before arrival?

Yes

No

Please specify which ones:

7. Please comment on the accuracy and usefulness of the information you received before migrating

Departing Australia: the experiences of Irish migrants

8. YOUR MIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

* 1. How old were you when you moved to Australia?

* 2. Did you leave with:

Friend(s)

Parent(s)

Child/children

Immediate family (e.g. brother)

Extended family (e.g. cousin)

Partner or spouse

Alone

3. Did you have people you already knew living in the location you moved to?

- Yes, friend(s)
- Yes, immediate family (e.g. sister)
- Yes, extended family (e.g. cousin)
- Yes, partner or spouse
- Yes, Other
- No

Other (please specify)

* 4. When you came to Australia did you intend to apply for permanent residency?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

Other (please specify)

5. When you came to Australia did you intend for other family members to follow you?

- Yes
- No
- Had not considered it

If Yes, who? Did other family members follow you to Australia?

Departing Australia: the experiences of Irish migrants

9. LIVING IN AUSTRALIA

1. Please list the places where you lived in Australia

Town/State	
Dates of residence	
Reason for moving	
Job held there (by you or by partner)	
Town/State	
Dates of residence	
Reason for moving	
Job held there (by you or by partner)	
Town/State	
Dates of residence	
Reason for moving	
Job held there (by you or by partner)	
Town/State	
Dates of residence	
Reason for moving	
Job held there (by you or by partner)	
Town/State	
Dates of residence	
Reason for moving	
Job held there (by you or by partner)	

2. Did Irish/Northern Irish contacts help you to find somewhere to live in Australia?

- Yes, Irish/Northern Irish friends from home
- Yes, Irish/Northern Irish people I met since my arrival
- Yes, an Irish/Northern Irish employer
- Yes, an Irish/Northern Irish/expat facebook page/group or online forum - please provide name/s in "Other" below
- No

Other (please specify)

3. In Australia did you:

- Rent
- Own your home (with or without a mortgage)
- Other (please specify)

4. In Australia, did you live: * Please select all that apply

- Alone
- With child/children
- With parent(s)
- With other family member(s)
- With housemates/flatmates
- With partner
- With spouse
- Other (please specify)

5. Were the people you lived with: please select all that apply

- Irish/Northern Irish only
- Australians only (apart from you)
- Non-Irish/Northern Irish migrants only (apart from you)
- A mix of Irish/Northern Irish and other migrants
- A mix of Irish/Northern Irish and Australians
- Other (please specify)

6. Thinking about the cost of living in Australia, did you:

	Yes	No
consider the cost of living high in Australia?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
regularly compare the cost of items in Australia with those in Ireland/Northern Ireland?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please comment if you wish to

7. Thinking about sending money to Ireland, how often:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Did you send money home to family in Ireland/Northern Ireland?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you send money back to Ireland/Northern Ireland to repay a mortgage?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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10. SOCIALISING IN AUSTRALIA

1. Thinking about your social activity in Australia, how often:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Did you socialise with Irish/Northern Irish/British people?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you participate in organised Irish/Northern Irish/British community activity (e.g. sport, music, culture)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you socialise with Australians?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you socialise with other, non-Irish/Northern Irish/British, immigrants?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Were you involved with local community activity in Australia?

- No
- Church (give details below)
- Community (give details below)
- Music (give details below)
- Sport (give details below)
- Charitable Societies (give details below)
- Cultural/Art activities (give details below)
- Informal activity (such as book club) (give details below)
- Other (please specify)

3. Did you visit the local Irish/British Club?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often
- Don't know where it is

4. Please give examples of any activities in which you participated related to the Irish/British Club?

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11. WORKING IN AUSTRALIA

1. What was your and/or your partner's main occupation in Australia?

2. Were you or your partner a FIFO (Fly in, fly out) worker?

- Yes, both of us
- Yes, me
- Yes, partner
- No

* 3. In Australia, were you:

- Working full-time
- Working part-time
- Unemployed
- Student
- Looking after home/family
- Retired
- Unable to work due to illness/disability

Other (please specify)

4. If you were a student, at what institution did you study? Please provide the name of the course/degree and area of study.

Institution of study:

Program: (e.g. Bachelor)

Area of study:

5. To what extent would you agree or disagree: My work in Australia was suitable for someone with my qualifications and skills.

- Yes
- No
- Does not apply

6. Considering your industry/occupation, do you think wages were higher in Australia?

- Yes
- No

Please comment if you wish to

* 7. Did Irish/Northern Irish contacts help you to find work in Australia?

- Yes, Irish/Northern Irish friends from home
- Yes, Irish/Northern Irish people I met since my arrival
- Yes, an Irish/Northern Irish employer
- Yes, an Irish/Northern Irish/expat facebook page/group or online forum - please provide name/s below in "Other"
- Yes, an employment agent
- No
- No, I secured a job before I came

Other (please specify)

8. If you secured a job before arrival, did your employer provide relocation expenses?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please provide details:

9. Was employment with a specific employer or within a specific industry/trade/occupation a condition of your visa/s?

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)

10. On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest, how satisfied were you with your Australian:

	Very dissatisfied 1	2	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied 3	4	Very satisfied 5
Job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career prospects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Does not apply? (please type Yes in comment box below)

* 11. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest, how would rate your quality of life in Australia?

	Poor 1	2	Satisfactory 3	4	Excellent 5
Quality of life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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12. CITIZENSHIP

1. Are you an Australian citizen?

- Yes
 No

2. If Yes, what year was citizenship granted?

3. Why did you apply for Australian citizenship?

4. If No, why did you not apply for Australian citizenship?

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13. KEEPING IN TOUCH

1. Thinking of keeping in touch with Ireland/Northern Ireland, how often did you:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
read Irish/Northern Irish/British newspapers online?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
buy Irish/Northern Irish/British foods online or where you live?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
listen to Irish/Northern Irish/British radio stations?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
watch Irish/Northern Irish/British cable/internet tv	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
skype friends and family in Ireland/Northern Ireland?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
phone friends and family in Ireland/Northern Ireland?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
text friends and family in Ireland/Northern Ireland?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
email your friends and family in Ireland/Northern Ireland?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
keep in contact with friends and family in Ireland/Northern Ireland via social network sites?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please list the social media and/or apps you use to keep in touch

* 2. How often did you

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
use Irish/British/Expat Facebook pages/groups?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
meet/socialise with other members of online Irish/British/Expat groups?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Please give example/s of any activities in which you participated related to online groups

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14. RETURNING TO IRELAND/NORTHERN IRELAND

* 1. When you lived in Australia, did you return to Ireland/Northern Ireland:

- Several times a year
- Once a year
- Once every two or three years
- Once every five years
- I didn't return while there

2. If you did not return, which of the following factors prevented you from returning?

- It was too soon to go back
- It was too expensive
- I favoured spending my holiday time/money visiting other places
- I did not get enough annual leave to visit Ireland
- Family/friends visited me
- Other (please specify)

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The Irish/British government provides adequate support for emigrants overseas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Irish/British government is doing its best to tackle the causes of emigration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expats should be eligible to vote in general elections in Ireland/Northern Ireland	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>				

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15. LEAVING AUSTRALIA

1. What made you leave Australia?

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16. HOMESICKNESS

* 1. Did you experience homesickness while in Australia?

- Yes
- No

Comment if you wish to:

2. Did homesickness (experienced by you or a family member) negatively impact your life in Australia?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes
- Unsure

Other (please specify)

3. Do you think you would have used the services of a migration counsellor? (someone to talk through feelings of separation, anxiety, loneliness etc with)

- Yes
- No

4. Would your use of a migration counselling service have depended on cost/Medicare subsidy?

- Yes
- No

Please comment if you wish to

5. Do you think it would be useful for a migration counsellor to have a cultural background similar to a user of the service?

6. Are you aware of support organisations in Australia for migrants from Ireland/Northern Ireland?

- Yes
- No

If Yes, what organisation/s do you know of?

17. WORKING IN YOUR CURRENT LOCATION

* 1. How would you describe your present employment status?

- Working full-time
- Working part-time
- Unemployed
- Student
- Looking after home/family
- Retired
- Unable to work due to illness/disability

Other (please specify)

2. To what extent would you agree or disagree: My work is suitable for someone with my qualifications and skills.

- Yes
- No
- Does not apply

3. Considering your industry/occupation, do you think wages are high where you are now?

- Yes
- No

Please comment if you wish to

4. If you are not in Ireland/Northern Ireland, did Irish/Northern Irish contacts help you to find work?

- Yes, Irish/Northern Irish friends from home
- Yes, Irish/Northern Irish people I met since my arrival
- Yes, an Irish/Northern Irish employer
- Yes, an Irish/Northern Irish/expat facebook page/group or online forum - please provide name/s below in "Other"
- Yes, an employment agent
- No
- No, I secured a job before I came

Other (please specify)

5. If you secured a job before arrival, did your employer provide relocation expenses?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please provide details:

6. Is employment with a specific employer or within a specific industry/trade/occupation a condition of your current or previous visa?

- Does not apply
- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify)

7. On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest, how satisfied are you with your:

	Very dissatisfied 1	2	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied 3	4	Very satisfied 5
Job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career prospects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Does not apply? (please type Yes in comment box below)

* 8. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest, how would rate your quality of life abroad?

	Poor 1	2	Satisfactory 3	4	Excellent 5
Quality of life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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18. SUMMING UP YOUR MIGRATION EXPERIENCE

1. What has been the worst part of your migration experience?

2. What has been the best part of your migration experience?

3. Are there other aspects of your migration experience would you like to comment on?

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19. About You

* 1. Are you:

- Male
- Female
- Transgender

2. Sexuality

- Heterosexual
- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Transgender
- Queer
- Other

* 3. What year were you born?

* 4. Where were you born?

* 5. What is your nationality? If you have more than one nationality, please tick all that apply.

- Irish
- British
- Australian
- Other (please specify)

6. Relationship status:

- Married
- De Facto
- Partner
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated
- Single
- Other
- Please specify

2. Sexuality

- Heterosexual
- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Transgender
- Queer
- Other

* 3. What year were you born?

* 4. Where were you born?

* 5. What is your nationality? If you have more than one nationality, please tick all that apply.

- Irish
- British
- Australian
- Other (please specify)

6. Relationship status:

- Married
- De Facto
- Partner
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated
- Single
- Other
- Please specify

7. If you are married or with a long-term partner, is this person:

- Does not apply
- Irish/Northern Irish/British-born
- Australian-born
- Other (please specify)

* 8. Do you have children?

- Yes
- No

9. How many children do you have?

10. How old are your child/ren?

* 11. What was the highest level of education/training you had completed prior to leaving Ireland/Northern Ireland?

- Lower secondary
- Upper secondary
- Post Leaving Certificate/A Level course
- Diploma
- Completed Apprenticeship/Trade Certificate
- Bachelor/Honours Degree
- Postgraduate Diploma/Masters
- PhD

Other (please specify)

12. What year did you finish this education or training?

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20. Survey feedback

1. Do you have anything you would like to add, either about the survey or your migration experience?

2. If you would you be willing to discuss these issues in more detail through a personal interview with the researcher via phone or in person, please provide your contact details below. The interview should take no more than one hour of your time and will be held at a time and venue most suitable for you.

Name

Mobile number

Email address

3. If you have or have had a visa which was attached to employment would you permit us to contact your employer?

Yes

No

4. If Yes, please provide contact details for the employer:

Company Name

Contact Person

Mobile Number

Email address

Appendix 5

Invitation to participate and Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PROJECT TITLE: The experiences of Irish migrants in Australia

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Professor Graeme Hugo

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Fidelma Breen

STUDENT'S DEGREE: PhD

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in the research project described below.

What is the project about?

This study is being undertaken to gather data from persons who have travelled from Ireland/Northern Ireland to Australia on a long-term temporary or permanent visa. The data will be used to investigate the impact of social media and technology on the migration experience. Impact is measured in terms of return visits to Ireland, migrants' perceptions of connectedness to 'home' and the settling in process with regard to family, social networks and working life. Pre-migration sources of information about Australia and measuring expectations against the reality of migration are also covered.

A central aim of this research is to determine what, if any, barriers to successful settlement exist for migrants from Ireland/Northern Ireland.

Who is undertaking the project?

This project is being conducted by Fidelma Breen.

This research will form the basis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Adelaide under the supervision of Professor Graeme Hugo

Why am I being invited to participate?

The inclusion criteria for the study are as follows: Participants must:

- *be over the age of eighteen*
- *have migrated from Ireland/Northern Ireland*
- *have travelled to Australia on a long-term temporary or permanent visa*
- *be willing to complete a questionnaire of approximately 20 minutes duration either online or on paper*

What will I be asked to do?

- *Participants will be asked to complete an electronic or paper-based questionnaire which should take approximately 20 minutes*
- *There may be a personal interview within six months by phone or in person if you volunteer for this.*
- *This will be audio-recorded with your permission for transcription purposes*
- *There may be a follow-up survey in one year.*

How much time will the project take?

- *At your discretion, participation may be limited to one 20-minute online or paper survey. With your permission there may be a personal interview of approximately one hour duration at a time and place convenient to you within six months of initial participation. There may be one final online or paper survey one year after the first survey is completed.*

Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?

- *The research team do not foresee any risks, side effects, emotional distress, discomforts, inconveniences or restrictions, either immediately or later. University-prescribed security measures will be undertaken to ensure the safety of the participant and the researcher.*

What are the benefits of the research project?

There are no immediate benefits of the project to the participant but it is anticipated that the results of the project may assist future migrants to Australia and/or groups working with the Irish/Northern Irish community in Australia. However, future benefit cannot be assured.

Can I withdraw from the project?

Participation in this project is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time.

What will happen to my information?

- *The information collected and all project records will be confidentially stored in electronic form using password-protected security access. Completed questionnaires will be stored in a de-identified form for a period of five years in a University of Adelaide repository in accordance with the requirements of the NHMRC guidelines for the storage of research information under the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. Access to the study materials will be limited to the Researchers named below. Any published or presented findings which may result from the study will not contain the names or other identifying information of participating individuals.*
- *Individual responses will be referred to in the text of the written work as in the following example: F, 32, NI, Accountant (Female, 32, from Northern Ireland, Accountant) so that respondents are de-identified. The data will be aggregated for reporting purposes.*
- *Participants who wish to view the final work should indicate this to the researcher and the report will be made available upon its completion and examination after any embargo period.*

Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?

Supervisors:

Professor Graeme Hugo, Geography, Environment and Population, School of Social Sciences, University of Adelaide, Room G30, Napier Building, North Terrace Campus. Tel: 08 8313 5646
Dr Dianne Rudd - Room G34, Napier Building, North Terrace Campus. (08) 8313 4109

Student: Fidelma Breen,

Geography, Environment and Population, School of Social Sciences, University of Adelaide,
Room G37, Napier Building, North Terrace Campus. Tel: 08 8313 4736

What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

The study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Adelaide (approval number H-2014-234). If you have questions or problems associated with the practical aspects of your participation in the project, or wish to raise a concern or complaint about the project, then you should consult the Principal Investigator. Contact the Human Research Ethics Committee's Secretariat on phone (08) 8313 6028 or by email to hrec@adelaide.edu.au. If you wish to speak with an independent person regarding concerns or a complaint, the University's policy on research involving human participants, or your rights as a participant. Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

If I want to participate, what do I do?

- *Viewing online? Continue with this electronic survey until completed*
- *Simply complete the attached survey and return it in the supplied reply-paid envelope.*

Yours sincerely,

Professor Graeme Hugo, ARC Professorial Fellow, Professor of Geography, School of Social Sciences

Appendix 6

Employer sponsored categories comparison chart (DIBP 2016g)

Visa type	Visa duration	SkillSelect expression of interest (EOI) required	Sponsorship required	Required to work in regional Australia	Points tested visa	Skill/qualification requirements	Other requirements	eligibility
Temporary Work (Skilled) visa (subclass 457)	From one day up to four years	SkillSelect EOI is optional for this visa	Yes, by an employer	No, unless approved prior to September 2009 under regional certification arrangement	No	Occupation must be on the prevailing CSOL and applicant must have the skills necessary to perform the occupation. Applicant must also have the necessary English language skills unless exempted	After a period of employment of two years in the same position an employer may be able to sponsor a subclass 457 visa holder through the Temporary Residence Transition stream under ENS or RSMS (see below)	

Employer Nomination Scheme (ENS) visa (subclass 186)	Permanent	SkillSelect EOI is optional for this visa	Yes, by an employer	No	No	Require a skills assessment by the relevant Australian authority and three years' work experience, unless exempt Relevant registration or licensing must be held if required	Occupation must be on the CSOL. Employee is to be paid at least the same as an Australian in the same occupation in the same location Must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 50, unless exempt • Have at least competent • English, unless exempt
Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS) visa (subclass 187) <i>Direct Entry stream</i>	Permanent	SkillSelect EOI is optional for this visa	Yes, by a regional employer	Yes	No	Must have a related Australian or overseas equivalent qualification or be exempt Overseas qualified trades workers will need to have their skills assessed by Trades Recognition Australia Relevant registration or licensing must be held if required	Occupation must be an ANZSCO skill level 1-3. Employee is to be paid at least the same as an Australian in the same occupation in the same location Must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 50, unless exempt • Have at least competent • English, unless exempt

Appendix 7

Points tested skilled migration comparison chart

Visa type	Visa duration	SkillSelect expression of interest (EOI) required	Sponsorship required	Required to work in regional Australia	Points tested visa	Skill/qualification requirements	Other requirements	eligibility
Skilled Independent visa (subclass 189)*	Permanent	SkillSelect EOI is mandatory	No	No	Yes	Nominated occupation must be on the applicable Skilled Occupation List (SOL) and skills assessed by relevant assessing authority	Must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invited to apply Under 50 Have at least competent English 	
Skilled Nominated visa (subclass 190)	Permanent	SkillSelect EOI is mandatory	Yes, applicant must be nominated by a state/territory government	No	Yes	Nominated occupation must be on the applicable Consolidated Sponsored Occupation List (CSOL) and skills assessed by relevant assessing authority	Must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invited to apply Under 50 Have at least competent English 	

Skilled Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 489) <i>Sponsored</i>	Up to four years	SkillSelect EOI is mandatory unless renewing a provisional visa	Yes, applicant must be sponsored by an eligible relative	Yes	Yes	Nominated occupation must be on the applicable Skilled Occupation List (SOL) and skills assessed by relevant assessing authority	Must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invited to apply Under 50 Have at least competent English
Skilled Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 489) <i>State or territory nominated</i>	Up to four years	SkillSelect EOI is mandatory unless renewing a provisional visa	Yes, applicant must be nominated by a state/territory government	Yes	Yes	Nominated occupation must be on the applicable Consolidated Sponsored Occupation List (CSOL) and skills assessed by relevant assessing authority	Must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invited to apply Under 50 Have at least competent English

*Skilled-Independent visa (subclass 175) closed to new applications on 1 July 2012. This visa is subject to the cap and cease arrangement that took place on 22 September 2015.

Skilled occupation list (SOL): you nominate an occupation from the SOL if you are applying for an independent or family sponsored points tested visa.

Consolidated Skilled Occupation List (CSOL): you nominate an occupation from the CSOL if you are nominated by a state or territory government for a points tested visa, or applying for a direct entry stream Employer Nomination Scheme visa, or a Temporary Work (Skilled) visa (subclass 457).

See more information about [Australia's skilled occupation lists](#).

Appendix 8

Migration Programme outcome by stream, 1984–85 to 2014–15

Year	Family Stream	Skill Stream	Special Eligibility	Total
1984–85	44,200	10,100	200	54,500
1985–86	63,400	16,200	400	80,000
1986–87	72,600	28,500	600	101,700
1987–88	79,500	42,000	600	122,100
1988–89	72,700	51,200	800	124,700
1989–90	66,600	52,700	900	120,200
1990–91	61,300	49,800	1,200	112,300
1991–92	55,900	41,400	1,700	99,000
1992–93	45,300	21,300	1,400	68,000
1993–94	43,200	18,300	1,300	62,800
1994–95	44,500	30,400	1,600	76,500
1995–96	56,700	24,100	1,700	82,500
1996–97	37,176	34,676	1,735	73,587
1997–98*	31,281	34,446	1,113	66,840
1998–99	32,038	34,895	888	67,821
1999–00	32,017	35,352	2,868	70,237
2000–01	33,461	44,721	2,415	80,597
2001–02	38,082	53,507	1,465	93,054
2002–03	40,794	66,053	1,225	108,072
2003–04	42,229	71,243	890	114,362
2004–05	41,736	77,878	450	120,064
2005–06	45,291	97,336	306	142,933
2006–07	50,079	97,922	199	148,200
2007–08**	49,870	108,540	220	158,630
2008–09	56,366	114,777	175	171,318
2009–10	60,254	107,868	501	168,623
2010–11	54,543	113,725	417	168,685
2011–12	58,604	125,755	639	184,998
2012–13	60,185	128,973	842	190,000
2013–14	61,112	128,550	338	190,000
2014–15	61,085	127,774	238	189,097

* Skill overtakes Family

** Skill more than double Family intake and the start of GFC

Source: Constructed from various population flows publications and annual reports–Migration Reporting, (DIBP 2016c)

Appendix 9

Qualitative data respondents

Key:

IA – Irish in Australia respondent

DA – Departed Australia respondent

Initial visa -

WHM	Working Holiday Maker (subclass 417) visa
2WHM	Second year Working Holiday Maker (subclass 417) visa
RSMS	Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme visa (subclass 187)
457	Temporary Work (Skilled) visa (subclass 457)
HEd	Higher Education Sector visa (subclass 573)
P(M)	Partner (Migrant) visa (subclass 100)
P(P)	Partner (Provisional) visa (subclass 309)
CPar	Contributory Parent visa (subclass 143)
OcT	Occupational trainee visa subclass 442
S(175)	Skilled Independent (Subclass 175) (No new applications from July 2012)
S(189)	Skilled Independent visa (subclass 189)
S(190)	Skilled Nominated visa (subclass 190)
ENS	Employer Nomination visa (subclasses 121 and 856)
SCV	Special Category Visa
Child	Child dependent visa
Br(A)	Bridging A (subclass 010)

Current Visa -

PR	Permanent Resident
C	Citizenship
R	Returned

Gender –

F	Female
M	Male

Relationship status –

M	Married
P	Partner

S	Single
D	Divorced
DF	De facto

Highest level of education or training –

PhD	Doctorate
-----	-----------

PG D/M Postgraduate Diploma/Masters

B/H	Bachelor/Honours Degree
-----	-------------------------

LC/A+	Post Leaving Certificate/A Level course
-------	---

Dip	Diploma
-----	---------

Trade	Completed Apprenticeship/Trade Certificate
-------	--

US	Upper secondary
----	-----------------

LS	Lower secondary
----	-----------------

NFIA No further information available

	Initial entry visa	Current visa	Year of arrival	Place of arrival	Gender	Year of birth	Place of birth	Citizenship/s	Relationship status:	Parent	Highest level of education/training
IA30	WHM	C	2005	Australia	NFIA	NFIA	NFIA	Australia	NFIA	NFIA	NFIA
IA101	WHM	C	2006	Victoria	M	1982	ROI	Irish/Aust	De	Yes	B/H
IA200	WHM	PR	2010	Perth	F	1984	ROI	Irish	M	No	PG D/M
IA217	WHM	457	2012	Perth	F	1982	ROI	Irish	De	No	LC/A+
IA275	WHM	C	1997	Melbourne	F	1972	ROI	Irish/Aust	M	Yes	B/H
IA283	P(M)	PR	2004	Australia	M	1975	NI	Irish	M	Yes	Diploma
IA284	457	457	2013	Victoria	F	1973	ROI	Irish	M	Yes	LC/A+
IA286	WHM	C	2002	Australia	F	1977	ROI	Irish/Aust	M	Yes	B/H
IA289	HEd	C	2008	Adelaide	F	1971	ROI	Irish/Aust	M	Yes	PG D/M
IA318	OcT	C	2009	Sydney	M	1985	ROI	Irish/Aust	P	No	PG D/M
IA346	CPar	C	1984	Australia	F	1967	NI	Irish/Aust	M	Yes	US
IA349	Unsure	Ci	1969	Sydney	F	1948	ROI	Irish/Aust	D	Yes	US
IA357	WHM	P(P)	2012	Melbourne	F	1979	ROI	Irish	M	No	PG D/M
IA359	PR	C	1994	Queensland	M	1967	ROI	Irish/Aust	M	Yes	Trade
IA364	P(P)	PR	2012	Melbourne	F	1972	SCOT	Irish/British	M	No	PG D/M
IA371	WHM	2WHM	2013	Adelaide	F	1988	ROI	Irish	P	No	PG D/M
IA414	WHM	C	2007	Melbourne	M	1984	ROI	Irish/Aust	De	No	B/H
IA415	WHM	PR	2014	Australia	F	NFIA	ROI	Irish	M	No	B/H
IA419	WHM	457	2012	Melbourne	F	1987	ROI	Irish	S	No	PG D/M
IA421	457	PR	2011	Townsville	F	1974	NI	Irish/British	DF	Yes	PhD

ID No	Initial entry visa	Current visa	Year of arrival	Place of arrival	Gender	Year of birth	Place of birth	Citizenship/s	Relationship status:	Parent	Highest level of education/training
IA442	WHM	457	2011	Perth	NFIA	NFIA	NFIA	NFIA	NFIA	NFIA	NFIA
IA448	P(M)	PR	1995	Cronulla	F	1971	ROI	Irish	M	Yes	LC/A+
IA464	WHM	WHM	2014	Melbourne	F	1989	ROI	Irish	S	No	PG D/M
IA488	WHM	C	2008	Perth	M	1984	ROI	Irish/Aust	M	No	Trade
IA498	WHM	PR	2010	Sydney	M	1986	ENG	Irish/Br/Aus	S	No	B/H
IA509	P(P)	C	1985	London	F	1966	ROI	Irish	M	Yes	LC/A+
IA510	P(P)	PR	2012	Australia	F	1972	SCOT	Irish/British	M	No	PG D/M
IA521	WHM	C	2012	Waterford	F	1966	ENG	Irish/Br/Aus	M	No	PG D/M
IA550	S(189)	C	2009	Broome	M	1977	ROI	Irish/Aust	S	No	US
IA560	S(190)	S(190)	2013	Australia	F	1977	ROI	Irish	M	Yes	PG D/M
IA587	WHM	C	NFIA	NFIA	NFIA	NFIA	NFIA	NFIA	NFIA	NFIA	NFIA
IA594	S(189)	C	2008	Sydney	M	1978	ROI	Irish/Aust	M	Yes	PG D/M
IA685	WHM	C	2003	Sydney	F	1974	NI	Irish/Aust	S	No	B/H
IA694	457	C	2005	Melbourne	F	1978	ROI	Irish/Aust	M	Yes	PhD
IA698	S(175)	S(175)	2011	Australia	M	1980	ROI	Irish	DF	No	B/H
IA699	SCV	SCV	2002	NZ	F	1971	ROI	Irish/NZ	P	No	Dip
IA700	Child	C	1976	Sydney	M	1961	ROI	Irish/Aust	D	Yes	PG D/M
IA748	P(M))	C	1998	South Aust.	F	1972	ROI	Irish/Aust	Single	Yes	Diploma
IA755	WHM	PR	2008	Australia	F	1984	ROI	Irish	S	No	B/H
IA762	457	PR	2011	Queensland	F	1969	ROI	Irish	M	Yes	Dip

ID No	Initial entry visa	Current visa	Year of arrival	Place of arrival	Gender	Year of birth	Place of birth	Citizenship/s	Relationship status	Parent	Highest level of education/training
IA772	WHM	PR	2009	Perth	F	1986	ROI	Irish	DF	No	Dip
IA813	WHM	PR	2011	Sydney	F	1988	ROI	Irish	P	No	B/H
IA844	WHM	457	2010		F	1984	ROI	Irish	DF	No	B/H
IA845	WHM	Br(A)	2013	Brisbane	M	1982	ROI	Irish	S	No	US
IA874	WHM	PR	2009	Sydney	F	1983	ROI	Irish	M	No	PG D/M
IA876	P(P)	C	2000	Perth	F	1960	ROI	Irish/Aust	M	No	B/H
IA936	WHM	C	2004	Sydney	M	1979	ROI	Irish/Aust	M	No	B/H
IA947	P(P)	P(M)		Australia	M	1980	ROI	Irish	M	Yes	Trade
IA996	WHM	PR	2010	Sydney	F	1987	ROI	Irish	DF	No	PG D/M
IA999	457	457	2012	Brisbane	F	1985	ROI	Irish	DF	No	B/H
IA1006	RSMS	PR	2009	Adelaide	F	1970	ROI	Irish	M	Yes	LC/A+
IA1048	S(175)	S(175)	2010	Australia	F	1977	ROI	Irish	DF	Yes	PG D/M
IA1059	S(189)	C	1988	Sydney	F	1962	ROI	Irish/Aust	M	Yes	LS
IA1011	WHM	ENS	2008	Sydney	F	1985	ROI	Irish	DF	No	Diploma
IA1072	NFIA							Irish			
IA1073	NFIA							Irish			
IA1074	NFIA							Irish			
IA1075	NFIA							Irish			
IA1076	NFIA							Irish			
IA1077	NFIA							Irish			

ID No	Initial entry visa	Current visa	Year of arrival	Place of arrival	Gender	Year of birth	Place of birth	Citizenship/s	Relationship status	Parent	Highest level of education/training
IA1078	NFIA							Irish			
IA1079	NFIA							Irish			
IA1080	NFIA							Irish			
IA1082	NFIA							Irish			
DA33	P(M)	C	2004	Brisbane	M	1989	ROI	Irish	S	No	LS
DA101	CPar	C	1987	Eugowra	F	1979	NI	Irish/Aust	M	Yes	B/H
DA134	S(175)	R	2010	Melbourne	M	1982	NI	Irish	M	Yes	B/H
DA156	WHM	R	2013	Thailand	F	1987	ROI	Irish	S	No	B/H
DA206	457	R	2005	Melbourne	F	1968	ROI	Irish	M	Yes	B/H
DA248	457	R	2012	Sydney	M	1978	ROI	Irish	M	Yes	B/H
DA249	WHM	R	2009	Sydney	M	1982	ROI	Irish/Aust	M	No	US
DA258	WHM	R	2011	Sydney	F	1985	ROI	Irish	P	No	B/H
DA261	457	R	2010	Kildare	F	1971	NI	Irish	M	Yes	Diploma
DA285	WHM	457	2011	Adelaide	F	NFIA			S	No	
DA305	457	R	2012	Melbourne	F	1984	ROI	Irish	S	No	PG D/M
DA379	WHM	R	1987	Melbourne	M	1964	ROI	Irish	M	Yes	LC/A+
DA403	WHM	R	2009	Melbourne	F	1985	ROI	Irish/Aust	S	Yes	B/H
DA428	S(189)	R	2008	Melbourne	F	1976	ROI	Irish	M	Yes	Diploma
DA491	457	R	2012	Perth	F	NFIA	ROI	Irish	S	Yes	
DA492	457	R	2011	Perth	F	NFIA	ROI	Irish	M	Yes	
DA493	457	R	2012	Perth	F	NFIA	ROI	Irish	S		

Appendix 10

Emigration in the Age of Electronic Media

Breen, F 2015, 'Emigration in the Age of Electronic Media: Personal Perspectives of Irish Migrants to Australia, 1969–2013', in A McCarthy (ed.), *Ireland in the World: Comparative, Transnational and Personal Perspectives*, Routledge, New York.

Emigration in the Age of Electronic Media: Personal Perspectives of Irish Migrants to Australia, 1969-2013

Fidelma Breen

Introduction

In the twelve months to April 2013 approximately 63,400 Irish migrants permanently left the island of Ireland to seek love, fun, employment, adventure, and advancement in other parts of the globe.³⁸ Their journeys continue the lengthy tradition of Irish emigration to places other than Europe which increased, and has continued to grow, since the period just after the Napoleonic Wars.³⁹ This chapter will consider the responses given by respondents to two surveys which enquired about the migration experience from Ireland to Australia. Those surveyed emigrated between 1969 and 2013. The survey samples were small and not representative of the Irish population in Australia and as such, the information contained herein is not used to make inferences about the general Irish population in Australia. It does, however, reveal that the characteristics of Irish migrants since 2008 differ markedly from the post-1980 period and the years before the collapse of the Irish economy. It also pinpoints some avenues for further research. The main points of interest which will be developed in future work

³⁸ 50,900 Irish nationals left the Republic of Ireland in the year to April 2013, 'Population and Migration Estimates', Central Statistics Office, Cork, Ireland: (http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/population/2012/popmig_2012.pdf) (accessed 20 September 2013). 12,500 people left Northern Ireland to live outside the United Kingdom between mid-2011 and mid-2012 with indicators of out-migration showing signs of modest increase: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency Report. *Long-term International Migration Estimates for Northern Ireland* (August 2013), p. 4, available at Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency website: (http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/Mig_Report11_12.pdf) accessed 20 September 2013. Republic of Ireland will hereafter be denoted by the abbreviation ROI. References to Northern Ireland will be denoted by NI. 'Irish nationals' refers to those from the Republic of Ireland. The categories provided here for the motivators of migration are derived from the responses provided by Irish immigrants to the survey questions described later in this chapter.

³⁹ Large numbers of soldiers, merchants and clergy emigrated to Catholic Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries and there was mass Protestant emigration from Ulster to North America during most of the 18th century. Malcolm Campbell states that the Irish had been emigrating for centuries (p. 4), but only beginning in 1815 did their emigration help create the 'new worlds' of his title. M. Campbell. *Ireland's New Worlds: Immigrants, Politics, and Society in the United States and Australia, 1815-1922* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), p. 5.

are the drivers of contemporary Irish migration to Australia with a specific focus on the settlement aspirations of migrants and the compatibility of available visas with those aspirations.

Around 5,839 of the Irish migrant group mentioned above chose Australia as their next new home between 2012 and June 2013.⁴⁰ This chapter will briefly discuss the topics of ‘migration’ and ‘diaspora’, since these are vital to a study of any migrant cohort, before detailing the results of two surveys. The first survey is ‘Ireland Online: So Close No Matter How Far’ while the second survey is ‘Ireland Online: The Experiences of Irish/Northern Irish Migrants to Australia’, both of which were carried out among Irish migrants across Australia in 2012 and 2014.⁴¹ These datasets are compared with the findings of recent academic studies undertaken on Irish migrants to Australia in an effort to uncover changing trends in Irish emigration since the collapse of Ireland’s economy.⁴² The analysis of the Ireland Online data will also refer to the Émigré Project being conducted by University College Cork (UCC) since the results of the two Ireland Online surveys generally support its recently published report.⁴³ After providing the demographic profile of the respondents, analysis of the data provided by the research is undertaken. This chapter will consider the role of technology in migration, contemporary emigration motivators, and Ireland’s diaspora engagement policy and practice.⁴⁴

We should note that Irish migration to Australia commenced with the British colonisation of the continent as Australia’s first European community had a significant Irish component. Not confined to the convict class, the Irish were part of the officialdom which accompanied white settlement. A

⁴⁰ Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). *2012–13 Migration Program Report* (Belconnen, ACT: DIAC 2013), p. 5, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/pdf/report-on-migration-program-2012-13.pdf> (accessed 20 February 2014). The *Migration Program Report* stated that the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland were the third and eighth top source countries respectively for the Australian resident visa program. Visas were granted to 5,209 Irish people and to more than 21,000 UK residents. The figures for the UK include people from Northern Ireland. Of the 21,711 UK residents who arrived in the program period to June 2013 approximately 630 can be calculated to have been from Northern Ireland. The UK Office of National Statistics states that the population of Northern Ireland constitutes about 2.9 per cent of the total UK population. Since migrants from the constituent parts of the United Kingdom are not treated separately it is difficult to obtain accurate numbers for them. Office of National Statistics <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/compendiums/compendium-of-uk-statistics/population-and-migration/index.html> (accessed 24 April 2014).

⁴¹ The surveys were responded to by Irish migrants in each of Australia’s states and territories excepting Tasmania. The state/territory’s percentage of the Irish population according to the 2011 Census of Australia is given in parentheses: 6.5 per cent from the Northern Territory (0.94 per cent); 22.2 per cent from New South Wales (32.98 per cent); 15.6 per cent from Victoria (21.95 per cent); 32.4 per cent from Western Australia (21.5 per cent); 16.7 per cent from South Australia (5.23 per cent); and 6.6 per cent from Queensland (16.4 per cent).

⁴² J. Chetkovich, ‘The New Irish in Australia: A Western Australian Perspective’ (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Western Australia, 2003); P. O’Connor, ‘The Multiple Experiences of Migrancy, Irishness and Home among Contemporary Irish Immigrants in Melbourne, Australia’ (unpublished PhD thesis, University of New South Wales, 2005).

⁴³ I. Glynn, T. Kelly, and P. MacÉinrí, *Irish Emigration in an Age of Austerity* (Cork: University College Cork, 2013).

⁴⁴ The Irish Embassy is running a series of discussion forums with Irish people in Australia throughout June and July 2014 as part of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s Diaspora Policy Review. <https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebsitemedia/ourrolesandpolicies/Review-of-Irelands-Diaspora-Strategy-Consultation-2014.pdf> (accessed 16 June 2014).

number of entries in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* testify to this fact.⁴⁵ Irish-born governors, magistrates, and politicians are numerous.⁴⁶ Irish families such as the Bagots in South Australia and the Ryans in New South Wales made fortunes on the land as pastoralists and in mines. The Irish in Australia made significant contributions to relief efforts against pending famine in Ireland in the late 1870s and added moral support and financial muscle to the Irish Home Rule movement.⁴⁷ In the 1880s the Irish-born comprised around 9.5 per cent of the total colonial population although the Irish component differed from colony to colony.⁴⁸ The numbers of Irish-born in Australia have certainly decreased from pre-First World War levels but Table 2: Numbers of Irish-born in the Australian population, 1921 - 2011 interestingly shows that the figures given for 1933 and for 2011 do not differ significantly. The data is represented as a line graph in Figure 4 where the recent upwards trend of the Irish-born component is clearly visible. It is worth noting that the 29 per cent increase in Irish-born people in Australia from 2006 to 2011 is the largest since the mid-to late 1980s when economic depression in Ireland heralded another great wave of emigration. The collapse of Ireland's boom, known as the Celtic Tiger, has played a part in the country's increased emigration since 2008 but interestingly, the survey respondents were, by and large, employed at the point of emigration. While the actual numbers vary little what has changed is the proportionate value of the Irish in the total Australian population as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Numbers of Irish-born in the Australian population, 1921 - 2011

Year	% of Australian population that is Irish-born	Total Australian population	Combined Numbers of people from Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland
1921	2.18	5,435,700	118,328
1933	1.39	6,629,800	92,235
1947	0.73	7,579,400	55,425
1954	0.68	8,986,500	61,008
1966	0.64	11,550,500	74,132
1976	0.69	13,548,400	93,454

⁴⁵ See the entries for Denis Conisden (?–1815), Thomas Jamieson (1753–1811), D’Arcy Wentworth (1762–1827), John Harris (1754-1838), Jacob Mountgarrett (1773-1828), Nicholas Divine (1739-1830), and John Cuthbertson (?-1823) for a few examples of those who held posts such as surgeon, commandant, and superintendent of convicts. *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au> (accessed 10/06/2012).

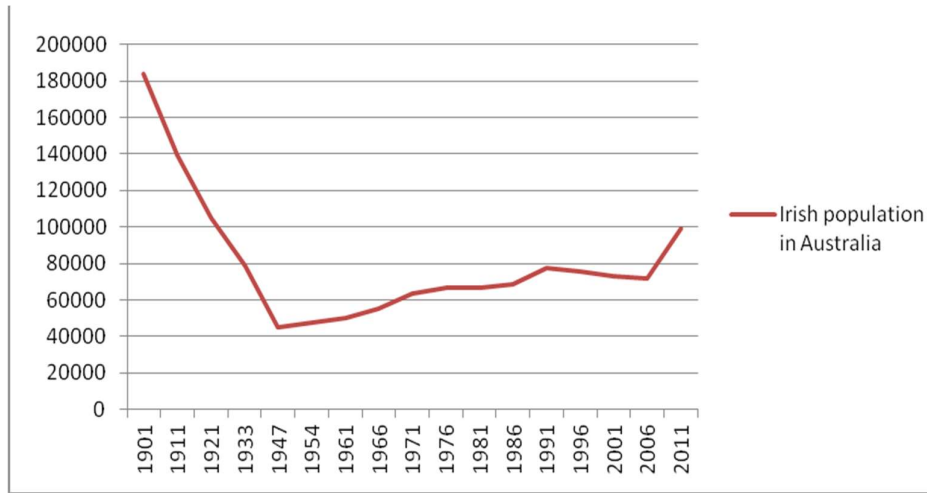
⁴⁶ Sir Arthur Kennedy of Cultra, County Down, was governor of Western Australia from 1855 to 1862; Sir Dominick Daly of Ardfry, County Galway, was appointed governor of South Australia in October 1861; Sir Hercules Robinson, of Rosmead, County Westmeath, was appointed governor of New South Wales in June 1872; and Sir Hamilton John Goold-Adams of Jamesbrook, County Cork, became governor of Queensland in 1914. Former Young Irelander Charles Gavan Duffy was the eighth man to serve as Victorian premier (1871-2).

⁴⁷ F. Breen, “‘Yet we are told Australians do not sympathise with Ireland’: A study of South Australian Support for Irish Home Rule, 1883 – 1912’ (unpublished M.Phil thesis, University of Adelaide, 2013), p. 176; P. J. Naughtin, ‘The Green Flag at the Antipodes: Irish Nationalism in Colonial Victoria during the Parnell Era, 1880-91’ (unpublished PhD thesis University of Melbourne, 2011).

⁴⁸ South Australia, Census of 1881, Historical Census and Colonial Data Archive.

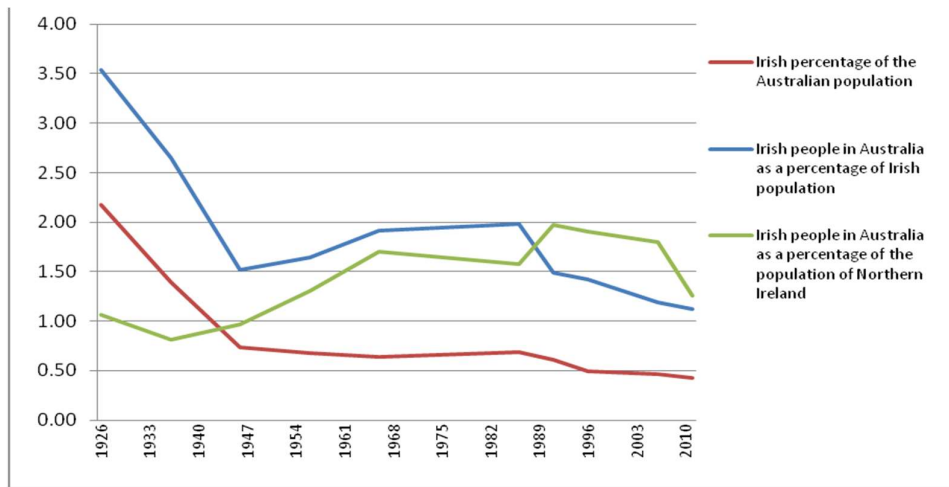
1986	0.61	15,602,200	94,519
1991	0.50	16,850,533	83,760
1996	0.46	17,892,423	82,573
2001	0.42	18,972,350	80,286
2006	0.40	20,061,646	80,366
2011	0.46	21,507,719	99,183

Figure 4: The Irish population of Australia from 1901 to 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics and Department of Immigration and Border Protection

Figure 5: The Irish-born as a percentage of the Australian population, 1921-2010



Migration

Migration from Ireland has often been characterised as ‘exile’ or ‘victim-driven’.⁴⁹ Historians, geographers, and other social scientists have analysed the ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors of centuries of migration and, as much as they change over time, these remain hauntingly similar.⁵⁰ Global moves are driven by wishes for an improved lifestyle, better career advancement and employment opportunities, and educational and leisure pursuits not catered for in Ireland. Aside from these, many migrants cite wanderlust or a quest for adventure as the reason for leaving.⁵¹ Whatever the cause of departure, what is striking is the reoccurrence of the theme among survey responses that contemporary emigration may be neither permanent nor a final action. Improvements in the cost, accessibility, and speed of travel, and communication and technology in general, may have contributed to the notion of a smaller world space and ease of connectedness but whatever the social, economic, or political ramifications of migration, the human aspect – feelings of fear, trepidation, loneliness, excitement, freedom, adventure, despair, and homesickness – has not changed.

The Republic of Ireland (ROI) is, once again, experiencing a large exodus of residents due to the financial crises of the past few years and Australia is proving a popular destination. *The Population and Labour Force Projections, 2016 – 2046*, produced by the Irish Central Statistics Office (CSO), determined that emigration ‘ranged from 25,000 to 30,000 between 1997 and 2005 before rising slowly between April 2006 and April 2008. This was followed by a sharp rise in 2009 following the economic downturn in 2008. Emigration has remained high in the years since meaning Ireland has returned to a situation of net outward migration’.⁵² The CSO reported that while almost 42 per cent of the 87,100 who had left Ireland in the year to April 2013 represented foreign nationals, the number of Irish women emigrating rose from 20,600 in 2012 to 23,800 in the year to April 2013, while the number of male migrants increased from 26,000 to 27,100 in the same period. Over 17 per cent (15,400) of

⁴⁹ Robin Cohen includes the Irish in his ‘victim’ category of diaspora. R. Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2008). Irish ballads are renowned for the ‘exile’ and ‘victim’ theme: one popular example is ‘The Fields of Athenry’ which tells of a young man transported to Botany Bay for stealing ‘Trevelyan’s corn’. Trevelyan was the Assistant Secretary to the Treasury in London during the Great Famine. This position put him in charge of the administration of Government relief to the starving Irish.

⁵⁰ D. B. Grigg, ‘E. G. Ravenstein and the Laws of Migration’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 3:1 (1977), p. 41; Jeannette Schoorl, et al., ‘Push and Pull Factors of International Migration: A Comparative Report’ (Luxembourg, European Communities, Office for Official Publications, 2000), xxi, p. 161. See more at: <http://www.poline.org/node/180911#sthash.lqw0Pv9a.dpuf>; B. Lindsay Lowell, ‘Immigration “Pull” Factors in OECD Countries over the Long Term’, in Publishing, OECD, *The Future of International Migration to OECD Countries* [electronic Resource], (Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2009), pp. 52 – 137, http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/social-issues-migration-health/the-future-of-international-migration-to-oecd-countries_9789264064126-en#page1.

⁵¹ F. Breen, ‘Survey 1. Ireland Online: So close no matter how far’, (Adelaide, SA: University of Adelaide, 2012) and ‘Survey 2. Ireland Online: The experiences of Irish/Northern Irish migrants to Australia’ (Adelaide: University of Adelaide, 2014a).

⁵² Government of Ireland, *Population and Labour Force Projections 2016 - 2046*, Central Statistics Office. (Dublin: Stationary Office, 2013), p.16.

Irish migrants were destined for Australia.⁵³ A 2013 report from Australia's Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) revealed that 4,784 ROI nationals were granted permanent residency in the year to June 2013.

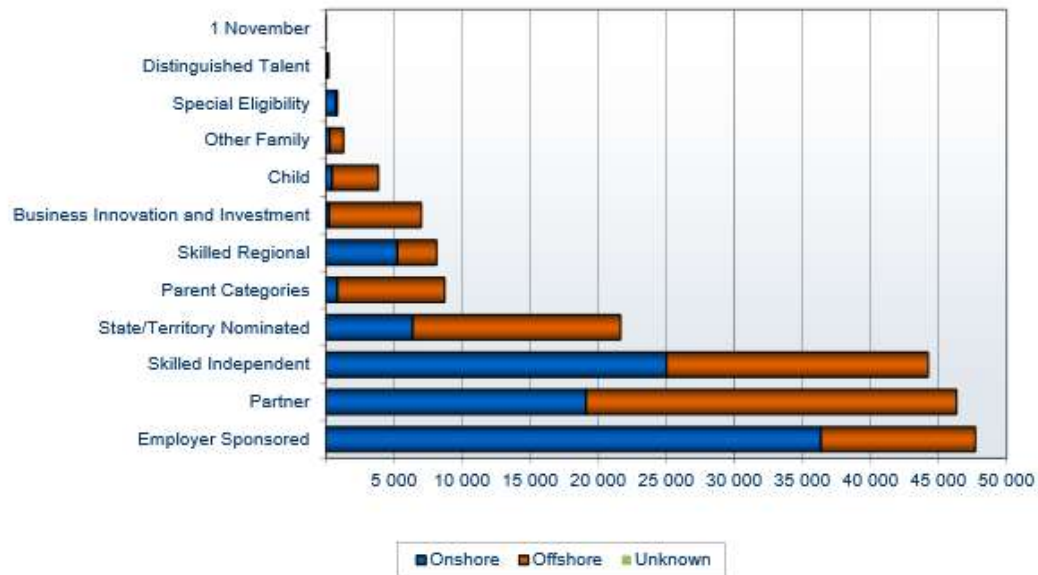
A total of 5,209 Irish nationals were granted a permanent visa to Australia through the Migration Programme in 2012-13. The majority (83 per cent) of permanent Irish arrivals were issued 'Skilled' migration visas. Of the 128,973 'Skilled' visas issued in 2012-13, 4,325 (3.4 per cent) were taken up by Irish people. Family visas accounted for the remainder of the total permanent Irish intake. Of the 60,185 family visas in the 2012-13 program, almost 900 (1.5 per cent) were granted to Irish people, the majority of whom (96 per cent) were partners of Australian residents.⁵⁴ Most of the visas in these categories were granted onshore (Figure 6). The Business (Long Stay) (subclass 457) (hereafter 457) visa is popular among the Irish seeking temporary entry to Australia in the first instance. Of the 126,350 subclass 457 visas issued, 10,290 (8.1 per cent) were granted to Irish nationals. More than 19,000 Irish people were granted the temporary Working Holiday Maker visa (subclass 417) (hereafter WHM) in 2012-13 from a total pool of 178,980 representing 10.6 per cent of the total.⁵⁵

⁵³ Central Statistics Office, *Population and Migration Estimates*, CSO statistical release, 29 August 2013, http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/pme/populationandmigrationestimatesapril2013/#.U1-fi_mSySo (accessed 18 February 2014).

⁵⁴ Economic Analysis Unit, *Country Profile - Ireland* (Belconnen, ACT: Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2013), p. 3. Available at http://www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/country-profiles/_files/ireland.pdf (accessed 19 February 2014).

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p.1. Irish people were issued 11, 817 initial WHM visas and 7,300 second-year WHM visas. The WHM visa allows people from a designated list of countries to work in Australia for a period of twelve months. Certain restrictions are placed upon WHM visa holders such as placement limits with any one employer and a requirement that some employment is undertaken in a regional area. A second year visa is an option. Applicants for permanent residency visas usually apply on the basis of having a sought-after skill or trade qualification, are sponsored by an Australian employer, and must meet points-based criteria. They must be self-supporting for the first two years and cannot access social welfare benefits such as Centrelink income support payments for example.

Figure 6: Skill and family visa categories, 2012-2013: Onshore versus Offshore



Source: DIBP 2012-13 Migration Program Report, p.5.

Long-term arrivals far outstrip the long-term departures indicating a significant increase in the long-term stay category of migration. Compared to 2009–10, subclass 457 visas issued to Irish nationals have increased by more than 200 per cent.

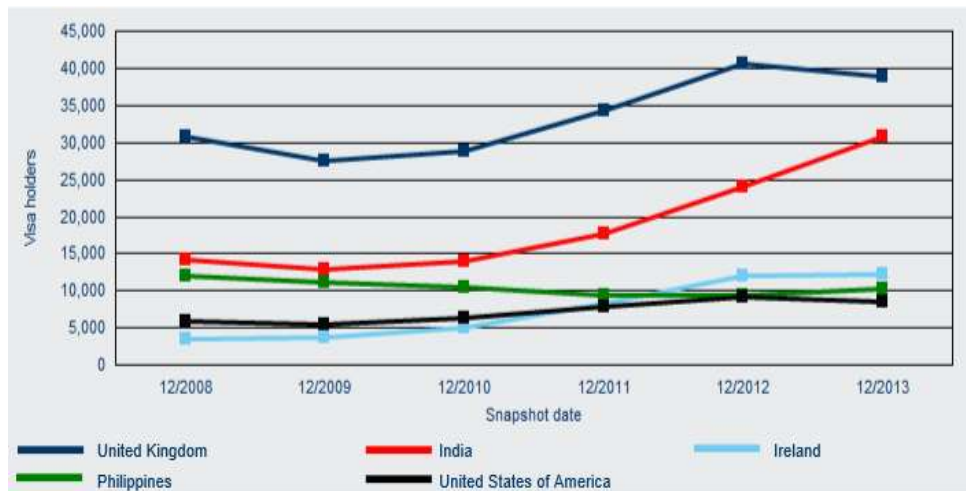
The top source citizenship country for Temporary Skilled (subclass 457) visa holders in Australia on 31 December 2013 was the United Kingdom (38,860 visa holders), followed by India (30,890), Ireland (12,150), the Philippines (10,270), and the United States of America (8,540).⁵⁶

When comparing the number of Temporary Skilled (subclass 457) visa holders in Australia on 31 December 2013 with earlier years, Figure 4 shows that over the past five years, the number of Temporary Skilled (subclass 457) visa holders from the United Kingdom increased by 26.2 per cent from 31 December 2008. India increased by 115.7 per cent, Ireland increased by 242.4 per cent, the Philippines decreased by 14.9 per cent, and the United States of America increased by 44.6 per cent.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ DIBP, Temporary entrants and New Zealand citizens in Australia as at 31 December 2013 (BR0169), p.13, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/pdf/temp-entrants-newzealand-dec13.pdf> (accessed 10 June 2014).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Figure 4: Temporary Skilled (subclass 457) Visa Holders in Australia: Top Five Citizenship Countries



Source: Department of Immigration and Border Protection, Temporary entrants and New Zealand citizens in Australia as at 31 December 2013, p.13

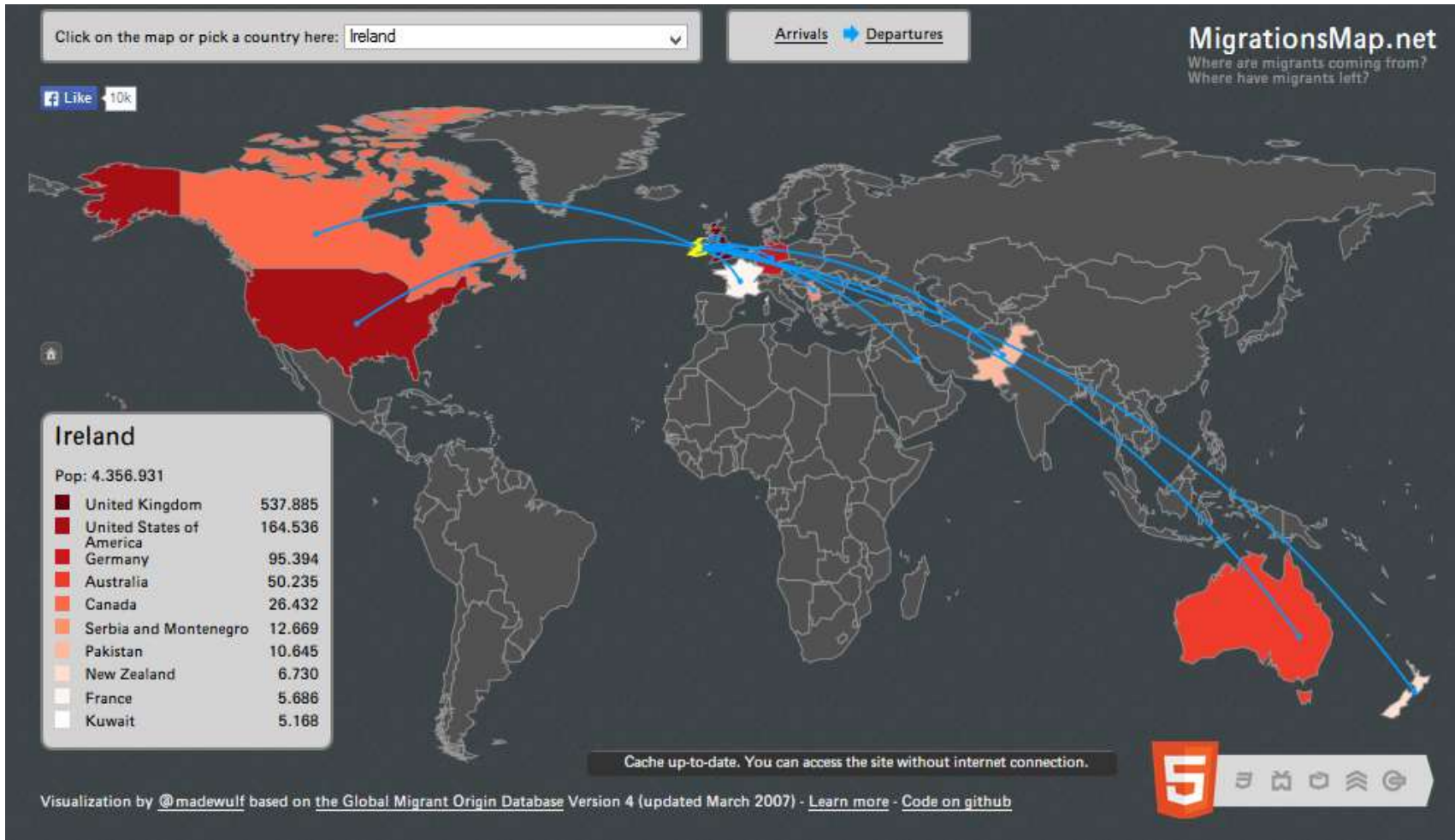
In combination with the physical expansion of diasporic communities caused by increased immigration (in the five years from 2006 to 2011 Australia's Irish community increased by 29 per cent), the explosion of online national groups, particularly on Facebook™, in recent years appears to have decreased feelings of distance for some migrants.⁵⁸ Evidence for this is provided in the discussion of migrants' feelings regarding distance and the effects of social media below. Paradoxically, then, ethnic communities can seem larger and more widespread as the disparate groups become aware of their counterparts in other regions. These groups, whether government, media, community, locality, or interest-based, provide the nation with the ability to reach out to members of its diaspora in ways previously unimagined. As of June 2014, Facebook™ had more than 80 groups dedicated to the Irish in Australia compared with 30 for British/UK expats and just four for the Italian community in Australia.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *Country Profile - Ireland* states that 'At the end of June 2011, 76,590 Irish-born people were living in Australia, 29 per cent more than at 30 June 2006'. Note: the figure of 99,183 given above in Table 2 is the combined total of ROI and NI born persons. There are numerous online groups initiated and administrated by expats for various nationalities. Among the most popular in Australia is Irish People Living in Australia (IPLAUS) in addition to regional variations such as Irish Families in Perth and Adelaide Irish Connect.

⁵⁹ These are the results of a search on Facebook, carried out on 14 June 2014, using the terms 'Irish', 'British', 'Brits', 'Poms', and 'Ital'. The results exclude pubs and restaurants but include other business-type organisations such as Chamber of Commerce entities.

Ireland's attempts to engage with and mobilise its diaspora are discussed briefly below. The reach of the Irish diaspora is evident from the MigrationNet map in Figure 5.

Figure 5: World map showing destinations of Irish emigrants (2007)



Source: www.MigrationsMap.net⁶⁰

⁶⁰ www.MigrationsMap.net, <http://migrationsmap.net/#/IRL/departures> (accessed 9 October 2014).

Diaspora

There has been considerable debate amongst scholars in Irish Studies about the application of the word 'diaspora' to the many Irish communities outside Ireland.⁶¹ A diasporic identity is one that allows acceptance of a new physical home to sit alongside the comfort of the emotional or imagined home – that is, it identifies a 'homing desire' without an actual want to return to the country of origin. It is a complex identity which can encompass not just the migrant, but the generations originating from that migrant, and involve the accommodation of dual citizenships and many-faceted emotional allegiances. Critics imply that the term sweeps away, or depoliticises, the political and economic causes of mass emigration.⁶² Others suggest that its links with the Jewish people hang upon its connotations of tragedy and enforced abandonment of home.⁶³ Patrick Fitzgerald and Brian Lambkin quote Liam Kennedy's MOPE (Most Oppressed People Ever) Syndrome as a description of a trend towards a general culture of victimhood.⁶⁴ Kevin Kenny, in 'Diaspora and Comparison' concludes that the Famine is the scarring historical event which ties Ireland to the last of Cohen's five categories of diasporic identity, that of victim.⁶⁵ In his critique of Cohen's typology, Donald Harman Akenson states that the categorisation of victim is 'demonstrably false in the case of nineteenth and twentieth century Irish out-migration, considered as a whole' and goes on to make the case that the Irish were as much imperialists as imperialised.⁶⁶ Mary Hickman raises the salient point that in Irish Studies the focus on emigration highlights the cause and effects for disparate groups of migrants over time, whereas consideration of an Irish diaspora includes subsequent generations of the migrant.⁶⁷ Dianne Hall and Elizabeth Malcolm conclude that 'diaspora' is a legitimate category of analysis if 'clearly defined, and employed with care'.⁶⁸

In May 2013, Joe Hackett, Director of the Irish Abroad Unit at the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, noted that Ireland has an 'inclusive approach to its diaspora. If you are Irish, if you feel Irish, if you feel connected to Ireland then, as far as we are concerned, you are Irish.'⁶⁹ The International Organization for Migration (IOM)

²⁴ C. E. Orser, Jr. 'Transnational Diaspora and Rights of Heritage', in H. Silverman and D. F. Ruggles (eds), *Cultural Heritage and Human Rights* (New York: Springer 2007), p. 93.

⁶² D. Hall and E. Malcolm, 'Diaspora, Gender and the Irish', *Australasian Journal of Irish Studies* 8, (2008/9), p. 8, refer to D. Lloyd, *Ireland After History* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999), pp. 101–2; and B. Walter, *Outsiders Inside: Whiteness, Place and Irish Women* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 13, as particular critics of the term.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ P. Fitzgerald and B. Lambkin, *Migration in Irish History, 1607-2007* (Basingstoke, Hampshire Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 53; L. Kennedy, *Colonialism, Religion and Nationalism in Ireland* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1996), p. 217.

⁶⁵ K. Kenny, 'Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study', *The Journal of American History*, 90:1 (2003), pp. 142–4.

⁶⁶ D. H. Akenson. 'Diaspora, the Irish, and Irish Nationalism', *IJS Studies in Judaica, Volume 9: The Call of the Homeland: Diaspora Nationalisms, Past and Present*, edited by A.S. Leoussi, A. Gal and A.D. Smith (Boston, MA, USA: Brill Academic Publishers, 2010), pp. 186–7.

⁶⁷ Mary J. Hickman, "'Locating" the Irish Diaspora', *Irish Journal of Sociology*, 11.2 (2002), p. 18.

⁶⁸ See Hall and Malcolm, 'Diaspora, Gender and the Irish', p. 7; Kenny, 'Diaspora and Comparison', contains an enlarged discussion on the etymology and expansion of the concept of diaspora, pp. 140–2.

⁶⁹ K. Aikins and M. Russell. 'Diaspora Capital: Why Diaspora Matters for Policy and Practice', *Migration Policy Practice* (International Organization for Migration and Eurasyllum Ltd, 2013), <http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/what-we>

accepts Kingsley Aikins's and Martin Russell's definition of diasporas as 'obvious collectives of people through which networks can be created and individuals mobilized for mutual benefit' and 'influential bridges to knowledge, expertise, resources and markets for countries of origin'.⁷⁰ How a country defines its diaspora will determine its policy and practice of engaging with it. Ireland has many successful diaspora engagement initiatives. Among its five most noteworthy are the Irish International Diaspora Centre Trust, The Ireland Funds, Ireland Reaching Out, Connect Ireland and, perhaps most famously, The Gathering, which is described in more detail below.⁷¹

In *Women and the Irish Diaspora*, Breda Gray quotes Khachig Tölöyan's argument that for a consciousness of diaspora to emerge, a discourse of diaspora must be produced by a small group of intellectuals and political leaders.⁷² In modern Ireland this was certainly the case. As a term, 'the Irish Diaspora' gained significance and popularity during Mary Robinson's term as President in the 1990s and has since passed into general usage. Mary Hickman refers to the success of the extent to which 'official imaginings of the nation have dominated public discourses'.⁷³ 'Diaspora' has become synonymous with the Irish nation, as well as other ethnic dispersions, such as the Armenians, Ukrainians, Chinese, Sikhs, Jews, and Hindus.⁷⁴ Within the context of this study it is taken to mean the communities of Irish people living outside Ireland, both Irish-born and their descendants. As a concept it is evident in officially promoted events such as 'The Gathering 2013', a Fáilte Ireland initiative conceived at the Global Irish Economic Forum held in Dublin in September 2009.⁷⁵ The Gathering was a year-long programme which provided a national branding umbrella for locally-organised activities aimed at bringing members of the diaspora back to Ireland to assist in rejuvenating the economy as well as encouraging those of Irish heritage around the world to connect with the country through genealogy, history, sport, and community events. The strategy appears to be working. A €1 billion boost to the Irish economy was the result of the increase in return travel to Ireland by expats and migrants who comprised a quarter of the total visitor number to Ireland in 2012/13. VFR (visiting friends and relatives) tourism was up nine per cent year on the year between 2012 and 2013. This equates to about 250,000 extra visitors. For Australia and New Zealand, the growth was even more pronounced, up 18 per cent in the year for VFR visitors.⁷⁶ Diane Butler, manager of Tourism Ireland Australia and New Zealand, stated that

[do/migration-policy-and-research/migration-policy-1/migration-policy-practice/issues/augustseptember-2013/diaspora-capital-why-diaspora-ma.html](http://www.failteireland.ie/Utility/What-We-Do.aspx#sthash.K2aFXrlt.dpuf) (accessed 24 April 2014).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² B. Gray, *Women and the Irish Diaspora* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 6.

⁷³ Hickman, "Locating" the Irish Diaspora', p. 14.

⁷⁴ *Studies in Judaica, Volume 9: The Call of the Homeland: Diaspora Nationalisms, Past and Present*, edited by A.S. Leoussi, A. Gal and A.D. Smith (Boston, MA, USA: Brill Academic Publishers, 2010), p.ii.

⁷⁵ Fáilte Ireland is the National Tourism Development Authority. Fáilte means 'Welcome' in Irish - See more at: <http://www.failteireland.ie/Utility/What-We-Do.aspx#sthash.K2aFXrlt.dpuf>, <https://www.globalirishforum.ie/2009Forum.aspx> (accessed 20 February 2014).

⁷⁶ 'Emigrants worth €1bn a year to Irish tourism', *Irish Echo*, 15 May 2014, <http://www.irishecho.com.au/2014/05/15/visiting-emigrants-bring-back-e1-billion-a-year/31753#.U3Qd3VspuDA.facebook> (accessed 15 May 2014).

the department aims to 'build on the legacy of the Gathering, continuing to reach out to the Diaspora across Australia and New Zealand.'⁷⁷

The economic and social rejuvenation of rural Irish communities in particular, is seen as an additional valuable aspect of the country's attention to attracting members of its diaspora to Ireland.⁷⁸ Community cooperatives have been formed on the basis of cottage industry manufacturing of cultural artefacts of Irish heritage for an international market as well as increased tourism.⁷⁹ Individuals are being urged to speak up for their local areas in business innovation forums through Connect Ireland, which was set up as part of the Government's job strategy in 2012. A recent article in *The Irish Times* reported on the 'Building Your Area For The Future Generation' initiative of the Upper Shannon-Erne Future Economy project set up by Bord na Móna and Leitrim County Council to regenerate the economy in the upper Shannon-Erne corridor. The report cites opportunities in artisan agribusiness and tourism which could be capitalised upon to bring migrant Irish back home to Ireland. High speed broadband and better connections have made this area more accessible and parts of the region are only an hour and a half from Dublin Airport. Local people are being urged to be the 'eyes and ears of Ireland' in attempting to attract investment to the region to reinvent their communities for future generations.⁸⁰

While Ireland's diaspora policy and examples of practice have garnered worldwide interest the Irish diaspora has attracted significant academic debate and attention. Studies such as Kerby Miller's *Emigrants and Exiles* and David Fitzpatrick's *Oceans of Consolation*, both of which relied on migrants' letters as source material, contributed to the conversation among scholars as to the most productive method of studying the phenomenon of a national community uncontained by borders and resettling in new and dissimilar (in both geographical location and stage of development) worlds. Akenson's observation that 'the dominant habit of using the passive voice when talking about diasporas' robs the migrant of their agency and relegates them to a piece of 'flotsam on some poorly defined and simplistically explained historical tide' strikes a chord.⁸¹ If one is to categorise contemporary Irish migration to Australia based on responses to the question 'Did you leave Ireland/Northern Ireland because you had to or because you wanted to?', (a question which was preceded by choices from a list of possible deciding factors) asked in Survey 2, then it would seem the 'exile' motif does not apply. Although almost 30 per cent of respondents stated that the main reason they left Ireland/Northern Ireland was because of the economic/political climate, 73 per cent stated that they left the country because they wanted to, with 27 per cent feeling the move was more 'push' than 'pull'.⁸² The varied deciding factors given by respondents to both surveys support the view

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ M. A. Brennan and A. E. Luloff, 'A Cooperative Approach to Rural Development in Ireland: Cultural Artifacts and the Irish Diaspora as an Example', *Journal of International Agricultural and Extension Education*, 12:1 (2005), p. 20.

⁷⁹ Diane Butler, manager of Tourism Ireland Australia and New Zealand, stated that 'We will also build on the legacy of the Gathering, continuing to reach out to the Diaspora across Australia and New Zealand.'

⁸⁰ 'Rural communities urged to use contacts to bring emigrants home', *The Irish Times*, 10 May 2014, <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/rural-communities-urged-to-use-contacts-to-bring-emigrants-home-1.1789622> (accessed 10 May 2014).

⁸¹ Akenson. *op.cit.*, 2010, p. 181. 'Diaspora, the Irish, and Irish Nationalism'.

⁸² Source: *Survey 2 - Ireland Online: The experiences of Irish/Northern Irish migrants to Australia*, Question 3.

that the push-pull dichotomy is reductionist and misleading, showing as they do that a mixture of factors that could be characterised as either ‘forcing’ or ‘enticing’ were involved in the decision to emigrate.

Survey Distribution

This chapter is based on two sets of data. One was gathered from a questionnaire which was distributed by post, email, and the internet (Survey 1) while the second questionnaire was sent to web-based connections only (Survey 2).⁸³ Why two surveys one might ask? Survey 1 (‘Ireland Online: So Close No Matter How Far’) was a brief survey of 33 questions focused on the use of social media and the communication methods of two distinct cohorts: those who arrived in Australia between 1969 and 1985 (Cohort 1) when email, Facebook™, and Skype™ were non-existent, and a later group who emigrated after 1999 (Cohort 2). Survey 2 (‘Ireland Online: The Experiences of Irish/Northern Irish Migrants to Australia’), contained 70 questions and was a more comprehensive questionnaire aimed at filling some of the gaps left by Survey 1 as well as providing pilot data for a PhD proposal.

In addition Survey 1 was aimed solely at Facebook groups self-identifying as Irish and thereby risked missing a portion of people from Northern Ireland who might not self-identify as Irish. This oversight was rectified with Survey 2 which was posted to Irish online forums as well as others such Poms in Oz, Adelaide Brits, and Expats in Adelaide. There were no limitations placed on respondents to the second survey other than considering themselves as having originated from the island of Ireland (self-identifying as Irish, Northern Irish or British) and having migrated to Australia. All respondents were migrants although some were dependant children at the time of migration.

Survey 1 was targeted at two specific groups delimited by the date ranges given above. There was a reason for choosing these two time periods: the first group left Ireland and moved across the world at a time when it was generally viewed as a one way trip.⁸⁴ Subsequent communication between the migrant and home was limited to letter writing as few households had a telephone and even when a connection was available the cost was prohibitive. Respondents from Cohort 1 of Survey 1 report that a phone call from Australia to Ireland had to be saved up for.⁸⁵ In contrast, those who moved to Australia in the last decade or so did so in an entirely different

⁸³ Survey 2 was distributed through various social media outlets using a link to the electronic survey hosted by SurveyMonkey.

⁸⁴ Those who availed of the Assisted Passage scheme (up until 1981) were provided with a one-way ticket and were aware of the two-year stay requirement this imposed on them. The provided fare had to be repaid in full if a two year residency was not completed. K. H. Fouweather, ‘Ten Pounds for Adults, Kids Travel Free: An Essay on the Effects of Migration Upon the Children of the British Migrants to Western Australia in the 1960s and 1970s; and, the Red Pipe: A Novella Set in Port Hedland’ (Unpublished PhD thesis, Edith Cowan University, 2013), p. 20. Considering the trip to be ‘one-way’ was also largely due to the cost of travel which is discussed in reference 86.

⁸⁵ There were only 18 telephones per 100 households in Ireland in 1971 and performance of the system was poor. R. Flynn, ‘The Development of Universal Telephone Service in Ireland, 1880–1993’ (Unpublished PhD thesis, Dublin City University, 1998) p. 314; In the UK the penetration rate of domestic telephones did not reach 50 per cent of households until the mid-1970s. See L. Hamill, *The Introduction of New Technology into the Household* (Guildford: Digital World Research Centre, University of Surrey, 2000), <http://www.hamill.co.uk/pdfs/tiontith.pdf>, p. 5 (accessed 14 October 2012).

technological world. Not only is travel quicker (as in travelling by air as opposed to travelling by sea as some ‘Ten Pound Poms’ did in the late 1960s) and on the whole more accessible because of cheaper fares, but in the last few years, communication advances, particularly with regard to mobile phone usage, have meant that very few people in the developed world are unreachable at a moment’s notice.⁸⁶

The earliest arrivals (Cohort 1) of Survey 1 represented the tail-end of the Ten Pound Poms and those who availed of the assisted passage scheme. Many of these travelled by ship in tourist-class accommodation on Peninsular and Orient (P&O) or other British-owned liners with the less-fortunate being allocated to converted carrier escorts owned by the Italian Sitmar Line for a journey from England to Australia that took approximately four weeks.⁸⁷

This group benefited from the later century improvements in technology and travel. While still a ‘long-haul’ flight, travellers from Europe can now reach Australia in less than 24 hours.

Technology was used to reach them in order to find out about their migration experience. Both surveys were formatted on SurveyMonkey, a web-based survey developer. Since SurveyMonkey does not provide a visitation counter it was not possible to determine how many individuals may have viewed the surveys, or links to them, but declined to participate. In total 218 people commenced Survey 1 which was emailed using a unique link (this meant it could not be forwarded to another person). It was physically mailed, and posted to various Facebook™ pages between 27 August and 3 September 2012. Nine responses came from 119 email invitations, seven came from 125 postal surveys, and 202 resulted from the Facebook™ postings (to six pages). The *Irish Echo* also did an online story on 13 September 2012 but the included link to the survey was corrupted.⁸⁸ Of the surveys commenced 66 per cent (144) were deemed valid and complete.⁸⁹ Of these, 22 were in the 1969-1985 group compared with 122 in the 1999-2012 group.

⁸⁶ ‘Ten Pound Poms’ refers to those migrants who availed of Australia’s post-war assisted passage immigration scheme (a joint agreement between the British and Australian governments from 1946 until Britain withdrew in 1972) which was open to residents of the Commonwealth (therefore closed to those from the ROI which left the Commonwealth in 1949) but particularly favoured by immigrants from the United Kingdom. *Immigration and Population History of Selected Countries of Birth*, Department of Immigration and Citizenship: <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/federation/body2.pdf> (accessed 08 May 2014). Fares for adults cost £10 and children travelled free. In 1973 the cost increased to £75 but without assistance would have cost in the region of £600 for a family of two adults and three children. A. J. Hammerton and A. Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms: Australia’s Invisible Migrants* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 33; *Ten Pound Poms*, Immigration Museum Victoria, <http://museumvictoria.com.au/immigrationmuseum/discoverycentre/your-questions/ten-pound-poms> (accessed 8 May 2014). Prior to a fare reduction in April 1972, a one-way airfare from London to Sydney cost £276 which is equivalent to \$2,753.35 at the time of writing. Source: Qantas Airways Ltd. History: <http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/qantas-airways-ltd-history> (accessed 8 May 2014). Calculation made using the Inflation Calculator of the Reserve Bank of Australia: <http://www.rba.gov.au/calculator/annualDecimal.html> (accessed 8 May 2014). A one-way fare today can cost as little as \$850: Skyscanner, <http://www.skyscanner.com.au/transport/flights/lond/syd/141120/airfares-from-london-to-sydney-kingsford-smith-in-november-2014.html?rtm=0> (accessed 8 May 2014). In 2012 Australia had 133 mobile phone devices per 100 persons (in the population) with the total number of mobiles being 30.2 million, *ACMA Communications Report 2011-12* (Melbourne: Australian Communications and Media Authority, 12 November 2012), p. 19.

⁸⁷ Sea travel tapered off through the early 1970s but it was not until 1977 that air travel took over completely. E. Richards. *Destination Australia: Migration to Australia since 1901* (Sydney, N.S.W.: University of New South Wales Press, 2008), p. 22; Fouweather, ‘Ten Pounds for Adults, Kids Travel Free’, p. 47.

⁸⁸ ‘Has Skype ended the expat letter?’ *Irish Echo*, Sydney, 13 September 2012, <http://www.irishecho.com.au/2012/09/13/has-skype-ended-the-expat-letter/20516>.

⁸⁹ The remaining third either did not meet the date criterion imposed on Survey 1 or clicked on the survey link and started but decided not to complete all of the questions.

Survey 1 was designed with the primary objective of discovering how Irish migrants use technology to connect with home and with each other. It included questions about birthplace, age, gender, education, origin family composition, marital status, settlement process, use of technology, involvement in Irish sport, dance and music groups, homesickness, regularity of letter writing, and return trips to Ireland. Survey 2 was more comprehensive. As well as these questions it asked for scale ratings of quality of life in Ireland and Australia, employment opportunity and job satisfaction, questions about visa category, integration into Australian society, use of Irish newspaper/radio/food suppliers, remittances to Ireland, use of online forums pre and post-migration, and the influence of economic factors in the decision to migrate. The response to the request for participation in the survey was impressive. In two days 208 people submitted their answers and comments to the seventy questions asked of them.⁹⁰ Approximately 82 per cent (171) of these were deemed complete and the responses given to both surveys are reflected in this article.

Sample Characteristics

Survey 1: Ireland Online: So close no matter how far⁹¹

Quality of life, particularly for families, was a constant theme of responses concerning the benefits of migration to Australia. Migrants from Northern Ireland represented 57 per cent of Cohort 1 of Survey 1 while 43 per cent were male. Of this group, 13.2 per cent were single, 55 per cent married (58 per cent accompanied by children), and the remainder (31.8 per cent) were child dependants (aged under 18) in a family group. Just over 40 per cent of Cohort 1 left school aged 15 or under, while 13.6 per cent completed secondary school, gaining A Levels or the Leaving Certificate qualification.⁹² More than half (57 per cent) of the child dependants attended university with 75 per cent of these gaining higher degrees.⁹³ Less than 20 per cent of the respondents said they emigrated in search of adventure, 28.5 per cent used the category "Other" and quoted the Troubles as the reason for leaving, while economic opportunity and the search for a more affluent lifestyle was a factor for 42.9 per cent of those questioned. Relationships with Australian citizens accounted for the remaining 9 per cent.

Cohort 2 of Survey 1 differed considerably in both composition and origin. Just under 10 per cent of the respondents emigrated from Northern Ireland compared with 90.1 per cent from the Republic of Ireland. Males represented less than a quarter (22 per cent) of respondents while 78 per cent were female. Those who emigrated in a de facto relationship accounted for 33 per cent of the Cohort 2 sample equalling those who travelled with a

⁹⁰ The survey link was posted on 3 February 2014 and data used included responses submitted until 5 February 2014.

⁹¹ This survey was undertaken to provide data for a paper given at the nineteenth Australasian Irish Studies Conference, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, 7-10 November 2012: F. Breen, 'Ireland Online: So Close No Matter How Far'.

⁹² Advanced or A Levels are usually undertaken at the end of the seventh year of secondary education (Upper Sixth form). The Republic of Ireland equivalent is the Leaving Certificate.

⁹³ These child dependants were frequent return migrants: 75 per cent attended university in Ireland; 50 per cent then returned to Australia and gained a higher degree. Source: Survey 1, Question 8.

spouse while 34 per cent came as single persons. Just under 15 per cent of the married couples were accompanied by children as were 3 per cent of the de facto couples. Slightly more than 66 per cent of the total of Survey 1 respondents were married or in a de facto relationship compared with 76 per cent of Survey 2 respondents. In total, 41 came as single persons and 103 emigrated in a family group. Three of these left an older child in Ireland when they emigrated. Eighty people (47 per cent) in the second group attended university with 28 achieving a higher degree. Twenty seven had a trade or vocational qualification and only three had left school by aged 15. Such is the educational opportunity afforded the last two generations in Ireland.

Survey 2: Ireland Online: The Experiences of Irish/Northern Irish Migrants to Australia

Survey 2 had markedly different demographic results. Almost two-thirds of the respondents were female (62 per cent). While 76 per cent of the total were, at the time of the survey, married or partnered with just less than 2 per cent in a same-sex marriage, 30 per cent of this group had arrived in Australia as single people and had formed new relationships post-arrival.⁹⁴ Overall, spouses were largely Irish (77 per cent) but, of the post-arrival relationships, almost 49 per cent were endogamous with 46 per cent being formed with Australian citizens and just over 5 per cent with citizens of other countries. Irish women were more likely than Irish men to seek an Irish partner in Australia as female respondents accounted for almost 58 per cent of the post-arrival endogamous relationships. Only 19 per cent of the total respondents from Survey 2 were married to Australian citizens with less than 4 per cent of partners being from somewhere other than Ireland or Australia. Around 40 per cent of the migrants who responded to Survey 2 had children. A small number (6.5 per cent) had children living outside Australia.

Of the single, non-parent migrants who responded, 70 per cent lived solely with Irish/Northern Irish people, 13 per cent with a mixture of Irish/Northern Irish people and others, 10 per cent with non-Irish/Northern Irish people, and 7 per cent lived alone. Most tended to socialise with their compatriots more than any other group. Of the total respondents, 64 per cent socialised with Irish/Northern Irish people either 'often' or 'very often' with 11 per cent answering in the categories of 'rarely' or 'never', leaving a quarter in the 'sometimes' category. Similar percentages resulted for the question regarding socialising with Australians with lower rates (47 per cent) of integration with other migrants in a social setting. These high rates of ethno-cultural socialisation differ markedly from Patricia O'Connor's despite the fact that most of the informants also come from the later arriving (post-1980) migrant group.⁹⁵ Only 38 per cent of O'Connor's subjects described their friendship group as being predominantly Irish-born, citing workplace relationships and social networking through mutual acquaintances as the main source of new friendships, while 15 per cent of Chetkovich's respondents described their friendship networks as 'mostly

⁹⁴John Canavan reports that same-sex couples represented 2 per cent of cohabittees in Ireland in 2006. J. Canavan, 'Family and Family Change in Ireland: An Overview', *Journal of Family Issues*, 33:1 (2012), p. 15.

⁹⁵ Chetkovich's study considered Irish immigrants from 1945 to 1995, p. 3.

Irish'.⁹⁶ This lower rate of ethnic insularity may be accounted for by Chetkovich's respondents being longer settled, having arrived between 1945 and 1995. A possible explanation for the responses given by contemporary immigrants may lie in the networking opportunities afforded by social media which allows casual but frequent contact between parties. It seems fewer Irish migrants arrive in Australia completely alone and many new arrivals come out to someone they know, even if only distantly.⁹⁷ The vast majority of these respondents use social media so this social cohesion is not surprising and points to a level of virtual insularity. The visa class also has an effect here since permanent roots and friendships are not the preserve of temporary visa-holders who are strongly represented in these surveys.

In 2012-13 the Skill Stream was the predominant route for Irish nationals seeking to come to Australia permanently, with 8 in 10 permanent visas granted to Irish nationals - a rise of 5.3 per cent in the number of Skill Stream visas granted. Most of this increase was in the Employer Sponsored component, reflecting the shift towards demand-driven entry. In 2012-13, 2,752 of these visas were granted to Irish nationals, an increase of 15 per cent on 2011-12 and an increase of 158 per cent since 2009-10.⁹⁸ Since more than half of Survey 1 and over 42 per cent of Survey 2 respondents are Working Holiday Makers, and therefore, not permanent, their general social insularity is perhaps not surprising. Several of the WHM informants reported the convenience of moving in with friends and living with 'their own'.⁹⁹ An inherent difficulty in this survey was reaching those who have integrated with Australian society to the point where they make no overt effort to uphold Irish connections. It is possible to speculate that their inclusion may dilute these findings regarding inter-community socialisation if one were to make the assumption that their friendship networks may be more diversified. Just over 61 per cent of the total respondents had Irish relatives or friends in Australia prior to arrival. Survey 1 respondents were asked an open-ended question regarding their initial experience of Australia regarding arrival, accommodation, and employment. Almost 45 per cent of new arrivals were met at the airport or stayed with Irish relatives or friends upon arrival. Another 14 per cent were greeted by employers/colleagues or chauffeured to pre-arranged accommodation meaning that 59 per cent of the total had initial settlement assistance.¹⁰⁰ This is slightly lower than the two-thirds (65 per cent) of O'Connor's informants which was similar to both Chetkovich's findings and characteristic of the broad community findings of the LSIA.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ O'Connor, (2005), pp. 200, 95. 'Multiple Experiences of Migrancy'

⁹⁷ 'Most people I know here have come out to someone they know with a spare bed or couch' - Respondent 'Miss McS', (F, 26, Clare, Ireland), in F. Breen and D. Lonergan, 'Tús maith, leath na h-oibre: half the work is in having a good start. Letters from Pennington', in *Hostel Stories: Reflecting on the Past, Looking Forward* (Adelaide: University of Adelaide, 2014). – forthcoming publication edited by Rachel Ankeny and Karen Agutter

⁹⁸ Department of Immigration and Border Protection, *Subclass 457 Quarterly Report 2013-14*. (Belconnen, ACT: Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2013), p. 10; Economic Analysis Unit, *Country Profile - Ireland* (Belconnen, ACT: Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2013), p. 3.

⁹⁹ Survey 1, Question 20.

¹⁰⁰ Survey 1, Question 20.

¹⁰¹ O'Connor, (2005), 'Multiple Experiences of Migrancy', pp. 195, 24. The Longitudinal Study of Immigrants to Australia (LSIA) was directed at a sample of Principal Applicants who immigrated to Australia between 1 September 1993 and 31 August 1995. Interviews were conducted in three waves: the first, within six months of arrival; then approximately one year later and finally, three and a half years after arrival. A total of 3,618 persons participated in all three waves.

No Irish community in Australia is large enough to permit its members to be completely insular but many maintain a strong interest in Irish affairs and past times. Almost 55 per cent of Survey 2 informants participate in organised Irish/Northern Irish community activity (but not in conjunction with an Irish Club or Association) and 58 per cent read online Irish newspapers 'often' or 'very often'. There was no discernible effect on these activities by time of arrival although anecdotal evidence from some respondents suggests that stage of life may be a contributory factor in active involvement with organised ethno-cultural activity.¹⁰² One informant reported that 'since arriving in Australia and becoming a parent I realised how isolated I was (prior to children it wasn't such a big factor), now I actively seek out Irish organisations and clubs to try and forge relationships/contacts with other Irish people.'¹⁰³ Her comment reflected the opinions of some others in similar family settings and the popularity of online social networking groups formed around carer/parent responsibilities and family activity points to the surrogacy role some Irish groups fulfil for migrants.¹⁰⁴ The participation in host community activities such as church, sport, music, and charity events in comparison with migrant activity in these areas in Ireland is discussed below.

Visas

The *Department of Immigration and Citizenship Working Holiday Visa Report December 2013* stated that Ireland was the third top source country for Australian WHM visas behind Taiwan and the United Kingdom for the program period until 30 June 2013.¹⁰⁵ The report showed that the figure for initial or first year WHM visas dropped by 39.4 per cent while applications for second year visas increased by 15.2 per cent.¹⁰⁶ Many WHM visa holders aim to convert this visa to one which will allow a longer stay with the ultimate aim of achieving Australian citizenship as will be discussed below.¹⁰⁷ As of 30 December 2013, 6,660 people from the Republic were in Australia on WHM visas. Almost 24,000 UK residents held this visa meaning around another 700 people from Northern Ireland were likely on a working holiday in the country at that date.¹⁰⁸ As

¹⁰² 65 per cent of respondents in Survey 1 rated the local Irish Club as somewhere they visited 'Rarely' or 'Never', while more than 6 per cent did not know where their local Irish association was. The remaining 29 per cent who visit the Irish Club 'Often' or 'Sometimes' is in line with O'Connor's data since 28 per cent of her sample were members of Irish Clubs or Associations. O'Connor, (2005), p. 201.

¹⁰³ Case30, Dublin, Female, arrived in 2005. De facto relationship with Australian male with two children aged 0-4yrs. Source: Survey 1, Question 21.

¹⁰⁴ Irish Mums in Adelaide (76 members); Adelaide Irish Connect (514 members); Irish Mums in Melbourne (180 members); Irish Families in Perth (5,900 members)

¹⁰⁵ Department of Immigration and Border Protection, *Working Holiday Maker Visa Programme Report 31 December 2013* (Belconnen, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia, 2013), p. 7.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 7, 18.

¹⁰⁷ Survey responses of those on WHM visas regarding future intentions. Source: Survey 2, Question 61.

¹⁰⁸ Using the proportion of population figure for Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom of 2.9 per cent as stated in reference 40.

Figure and show, of the survey respondents who held a visa, the great majority were part of the Working Holiday Maker scheme. The next largest visa cohort was the Temporary Work (Skilled) visa (subclass 457) group representing 22 per cent to 28 per cent of the total in each survey group. Of those in the sample on a limited fixed duration visa, less than 2 per cent intend to return to Ireland upon its expiry while another 2 per cent intend to migrate to another country when their visa expires. More than a quarter of this group intend to seek a visa extension or category change to allow them to remain on a different visa if possible. A small number, 2.5 per cent, intended to remain in the country regardless of their visa situation.¹⁰⁹ These figures support the view that even those on a temporary or limited visa regard their movement as a migration.

Figure 6: Survey 1 Visa Categories

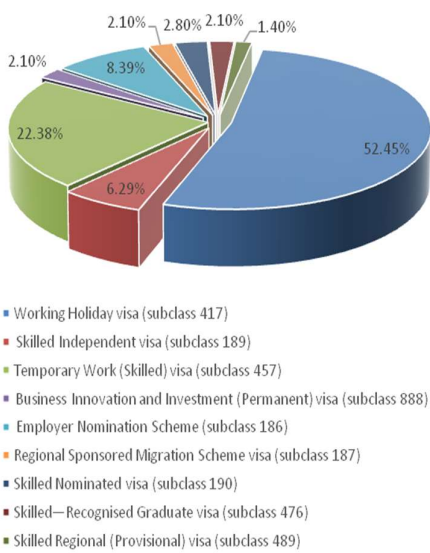
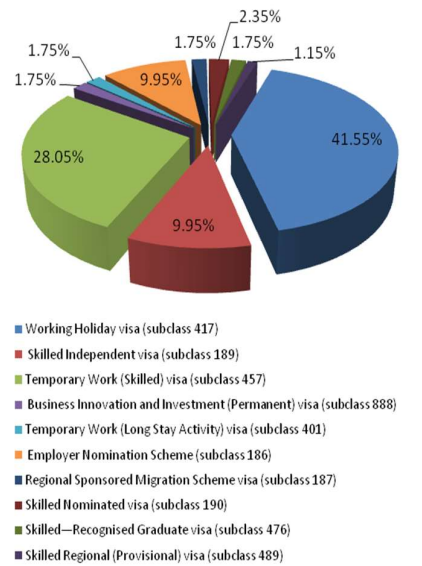


Figure 7: Visa Categories of Respondents to Survey 2



¹⁰⁹ Survey 2, Question 61.

The fact that most respondents were in the most recent arrival category may explain the high numbers of migrants in the Temporary Work (Skilled) and WHM visa categories. The argument against an intention to stay in Australia permanently or the removal of such persons from the 'emigrant' classification may be weakened by the fact that many temporary visa applicants subsequently apply for permanent status and this trend is growing. Category jumpers (conversion from temporary to permanent residency) are plentiful. According to DIBP's *Subclass 457 Annual Report 2013-14*, 'In the 2013-14 programme year to 31 December 2013, the number of subclass 457 visa holders who were granted a permanent residence/provisional visa was 24,440, 44.2 per cent higher compared with the same period in the previous programme year, which was 16,950'; 3,400 of these were granted to Irish people.¹¹⁰ Almost two-thirds of Survey 2 respondents indicated that their visa category had changed since arrival.

The change in the nature of Irish migration to Australia, particularly since 2008, is evident. O'Connor noted that migration by skilled transients tended to be career/occupationally motivated while those on WHMs were motivated primarily by recreational stimuli and the rite of passage of the 'gap year'.¹¹¹ Australian officials recognise that there has been 'a recent shift in motivation for these visa holders, from a tourism and/or life experience to an employment opportunity.' The WHM programme is often seen 'as a pathway to long-term employment and eventual permanent residence'.¹¹² Reflecting a shift from O'Connor's figures for 2004-5, in 2012-13, only 547 Irish-born permanent residents indicated at departure that they were leaving Australia permanently representing a drop from 37.5 per cent to 16 per cent of total new permanent residents.¹¹³ The report of UCC's *Émigré Project*, which analysed the responses of almost 3,000 individuals in Ireland and abroad, states that less than 10 per cent of its informants intended returning to Ireland and that '68% would like to extend their visas if possible'.¹¹⁴

The Age of Information

Today's migrants are generally much better informed than those of previous years. Information gleaned from friends and family abroad can provide the impetus for some moves. As Stephen Castles puts it:

It is well known that most migrants follow 'beaten paths' and go where their compatriots have already established a bridgehead, making it easier to find work and lodgings, and deal with bureaucratic obstacles. Older migration scholars spoke of 'chain migration,' while in recent years much emphasis has been put on

¹¹⁰ DIBP, *Subclass 457 Quarterly Report 2013-14* (2013), pp. 2, 6.

¹¹¹ O'Connor, ' (2005), 'Multiple Experiences of Migrancy', p. 24

¹¹² DIAC. *Working Holiday Maker Visa Programme Report 31 December 2013* (Belconnen, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia, 2013), p. 1.

¹¹³ O'Connor, (2005), 'Multiple Experiences of Migrancy', p. 102. There were 436 permanent arrival figures from Southern Ireland and 164 permanent departures.

¹¹⁴ Glynn *et al.* *Irish Emigration in an Age of Austerity*, pp. ii, 9.

'migration networks' and the way these develop as links between communities at home and in destination areas.¹¹⁵

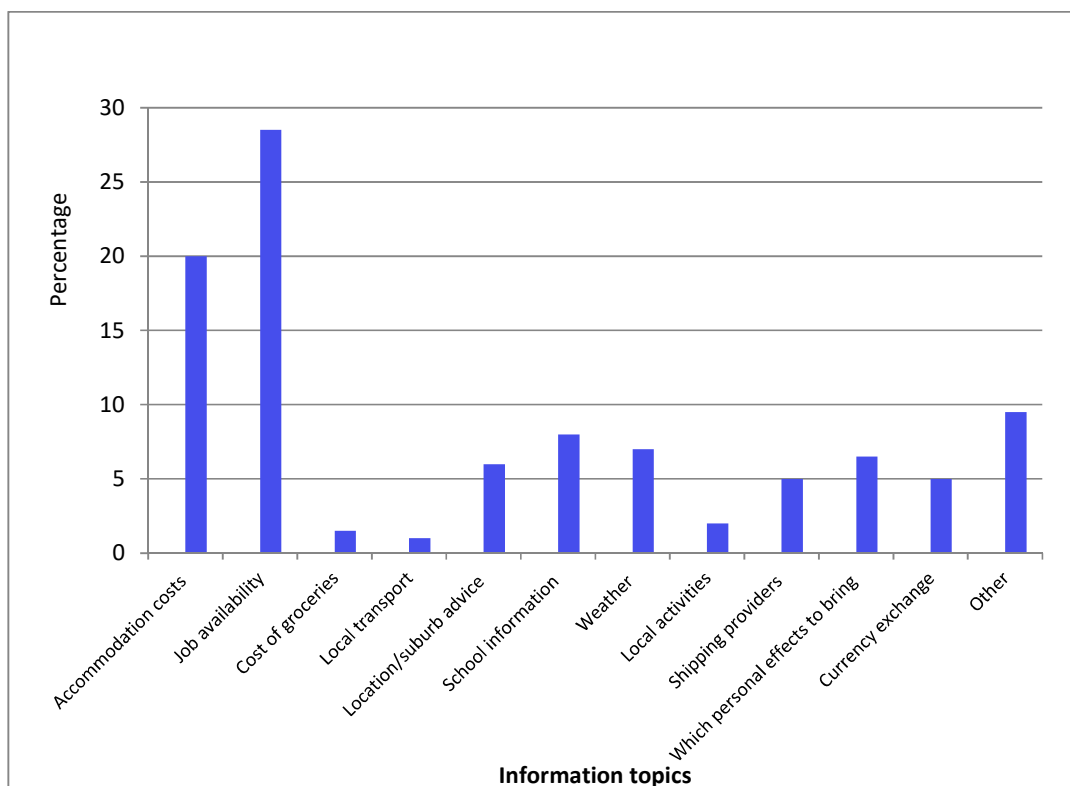
Around 57 per cent of Survey 1 respondents and 66 per cent of respondents to Survey 2 had relatives or friends in the location they moved to in Australia indicating that chain migration, or a migration network, is still a strong feature of Irish movement to the Antipodes though fewer people gain entry through family sponsorship.¹¹⁶ Websites and internet groups also provide much of the information people seek about their new destination. Migrant forums give a wide range of personal opinion, recounting both good and bad experiences, and provide substantial food for thought for prospective immigrants.¹¹⁷ Question 41 in Survey 2 asked migrants about the information they sought from online forums. The results are in Figure 8.

¹¹⁵ S. Castles, 'Migration and Community Formation under Conditions of Globalization', *International Migration Review*, 36 (2002), p. 1150.

¹¹⁶ Castles states that 'In the "classical immigration countries" it was - at least until recently - seen as axiomatic that immigrants of all types, once allowed to settle, should be entitled to bring in close dependents. This principle is now being eroded in Australia and elsewhere', *Ibid*, p. 153. Just over 61 per cent of respondents had Irish friends or relatives somewhere in Australia when they arrived. Of Irish people known and located at the point of arrival, 45 per cent provided settlement assistance.

¹¹⁷ Newsfeed on many Facebook™ pages such as Poms in Oz takes the form of prospective and new migrants asking for advice on a range of issues. Survey 2, Question 41 asked informants about the categories on which they sought advice. Figure 8 gives the results.

Figure 8: Advice sought by migrants in online forums



Since most responses to both surveys were submitted through the web it is not surprising that the majority cited this aspect of technology as one of the most positive of modern-day communication with 66 per cent of the total respondents using video calling services such as Skype. Mobile phone usage is also popular with 62.5 per cent text messaging ‘often’ or ‘very often’.¹¹⁸ A more recent phenomenon and one that was not included in the questionnaires is the ‘group message’ on Viber which allows a multi-person conversation to be held.¹¹⁹ Online networks usually result in personal connections in host communities: 32 per cent of respondents met with members of their Facebook™/online group on a regular basis, with 85 per cent regularly using Irish/British online forums and Facebook™ groups.¹²⁰ For recent arrivals, and those still in Ireland, the most common reason for using the online connection is seeking advice about employment, followed by accommodation costs, inferring that these are the two major concerns of new arrivals. Before relocating, 62 per cent of respondents had used the Australian Government immigration website, yet only 15 per cent used online

¹¹⁸ Survey 1, Question 18; Survey 2, Question 35.

¹¹⁹ Members of Adelaide Irish Connect were asked about this at a meeting on 13 April 2014 and 75 per cent of those asked used the Viber app to keep in touch with family and close friendship groups. The fact that the app and communications through it are free was cited as beneficial. More information can be obtained at the Viber website: <http://www.viber.com/>

¹²⁰ Survey 2, Question 41.

groups for advice.¹²¹ Joining the Facebook™ group relevant to their state or city seemed to happen for the majority of respondents once the move had been made. Reliance on government literature and information from any contacts already in Australia were the options for those who arrived prior to 1985 since the technology, and therefore, these options did not exist then.

Homesickness

Emigration is as much an emotional journey as a physical one and many migrants experience homesickness at some point. Of Survey 1 informants, 15 per cent reported regularly feeling so homesick that they wanted to leave Australia, while 40 per cent said they felt homesick but contact with the Irish in Australia or at home made them feel better. A quarter of informants felt pangs of homesickness but took no action preferring to let it pass while 20 per cent report never experiencing longing for Ireland. Of Survey 2 respondents, 73 per cent experienced homesickness 'sometimes', 'often' or 'very often'.

While homesickness was considered a real condition of concern by 77 per cent of respondents to both surveys it was experienced to varying degrees among them. There was no division in opinion between those who arrived recently or long-term residents. Neither did origin, family size, or composition of the migrant's domestic situation in Australia differentiate those who reported suffering from homesickness. The most discernible difference in attitudes towards treatment of homesickness as a condition which required some support or intervention was gender-based. Twice as many men than women felt it was not a 'real/valid' complaint.¹²² Among the top life event stressors in society today are death of a spouse/family member, divorce, moving house, and separation.¹²³ Migration 'involves not only leaving social networks behind (which may or may not be well established) but also includes experiencing at first a sense of loss, dislocation, alienation and isolation'.¹²⁴ Considering that migrants experience both changing home and divorce from their support network during migration, it is surprising that specific migration health and counselling services are not more readily available. Illness rates are high among migrants and among persons who move between cultures or move frequently within their own country.¹²⁵ While we do not have specific data on either the physical or mental health of Irish migrants in Australia, responses to open-ended questions in the surveys elicited stories of despair, family disintegration when one spouse decided to return, guilt at being away when a family member became ill, separation anxiety, depression, and general sadness, inferring that this may be a matter of concern and an avenue of further research.

Although homesickness appears to be a largely unavoidable part of the migration process, most migrants manage to suppress it, recognising that it presents in waves and that the reason for migration is usually still

¹²¹ Department of Immigration and Border Protection website: <http://www.immi.gov.au> (accessed 16 February 2014).

¹²² Survey 1, Question 29; Survey 2, Question 63.

¹²³ S. Mestrovic and B. Glassner, 'A Durkheimian Hypothesis on Stress', *Social Science & Medicine*, 17:18 (1983), p. 1315.

¹²⁴ D. Bhugra, 'Migration, Distress and Cultural Identity', *British Medical Bulletin*, 69:1 (2004), p. 129.

¹²⁵ Mestrovic and Glassner, 'A Durkheimian Hypothesis on Stress', p. 1316.

substantially valid. In response to a thread regarding homesickness, one group member stated that 'During the first two years we would have gone home several times from homesickness. In the next five years we each got homesick at different times and luckily we both were not homesick at the same time so we settled down'.¹²⁶ Another wrote: 'At the end of the day you make the decision for you and your children and their future ... we have a lifestyle that I don't think we would have had in Ireland and our children have opportunities for better lives'.¹²⁷

Homesickness, Communication and Social Media

Anecdotal evidence of feelings of homesickness, isolation, connectedness, settling in, and forming new social networks was gathered from the open-ended questions in the questionnaires. The role of social media was a focus of both surveys but Survey 1, which was developed specifically to look at communication between diasporic communities and those remaining in Ireland, delved deeper into communication methods than Survey 2.

Facebook™ is cited in the survey as the most utilised social media platform of recent migrants. The study revealed that it has both benefits and drawbacks from the migrants' perspective. While most (93 per cent) are of the opinion that this portal allows them to keep up with life events of family, friends, and the hometown community, seven per cent blame it for increasing feelings of loneliness claiming that the almost real-time of updates makes them realise what they are missing out on. Conversely, around a quarter made the observation that seeing the lack of activity in peoples' lives at home made them appreciate their new lifestyle, home, and surroundings all the more since some aspects of life at home, particularly their peers' social lives, appear to have stagnated.

Usage of Facebook™ as a means of keeping in contact with friends and family in Ireland was 70 per cent in the 'often' or 'very often' categories among all respondents. Weekly or fortnightly phone calls from a landline remain the preferred communication method for the Cohort 1 of Survey 1 and, surprisingly, it is those in Cohort 2 who still write letters. The regularity of communication with people in Ireland appears to decline over time as 47 per cent of the earlier group communicate with Ireland once or twice a week compared with 60 per cent of the second group. Of those who arrived since 1999, 94 per cent are in contact with relations in Ireland at least once a fortnight compared with 67 per cent of the earlier arrivals. Skype is perhaps the newest variation in contact methods with 65 per cent of respondents citing this as a service used 'often' or 'very often'. In addition to verbal communication, the Cohort 2 members are physically present in Ireland much more often than Cohort 1. Should these trends continue, it is likely that the 'regret of distance' will figure less

¹²⁶ This quote is from a Facebook™ post on Irish Families in Perth group page, 23 February 2014. As the group is 'closed' for privacy reasons, the hyperlink to the page cannot be provided.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

for migrants, especially those with children who are thus removed from grandparents and extended family.¹²⁸ The closeness made possible by new methods of instant communication and the affordability of air travel makes familiarity over distance a reality. What this closer communication means for the future Irish diaspora remains to be seen. Taken in conjunction with the Irish diaspora policy it is entirely possible that the generations that were formerly lost to Ireland through either the inability or reluctance of Irish migrants to make return journeys or even maintain regular contact are a thing of the past.

Feelings of connectedness to those still in Ireland appear strong for most migrants with 66.6 per cent feeling strong connections with their local community, 80 per cent feeling they still fitted in former friendship groups and, not surprisingly perhaps, 90 per cent reporting slotting easily back into the family circle.¹²⁹ Social communication technology assisted here: quick 'chats' via SMS allow regular 'everyday' information flow; Skype calls afford visibility which in turn allows viewing of faces, new hairstyles, 'meeting' newly-born members of the family, and witnessing the growth of children. Such seemingly small concerns perhaps, yet it is logical that regular physical viewing of the separated person prevents unfamiliarity; the shock of seeing an aging parent after prolonged absence for example. Around 10 per cent responded that they felt the deep connection among immediate family members was responsible for their connectedness, implying that they would be up to date with events in Ireland with or without electronic media. Only 16 per cent of migrants reported feeling as if they did not belong in their local Irish community anymore; 6 per cent felt alienated from former friends, and less than 1 per cent felt they had lost connection with the family circle. Some stated that life experience, including but not solely due to emigration, had changed them and so relationships changed implying that this would have occurred whether they had left their hometown or not.

Personal experiences displayed on social media and shared in the comments sections of the surveys show a wide variance. There are those who post that they cannot wait to get home because life is too short to be away from the most important people in their lives – parents, siblings, nieces, nephews – and that no amount of sunshine or money can make up for the loss they feel. Such feelings are counterbalanced by posts sharing stories of couples and families becoming closer as they were left to fend without the support of extended family and the local community networks of home. Both ends of the spectrum are important, as are the middle-range experiences of those who feel the pangs of homesickness but 'stick things out'. Further study of the personal experiences of migrants is warranted in this area in order to gain some insight into the health of migrants and ascertain if processes can be streamlined and information improved.

So where is 'home' for the transnational migrant and the diasporic Irish in Australia? The answer to this question did not appear to be dependent on the length of time in Australia. Almost identical percentages of the groups answered to the categories of 'Ireland', 'Australia' or 'Both': 38 per cent of the first group and 37

¹²⁸ Guilt at taking children away from the wider family circle came up several times in the open-ended questions regarding the best and worst aspects of migration. Parents appeared to be regularly weighing up the benefits and opportunities of life in Australia against the loss of familial support and their children's familiarity with extended family members.

¹²⁹ Survey 1, Questions 27 and 28.

per cent of the second answered 'Ireland'; 14 per cent of each cited Australia as home; and 48 per cent and 49 per cent respectively claimed that both were 'home'. Chetkovich reported that 72 per cent of respondents claimed a dual home while 23 per cent named Ireland and 5 per cent named Australia. Of O'Connor's respondents, 38 per cent equally ranked Ireland and Australia as home and one-fifth of the group considered both locations to be home. From the survey responses given postnational theories of citizenship are not evident while aspects of transnationalism such as dual, even multi-citizenship, and biculturalism are upheld. Relationships with one's birthplace and chosen homeland can be characterised by fluidity and attachment to place and self-identification can alter over time. The responses of older migrants who are now the grandparents of Australian-born children are a good example of this. Victor Roudometof speaks of 'a perpetual sense of homelessness' for those torn between two places and two identities.¹³⁰ Rather than a sense of homelessness, the respondents here felt they had two homes. Family ties in both places appear to be the reason for respondents being unable to define one 'home'. For newer migrants it was extended family in Ireland that kept Ireland in contention for the title, while for the first cohort the presence of grandchildren in Australia left Ireland vying for it: 'Ireland will always be home' was a frequent response.

Migration Motivators

Although the majority of respondents to both surveys stated that they emigrated because they chose to, there is a strong element of 'push' among the reasons for migration. Economic reasons were cited as the motive for migration for many of the respondents to Survey 1 (46 per cent of the total). For migrants from the north of Ireland there was the added impetus of civil unrest. Of the pre-1980 migrants in Survey 1, 35 per cent left because of The Troubles as did 23 per cent of pre-1980 migrants in Survey 2. The Northern Ireland 'Troubles' are credited with causing the high levels of out-migration which occurred in the early 1970s.¹³¹ This loss resulted in the first decrease in Northern Ireland's population since the early 1930s.¹³² As demonstrated by Figure , arrival in Australia by respondents from Northern Ireland to Survey 1 spiked in 1973. This is likely the result of the impact of increased violence in Northern Ireland during 1972 when 472 people died, 321 of whom were civilians. That year is recognised as the worst year of The Troubles.¹³³ Those leaving the Republic maintain a fairly steady rate from early in the first decade of this century until around 2008 when the numbers

¹³⁰ V. Roudometof, 'From Greek-Orthodox Diaspora to Transnational Hellenism: Greek Nationalism and the Identities of the Diaspora.' *IJS Studies in Judaica, Volume 9: The Call of the Homeland: Diaspora Nationalisms, Past and Present*, edited by A.S. Leoussi, A. Gal and A.D. Smith (Boston, MA, USA: Brill Academic Publishers, 2010), p.158.

¹³¹ Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, *The Annual Report of the Registrar General 2012* (Department of Finance and Personnel, Belfast: Office of National Statistics, 2013), p. 9.

¹³² Office of National Statistics, 'A Demographic Portrait of Northern Ireland', *Population Trends*, 135 (2009), p. 91. Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency: http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/publications/Pop_Trends_NI_Article.pdf (accessed 15 February 2014).

¹³³ 'Violence - Significant Violent Incidents During the Conflict', CAIN (Conflict Archive on the INternet), University of Ulster, <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/violence/majinc.htm> (accessed 15 September 2013).

increase sharply and, bar 2010, remain high. The increase from 2008 was the result of the collapse of the ROI economy.

From the data set of Survey 1 only three respondents (14 per cent) of Cohort 1 reported leaving from a county different from their birth place and only one from a different country suggesting that, for this cohort of the sample, rates of internal migration within Ireland were low at this time. This compares with 49 of Cohort 2 (40 per cent) of Survey 1, three of whom were born outside Ireland. From the 2011 Census, the Irish Central Statistics Office has determined that 'Irish people showed a tendency to live in their birth county. Over three-quarters of the country's 3.76 million Irish born residents were usually resident in their county of birth.'¹³⁴ Cohort 2 then appears to be atypical of the general population of the Republic.

Almost a quarter of the respondents to Survey 2 had lived outside Ireland for a period of more than twelve months before moving to Australia. A possible interpretation of this is that Australia may be part of a newer trend of stepped migration towards a final location. The likelihood of a return to Ireland being the final step seems remote given responses to the last set of questions in Survey 2 as described below.

¹³⁴ Government of Ireland, *Census 2011 Profile 1 – Town and Country*, Information Section, Central Statistics Office (Dublin: Stationery Office, 2012), p. 13.

Figure 9: Timeline of arrivals for Survey 1 respondents

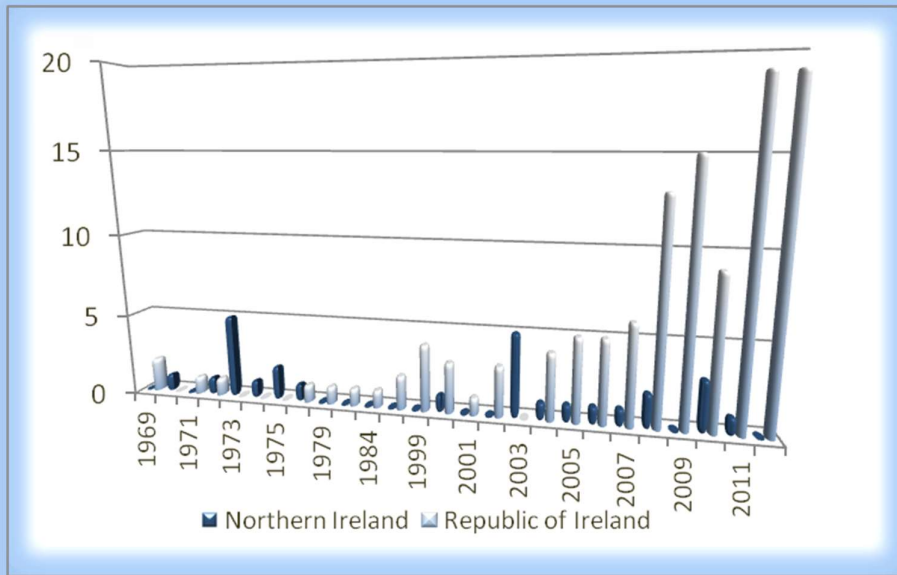
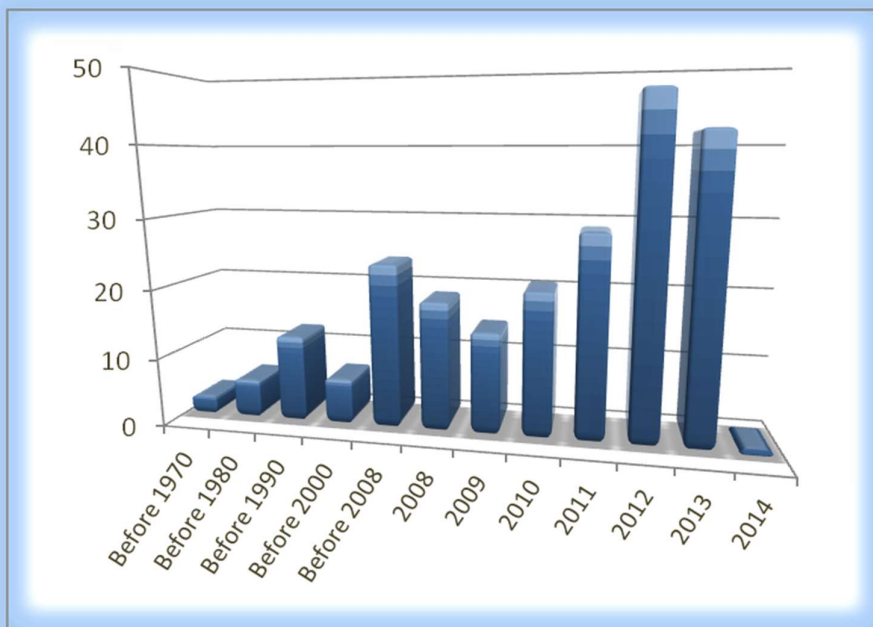


Figure 7: Timeline of arrivals for Survey 2 respondents



The data from Survey 2 showed that the economic climate in Ireland/Northern Ireland was a ‘very influential’ or ‘extremely influential’ factor in the decision to leave for 73 per cent of respondents. Of those who left since

2008, the commencement of Ireland's period of economic downturn, 61 per cent stated that they migrated to find better employment or gain job experience. While 43 per cent indicated that they would like to return to Ireland/Northern Ireland within the next five years either 'very much' or 'quite a lot', only 30 per cent thought it was 'likely' or 'very likely' that they would do so. These figures differ only slightly from those produced in the *Émigré Report* which said that 'although 39.5% out of all recent emigrants would like to return to Ireland in the next three years, only 22% see it as likely'.¹³⁵ Improvement in the economy (aspects of which include reduction in property prices and increased job availability) in Ireland would be enticing for around 52 per cent, while 31 per cent felt this would have no effect whatsoever on a consideration of a move home. A higher percentage (82 per cent) of *Émigré's* respondents said the likelihood of their return would improve if Ireland's recession showed signs of lifting. Perhaps the greatest differential between the respondents of Survey 1 and 2, who were all based in Australia, and those who responded to the UCC study is the fact of location. The *Émigré* respondents were based in several countries.¹³⁶ The lifestyle, weather, recreation, and job opportunities available in Australia appear to offer more enticement than any inducement in Ireland. All travelled to Australia to further their careers, despite holding secure employment at the time of departure. In Ireland/Northern Ireland all held full-time positions, 80 per cent of which were permanent.¹³⁷ Given that the economic climate had considerable leverage in the decision to emigrate it might be surprising to read that this was the case. The anecdotal evidence sheds further light on this and reveals layers of intricacy that the data cannot. This group was similarly economically engaged in Australia with only one reporting being unemployed at the time of submission. Comments about life in Australia reveal that job prospects and career advancement are noticeably better for most.

Lack of permanent resident status, income, stage of life, and relationship status can all affect opportunities for home ownership. Approximately 79 per cent of Survey 2 respondents live in rental properties while 90 per cent of the homeowners among the group arrived prior to 2009. The great majority are married or partnered (76 per cent) with children (50 per cent). Slightly more than 70 per cent have obtained educational qualifications at Diploma level or above, with 85 per cent of these holding a Bachelor degree or better. This is congruent with the *Émigré Report* findings which state that 'Today's emigrants are much more likely to have a high standard of education than the population in general. While 47 per cent of Irish people aged between 25-34 hold a tertiary qualification of three years or more, 62 per cent of recent Irish emigrants hold the equivalent qualification, suggesting that graduates are over-represented amongst those leaving.'¹³⁸ This supports Graeme

¹³⁵ *Émigré Report*, UCC, p.ii.

¹³⁶ The majority of Irish migrants go to the UK and Australia with smaller numbers travelling to New Zealand, Canada, and the United States.

¹³⁷ This compares with 47 per cent of respondents to the *Émigré Report*, p. ii.

¹³⁸ *Émigré Report*, p. ii.

Hugo's observation of 'brain circulation' in Australia.¹³⁹ A lower percentage of O'Connor's informants achieved tertiary or postgraduate qualifications: 'One-third held university or post-graduate qualifications. A further third had attained other tertiary qualifications.'¹⁴⁰ In contrast, 65 per cent of the migrants from Survey 1 had attended university with a higher proportion of this group, mostly from the cohort who arrived before 1986, having left school at the upper secondary level. Obviously visa entry requirements also have an effect on the proportion of migrants who would claim to be non-skilled, but this restriction was not in place during the time of the migration scheme of the 1960s and 70s when many adult migrants had left school around the age of 14 or 15 due to economic necessity.¹⁴¹ Quality of life (designated by general satisfaction with work/life balance, leisure time, disposable income, and that vague element, happiness) in Ireland/Northern Ireland was rated by participants on a scale of one to ten where one was the lowest: 47 per cent rated quality of life at a score of 5 or below, while 53 per cent rated it between 6 and 10 (6 per cent scored life quality at 10). The same question was asked of life in Australia and the difference was marked: only 5 per cent rated quality of life below 5 with almost 19 per cent rating it at 10.¹⁴²

In August 2013, Irish Heritage Minister, Jimmy Deenihan, claimed in an interview with ABC News, 'There's [sic] huge connections here [in Australia] in the political world, in the education world, in the medical world and in industry. Irish people feel very comfortable coming to Australia because they know there's a very positive welcome for them here'. While this may be the case for the skilled visa group, commentary from some WHM visa holders described a prejudice against younger Irish workers.¹⁴³ Only 34 per cent of respondents had gained work connections from an Irish person in Australia, the majority of whom were known to them before arrival with one-third representing new connections.¹⁴⁴

One open-ended question regarding the aspects of migration which had been the least pleasant attracted comments that indicated that some new migrants felt they were the victims of discrimination based on their nationality. Some felt their difficulty in having Irish-gained qualifications recognised by Australian employers to be an insidious form of racism.¹⁴⁵ They felt that because they were white and English-speaking such complaints were not taken seriously.

¹³⁹ G. Hugo, 'Migration Policies in Australia and Their Impact on Development in Countries of Origin' in UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), *International Migration and the Millennium Development Goals* (UNFPA, New York, 2005), p. 202.

¹⁴⁰ O'Connor, 'Multiple Experiences of Migrancy', p. 167.

¹⁴¹ Many of those born in the post-war era accepted that their income was needed to support the nuclear family. This was especially true of the older children of the household. Although educational reform had taken place in Ireland, it was not until the 1967 Education Act that secondary education became a reality for many Irish teenagers. A. E. Raftery and M. Hout, 'Maximally Maintained Inequality: Expansion, Reform, and Opportunity in Irish Education, 1921-75', *Sociology of Education*, 66:1 (1993), pp. 41-62.

¹⁴² The combined percentage for ratings '9' and '10' was 40 per cent.

¹⁴³ Survey 2, Question 66.

¹⁴⁴ 'More Irish coming to Australia than ever before, according to Immigration figures' *ABC News*, 24 August 2013. ABC News: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-08-24/irish-migration-to-australia-increasing/4910116>

¹⁴⁵ Respondents used the terms 'racist', 'bigot', and 'cruel' when describing their experiences as Irish migrants in Australia. Some thought the relationships formed with Australians proved to be superficial after a time. Migrant expectations, perhaps based on an idealistic notion of Irish friendships and sense of community, appear to be disappointed in this regard on

Consequences of Emigration

Return Visits

Survey 1 asked for information about return visits and opinions on how migrants felt they fitted in with family, friends, and the wider community in general when they returned. The phenomenon of the 'American wake' still exists today although in modified form.¹⁴⁶ It is relatively common for the migrants' family and friends to get together to wish them well in their new life abroad, but there is little of the finality of earlier times. Indeed, Cohort 2 had a much higher rate of return than Cohort 1. Not only did they make a return visit sooner (17.5 per cent within the first year) after the initial departure than their predecessors, but they also return more frequently and fully intend on keeping up this trend as long as finances permit it. More than 21 per cent returned for a holiday less than two years after emigrating. Where finances are limited migrants have compromised by co-financing holidays by relatives. This arrangement changes as parents age and are no longer able to travel. On average the offspring of Cohort 1 made 2.07 trips each (over a 43-year period), while the children of Cohort 2 have visited Ireland 2.24 times each and that only within a 13-year period. Some children in the second group go to Ireland annually and two, aged 16 months and 20 months respectively, had already been twice.

High rates of early and frequent return trips are evident among Survey 2 respondents also. Of this group, two per cent travel to Ireland several times a year, 25 per cent once a year, 38 per cent once every two or three years, 10 per cent once each five years, while 25 per cent have not returned. Of those who have not returned yet, 60 per cent reasoned that it was too soon to go back. Other reasons for not having returned included the cost factor, lack of annual leave time available for a decent trip to Ireland, and a wish to see other places during one's free time.¹⁴⁷ Visits by family members to Australia were also a reason to delay a return trip. One development which will be interesting to take account of in the future is to see how the familiarity with Ireland and its cultural aspects through more frequent return travel among child migrants affects the engagement of the diaspora with Gaelic sports and other 'Irish' leisure activities in Australia.

occasion. Source: Survey 2, Question 66. O'Connor provides quotes from two respondents which illustrate this same notion of lack of depth in relationships between the Irish and Australians. O'Connor, 'Multiple Experiences of Migrancy', pp. 268-9.

¹⁴⁶ The traditional American Wake was revived in Co. Clare late in 2011. 'A Party for the Departing', *The Irish Times*, 17 December 2011, <http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/a-party-for-the-departing-1.12914> (accessed 14 May 2014).

¹⁴⁷ Given the cost of return flights a trip of three weeks or more is generally considered a 'decent' amount of time for a visit.

Benefits of Emigration

One of the biggest drawcards for Irish migrants to Australia is its weather and the lifestyle associated with sunshine. While seemingly superficial, 10 per cent of respondents noted that increased outdoor time was a healthier option for growing children and allowed for more 'whole family' activity.¹⁴⁸ Opportunity for career advancement was also highlighted. An article which appeared in November 2013 in the *Irish Times* 'Generation Emigration' series reported that 'Even college leavers going on working-holiday visas want a job in their field so they can gain experience . . . They don't just want a backpacking job anymore.'¹⁴⁹ As mentioned previously, Australian immigration officials have recognised the shift from casual work intentions and recreational use of the WHM visa towards work experience which can assist with securing a second visa which offers permanent residency. Respondents to the survey confirmed that career prospects were much better in Australia and many revealed that gaining job experience was a deciding factor when considering migration. When asked to rate career prospects in Ireland/Northern Ireland the majority of Survey 2 informants (61 per cent) rated these 5 or less on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 was the lowest score. Many commented that although they worked in Ireland they did not see much opportunity for advancement and newer graduates said they could not get a start in their chosen field at home.

Conclusion

Despite their limitations these pilot surveys revealed a number of interesting differences between the two groups of migrants. The earlier group and their offspring do not return to Ireland as often as the newest group of arrivals can and do. Contact between them and family and friends in Ireland is not as frequent as between newer arrivals and home. This is attributed to their longer absences since many gave anecdotal evidence of not feeling as much a part of the home community due to missing out on participation in significant events in the lives of family and friends in Ireland. More frequent return visits by the newer migrants are likely to lessen this distancing effect. The skill level and corresponding income potential of more recent migrants assists frequent return travel. The contribution of the Irish diaspora to the Republic's recovering economy is noteworthy as is its addition of threads to the country's social fabric by means of increased familial and community contact.

The widespread and regular use of social media is a conspicuous feature of contemporary emigration. This study suggests it is valuable in the settlement process. The rise in visibility and popularity of online migrant resource and social networking groups may spell the eventual decline of traditional Irish clubs in Australia's capital cities. There are four elements to this conclusion: firstly, the aging membership and management of

¹⁴⁸ Survey 2, Question 67.

¹⁴⁹ 'Most emigrants who settle in Australia will not return' Generation Emigration, *The Irish Times*, 9 November 2013, <http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/most-emigrants-who-settle-in-australia-will-not-return-1.1588651> (accessed 15 November 2013).

clubs appears to lessen their attractiveness and relevancy to contemporary migrants; secondly, they generally no longer perform the welcoming and networking functions of previous years; thirdly, they require a subscription whereas online groups are free; and lastly, they are constrained by the fact that they have a physical location. Participation in online groups and networking through them is not regulated by settlement locality. The accessibility of social media to local, regional and even prospective migrants, cannot be overlooked.

This study's sample has demonstrated differences in attitudes towards the permanency of the move to Australia, in habits of socialisation with their own ethno-cultural community and in their intention to return to Ireland compared with earlier studies. That its findings are more in line with the 2013 Émigré Report indicates that the characteristics of the trend of migration from Ireland since 2008 differ markedly from the post-1980 period and the more recent years before the collapse of the Irish economy. While world systems and other external forces play their part in migration flows, the agency of the individual migrant is important in determining how much emotion plays a role in this human traffic. This study has demonstrated that economic considerations certainly play a part in the decision to leave Ireland but lifestyle choices, family considerations, freedom, and adventure balance these and suggests that the rising importance of technology in the fields of information provision and in social media will continue to impact successful settlement.

Appendix 11

Australian Immigration Policy in Practice

Breen, F 2016, 'Australian Immigration Policy in Practice: a case study of skill recognition and qualification transferability amongst Irish 457 visa holders', *Australian Geographer*, vol. 47, no. 4, 2016/10/01, pp. 491-509.



Australian Immigration Policy in Practice: a case study of skill recognition and qualification transferability amongst Irish 457 visa holders

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Australian Immigration Policy in Practice: a case study of skill recognition and qualification transferability amongst Irish 457 visa holders

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ABSTRACT


Immigration quotas in Australia are guided primarily by economic policy—the needs of the nation are quite rightly the principal concern of policymakers. Using data from a mixed-methods study, this article engages in a dialogue between labour geography and population and migration studies through an examination of the lived experiences of migrating workers and their families. The paper examines a number of cases where policy and practice have detrimentally affected the migration experience of Irish migrants who came to Australia under the Temporary Work (Skilled) (subclass 457) visa. The case study focuses on interviews with secondary 457 visa applicants, namely the wives of former 457 workers. These interviews highlight the problems faced by newcomers to Australia who arrive under this visa. The experiences relayed by these women demonstrate how ill-considered policy relating to qualification transferability makes entering the workplace and, therefore, transition to life in Australia more difficult than it needs to be. While the cases that underpin this paper ended in migration failure (the families involved returned to Ireland), the core issues of qualification transferability and skill comparison were replicated in the wider study dataset (of 1022 survey responses and 80 qualitative interviews). While acknowledging that citizens generally have more freedom and more civil rights than non-citizens, the findings of this study indicate that further review of Australia's 457 visa is needed, particularly with respect to the limitations placed on the agency of migrant workers. Greater awareness amongst prospective migrants as to the purpose and limits of the 457 visa is also necessary, in order to avoid misinterpretation and the extreme personal repercussions outlined in this paper.

KEYWORDS

Immigration; visa; Australia; Ireland; temporary; permanent; policy

Introduction

The data in this article derive from a PhD project on the experiences of Irish migrants to Australia from 2000 to 2015, which commenced under the generous supervision of Professor Graeme Hugo AO, as part of a larger diaspora project that he was involved in at the

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time of his passing. The specific focus of this paper is on Irish migrants who came to Australia as temporary skilled workers, but who had returned to Ireland at the time of the research due to their difficult migration experiences. Their accounts of the convergence of events which resulted in dramatic migration failure are unique amongst the study participants. However, the core issues of skill recognition and qualification transferability are replicated across the author's broader dataset of 1022 survey responses and 80 qualitative interviews with Irish migrants to Australia.

This article's primary concern is with the effects of immigration policy on individual migrants. It builds on Hugo's work on theories of international migration and his concern that 'policies and programs, both formal and informal' are developed to 'maximize the benefits and minimize the costs of the greatly enhanced mobility' that the world is now experiencing (Hugo 2002, 13). Its concentration on the ability of migrants to fully use their training and qualifications provides a specific illustration of what Hugo deemed a key issue in the skills focus of Australia's immigration policy (Hugo 2014b). However, the case studies presented in this paper also highlight the emotional cost of some migrations. The article opens a dialogue between labour geography and population and migration studies in its examination of the lived experiences of migrating workers and their families and in its contemplation of the individual agency of the workers in the case study (Castree 2007). The concerns articulated by Hugo and other leading scholars (Howe 2013; Howe and Reilly 2014) about Australia's temporary labour schemes are mirrored in this study of the Temporary Work (Skilled) (subclass 457) visa, hereafter 457. This visa allows skilled workers to work in Australia on a long-term but temporary basis. The relevance of the article, then, is in its capacity to relay something substantive about the experiences of labour migrants, and their families, under the most popular temporary skilled visa Australia currently offers (DIBP 2015a).

It is nothing new for government policy to be mechanistic and impersonal. Entry systems in immigrant nations such as Australia are complex, immense and are supported by complicated legal and regulatory frameworks. Immigration quotas in Australia are guided primarily by economic policy—the needs of the nation are, quite rightly, the principal concern of policymakers. What has arisen as a matter of concern from this research project, regarding recent emigration from Ireland to Australia, is that Australia's skilled visa system has seemingly little regard for the emotional well-being of the migrants involved or their personal circumstances. Setting aside the contention that Australia's policy provides an opportunity to skilled workers, they are viewed primarily as economic entities and 'care' is given in so far as it is consistent with the main aim of enabling them to provide an economic benefit. This article first provides a broad overview of the 457 visa. It then briefly describes the development of Australia's immigration policy from White Australia to the revision of the points system for skilled migration in 1999 in order to demonstrate the shift in focus from population augmentation to targeted, skilled migration that benefits the Australian labour market. The empirical portion of the paper considers the experiences of three highly qualified linesmen from Ireland who were employer sponsored under the 457 visa. In the examples presented—relayed through the workers' female partners—the lack of full disclosure and misrepresentations made by employers caused migration failure and the return of the 457 workers and their families to Ireland. Stress, alcoholism, domestic violence, house repossession and relationship breakdown also resulted. While the examples presented are arguably extreme cases, they raise important

questions about qualification transferability and skill comparison that were replicated in the wider study dataset. They show that even highly skilled migrants can struggle with the migration experience if labour expectations are not transparent. The paper argues that there is a need for more transparency in the pre-migration stages on the part of employers, for bilateral qualification recognition between Australia and its source countries and, where retraining is needed, utilisation of online delivery methods whenever possible.

The Temporary Work (Skilled) (subclass 457) visa: an overview

Introduced in 1996 under the Howard administration and initially called the Business Long Stay (subclass 457) Visa, the visa was renamed the Temporary Work (Skilled) (subclass 457) visa in November 2012. The 457 visa allows

skilled persons to come to Australia to work for an approved employer, accompanied by their immediate family members for a period of between one day and four years ... The program involves a three-stage process whereby an employer applies to become an approved sponsor and then nominates a skilled overseas worker to fill a specific position. The skilled overseas worker completes the process by lodging a linked temporary work skilled visa application. (Parliament of Australia 2013)

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP 2016b) states that 'the Temporary Work (Skilled) (subclass 457) visa is designed to enable employers to address labour shortages by bringing in genuinely skilled workers where they cannot find an appropriately skilled Australian'. The intake is uncapped and driven by employer demand (Cully 2011).

Empirical evidence shows that some 457 visa holders are particularly exposed to the vagaries of their employers. This reflects the precarious labour market position of temporary workers, their disenfranchisement and the coercive relationships that often exist between these workers and their employers (Berg 2015; Boese et al. 2013; Campbell and Tham 2013; Costello and Freedland 2014; Howe 2013; Velayutham 2013). While the 457 visa allows long-term temporary residence, it is also a primary source of transfer to permanent residency—indeed, almost 40 per cent ($n = 61$) of the 457 respondents in the current study indicated that they did not consider their move to Australia to be temporary at the time of departure from Ireland. Irish people comprised 5.3 per cent of total subclass 457 visa recipients in the year to 30 September 2015 (DIBP 2015b).

The difficulty the 457 visa presents in a comparative exercise lies in the fact that, while temporary, it is a means of attracting highly-skilled workers (Hugo 2014b) rather than (so-called) low-skilled workers such as those used in California's *bracero* scheme or Australia's seasonal employment programme (Connell 2010; Mitchell 2013). Nevertheless, some striking similarities remain between this newest skills shortage reduction scheme and California's importation of an agricultural workforce from the 1930s until the 1960s. California's scheme was described and analysed by Mitchell (2013, 224) as 'a large-scale program of importation of a highly controlled—indeed indentured—force of temporary labourers, one that required unprecedented levels of state involvement in labour procurement, housing, and regulation—in essence state command over the labour market'. This is not to imply that Australia's 457 visa is a form of indentured labour *per se*¹—although

the fact that migrants are tied to an employer sponsor² and are unable to move jobs with ease or progress their careers³ is morally questionable. The lives of migrant workers and their families are highly regulated and restricted outside the employment sphere by their visa conditions, which inhibit access to the welfare support network and subsidised healthcare and education enjoyed by Australian residents. It is a requirement that 457 visa holders take out and maintain high-level healthcare insurance, as prescribed by the DIBP under Condition 8501, to insure against the cost of all medical treatments not covered by a Reciprocal Health Care Agreement. Welfare payments cannot be accessed for a period of 104 weeks after arrival (DHS 2015). The issue of high public school fees for the children of 457 families is discussed in some detail in the empirical portion of this paper.

There appears to be little *quid pro quo* in this visa arrangement: it is an unequal transaction if one considers the cost and risk undertaken by the skilled migrant in moving to Australia to fill a gap in the labour market, with little or no support. Concerns about the 457 visa have also been vociferously expressed by union bodies, focused on the protection of individual Australian workers and the state of industry in Australia. The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) made a comprehensive submission to the Governmental Review of skilled migration and 400 series visa programmes⁴ which highlighted their concerns over the growing reliance on 'demand driven' temporary skilled immigration and the preoccupation with deregulation rather than the integrity of the programme (ACTU 2014). The following section of this paper turns to review the shift in the nature of Australia's immigration programme over recent decades. Particular attention is paid to the shift towards temporary skilled migration driven by economic imperatives.

Development of Australia's immigration policy: from population augmentation to skilled migration

As one of the world's traditional immigration countries (Castles 2014), international migration has been core to the development of Australia since white settlement. A notable feature of its post-war development was an expansive, planned immigration programme profoundly shaped by government policy (Hugo 2014a). From Federation in 1901 to the close of the Second World War, a protectionist attitude towards market regulation and trade fostered a tight, race-restricted immigration control, known as the White Australia policy, which continued the largely Anglo-Saxon immigration trend that had characterised the country's population expansion since European settlement (Tavan 2005). The debunking of race theory (Barkan 1992), and the ascendancy of assimilation in the post-war period, aided a change in immigration policy priority which determined that the country must 'populate or perish'. The government aimed to increase the population through immigration by 1 per cent per annum. Various changes (from the revision of the *Migration Act* in 1958, which abolished the dictation test, to the reforms under Harold Holt and Gough Whitlam in 1966 and 1973) respectively dismantled the White Australia policy (Meaney 1995; Oakman 2002). It took almost 30 years and many timid, piecemeal steps to remove the concept of White Australia from the lexicon of Australian government.

Population augmentation was the main focus of Australian immigration policy until the late 1970s. More targeted skilled migration became the focus with the introduction

of the Numerical Multi-Factor Assessment System (NUMAS) in 1979 (Davis, McAllister, and Manning 1980). This assessed migrants on occupation, skills, English-language competence and other factors such as family ties. Non-English-speaking applicants with low skills had little chance of passing. In 1985, the then Labor government increased immigration and introduced a new selection system that favoured the most skilled of sponsored relatives. Opposition to increasing Asian immigration and multiculturalism in general found a voice in a wide-ranging public inquiry held in 1987 and chaired by Dr Stephen Fitzgerald. The Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies (CAAIP) was assigned the task of investigating public opinion on immigration and charged with making recommendations to guide future immigration policy. The CAAIP used Hugo's research, which had shown that family reunion pathways were generating a relatively low-skilled intake, to support their new rationale for increased immigration on economic grounds (Birrell and Betts 1988; CAAIP 1988; Hugo 1988).⁵ The CAAIP appealed to Australians for support by emphasising the fiscal benefits that higher skilled immigration could bring in terms of international competitiveness and strengthening the economy (CAAIP 1988). Selection processes then turned away from extended family sponsorship towards applicants with business and labour skills.

A points system—the Structured Selection Assessment System (SSAS)⁶ (Mackellar 1979)—had been in place since 1973 but it was the introduction of a Canadian-style 'Points Test' system (Shachar and Hirschl 2013) in 1989 that consolidated the expectation that migrants be self-reliant upon arrival. Going forward, applicants were allocated visas on the attainment of points related to their age, health and character criteria, English-language proficiency, skill level and the possession of credentials recognised in Australia (Boucher 2013; Miller 1999). The rule-based system made rational selection easier but the end result was a minefield of visa classes and permit types (Jupp 2007). While Labor laid the foundations for some of the harshest financial aspects of the new economically rationalist immigration policy—introducing a 6-month waiting period for social welfare and charging for visa applications, appeals and English tuition—these were all to become lengthier and more expensive under the Liberal administration of John Howard. Social welfare assistance, for example, was denied to new arrivals for a period of 2 years, despite research showing that this period was the most crucial in terms of securing stable employment and housing (Jupp 2007).

Immigration policymakers were necessarily circumspect of the domestic situation. Immigration policy was balanced, after all, on the combined support of social and organised business interests and presented an electoral vulnerability. When Howard's Liberal-National Coalition government came to power in 1996, deliberate moves were made to rebalance the immigration system in favour of targeted, skilled immigration while the value of family ties was concurrently reduced. Changes to the Points Test in 1999 demonstrated this new focus: the pass mark was raised by 10 points to 120; the required International English Language Testing System (IELTS) scores were raised; points were given for pre-arranged employment and removed for familial links; the age for which maximum points could be attained was halved to 30 years; and the 80 points previously given for general occupational skills was replaced by a maximum 60 points for targeted skills which were listed in the Migrant on Demand List (MODL). These elements remain the basic structure of the entry system to Australia to the present day.

As a result of this changed focus, the composition of Australia's immigration intake has changed dramatically over recent decades. In particular, the proportion of migrants entering Australia through the 'skill' and 'family' components has diverged significantly since the tightening of the points system (see Figure 1). The permanent migration programme now comprises 68 per cent skill and 32 per cent family visa grants (DIBP 2015a). Migrants now constitute 27.7 per cent of Australia's overall population of 24 million people.

To demonstrate the importance of the temporary migration programme against permanent intake: in the year 2014–15 year 51 125 visas were granted under the 457 programme, alongside 214 830 Working Holiday Maker visas, against the 189 097 places in the permanent programme (DIBP 2015a).

Figure 2 illustrates the flexible and uncapped nature of the 457 visa against the family and skill components of the permanent migration programme, while Figure 3 charts the 457 visa programme intake, part of the temporary programme, since its inception. In the 5 years following December 2010, the number of 457 visa holders in Australia rose dramatically, largely because Australia was viewed as having escaped the worst effects of the Global Financial Crisis (DIBP Economic Analysis Unit 2013). In this 5-year period to 2015, temporary 457s from India increased by 155.5 per cent, those from China (excluding Special Administrative Regions of China) increased by 115.4 per cent, and from Ireland by 59.1 per cent (DIBP 2016a, 13).

Given that Australia's skilled migration programme aims to assist Australian employers by allowing long-term work rights to people with the skills they need to conduct their business, it is in everyone's interest that the migration process—including the 457 visa programme—is a success (DIBP 2016b). Despite the high 457 intake figures outlined above,

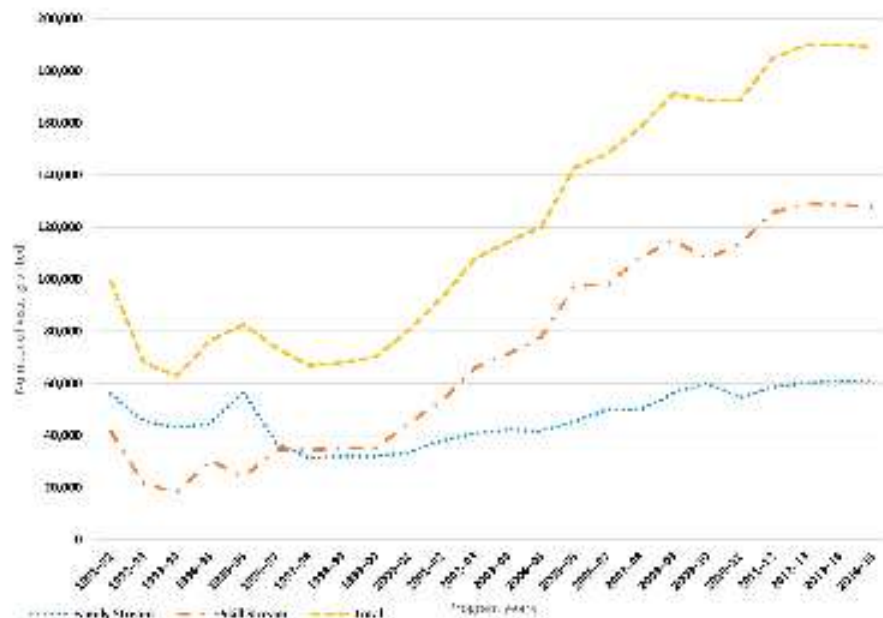


Figure 1. Infographic depicting the divergence between the family and skill entry streams, 1991–2015. Source: adapted from DIBP Migration Programme Statistics (DIBP 2015).

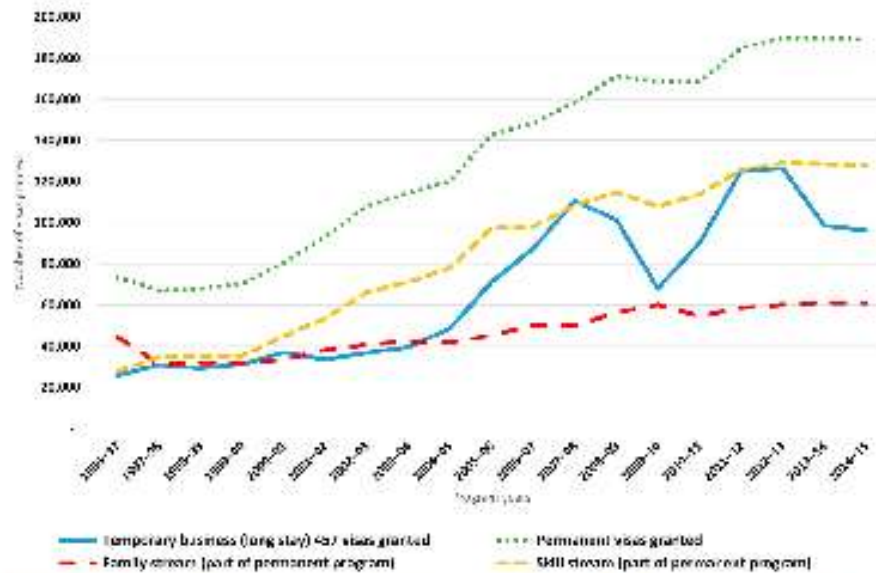


Figure 2. 457 visa intake shown against the permanent programme intake, 1996–2015. Source: ‘Migration to Australia: A Quick Guide to the Statistics’ (Janet and Simon-Davies 2016).

Australian policymakers should be wary of complacency as the strong economic focus of Australia’s immigration policy, application costs and generally high entry requirements may have contributed to the increasing importance of alternative destinations for the Irish in recent years. In 2015 the UK returned to its position as the lead destination for Irish emigrants, while Australia attracted less than half the number of Irish migrants it did in 2013 (CSO 2015). Australia attracts only around 5 per cent of the world’s total skilled migrants (UN-DESA & OECD 2013).

As shown throughout this section, Australian immigration policy has undergone profound changes over recent decades in implementing a stronger focus on economic-based

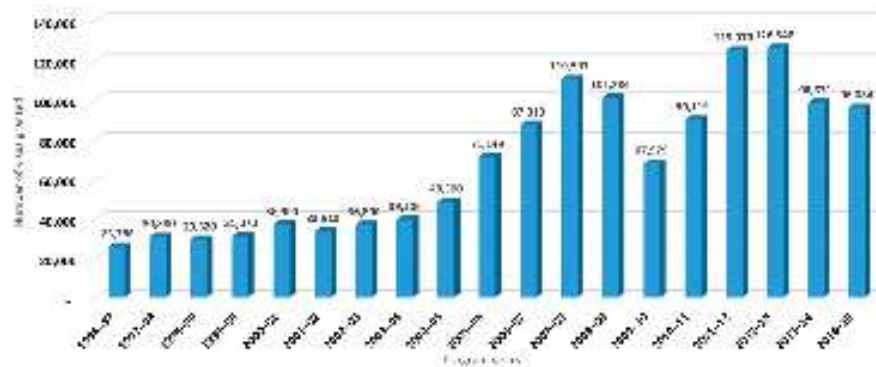


Figure 3. 457 visas granted since 1996. Source: ‘Migration to Australia: A Quick Guide to the Statistics’ (Janet and Simon-Davies 2016).

policy. Elements of these policy changes include 'a shift away from a human capital focus toward more targeted selection based on labour market demand for specific skills [and] increased emphasis on temporary foreign worker programs' (Akbari and Macdonald 2014, 801). Hugo (2005, 205) noted an overwhelming focus in Australia on skills in migrant selection, which he described as 'searching for talent'. This shift has occurred despite the fact that demographic and economic changes in Australia, like in other OECD nations, have meant that there is growing demand for both unskilled and skilled workers. Hugo (2005, 207) expressed concern about: 'a growing mismatch between immigration policies focused on skill and a tightening labour market with demand for labour across a broader skill spectrum'. He also voiced concern that the focus of immigration research attention in Australia 'remains predominantly on permanent settlement [but] there is an increasing realization that temporary migration is of significance when considering the effect of migration on Australia's economy and society' (Hugo 2006, 113; see also Castles, in this issue). He added that 'temporary migration [is] dealt with quite separately from permanent-settlement migration [in both policy and academic writings] although there is considerable overlap' in practice (Hugo 2006, 113). The case studies presented in this paper demonstrate that the 457 visa is particularly important when looking at the pathway to permanent residency, given the expectation voiced by many of the families interviewed that the 457 was 'a foot in the door'. The DIBP (2014b) has recognised this trend in transition to permanency stating that 'the proportion of the Migration Programme places filled by people on a temporary visa in Australia has increased from around 30 per cent in 2004–05 to 50 per cent in 2013–14'. This trend has been 'particularly pronounced in the Skill stream where the proportion of onshore grants has increased from 35 per cent in 2004–05 to 57 per cent in 2013–14' (DIBP 2014b). The paper turns now to case studies of recent Irish 457 emigrants in an effort to highlight some of the existing difficulties with this visa.

Methods

The cases presented in this paper are part of a broader mixed-methods study of the experiences of Irish migrants to Australia from 2000 to 2015. The study dataset comprises two sections: Irish migrants living in Australia and Irish migrants who have departed Australia. The total study dataset contains 1022 usable survey responses and 80 qualitative interviews. The three case studies used in this article are taken from 15 interviews recorded with former Irish migrants who had left Australia at the time of interview.

In an example of the snowball method of recruitment common to ethnographic fieldwork and best used to reach sensitive cohorts (Brace-Govan 2004), contact with the interviewees was gained through an administrator of the Irish Families Living in Perth Facebook group. Snowballing then proceeded through the first interviewee's network. The interview schedule was chronological in its investigation of the early life, education and employment experiences of participants before delving into the migration decision and journey and post-arrival experiences in depth.

Telephone interviews were conducted by the author in January 2016 as the participants were in various parts of Ireland and the researcher was based in Australia. The three vignettes featured in this paper are based on interviews with the female partners of men who had migrated to Australia as 457 visa holders sponsored by an energy subcontractor in Western

Australia. The women interviewed were thus secondary 457 applicants and their migration experiences no doubt differ somewhat from their partners' experiences. The recruitment of female partners as interviewees came about because the initial contact in Perth knew one of these women (Julie)⁷ personally and so Julie became the natural point of contact. Julie, in turn, introduced the researcher to Natasha and Emily. It was not possible to speak to Julie and Emily's partners (Michael and Tom) due to their work commitments and Peter was no longer in a relationship with Natasha at the time of interview.

The women's voices are used here as a bridge to feminist labour geography—it was their experiences which combined with the employment experiences of their partners to produce migration failure. As home workers, Julie and Natasha are viewed in this paper as equal economic migrating partners prepared to undertake the provision of care. Their intended role as workers in the social economy, or the non-market sector of the diverse economy (Cameron and Gibson-Graham 2003), was confounded by the failure of employment of their partners in the capitalist economy (under the 457 visa). The experiences of the women and their partners, as a group of migrating workers, deserve holistic attention. Too often the employment aspects of labour migration are the sole or paramount focus of research, when in reality the personal and family circumstances of a migrating worker can affect the prospect of migration success as much as the conditions of employment (Castree 2007).

The case studies presented in this paper were chosen because each highlights the dramatic effect the programme's restrictions can have on a migrant, and in this case, his family, through the conjuncture of events and the divergence of expectations and realities. In each case the worker was shown to be at the mercy of the employer and the company's market success or failure which was, in turn, affected by the general economic climate. In each instance the worker was bound by the terms of the 457 visa which restricted both his (and his family's) agency and access to social support infrastructure. In two of the cases, lower than expected earnings severely compromised the families' ability to survive financially.

Case studies—the experiences of three Irish families under Australia's 457 visa programme

As noted above, the three women whose interviews form the basis of the remainder of this paper had partners who were all employed (under the 457 visa scheme) by the same energy subcontractor in Western Australia. Michael and Peter came across the positions offered by the energy company through an internet search for job opportunities in Australia while Tom received information from a former work colleague who had relocated to Perth. Visa applications for all three linesmen and their families were handled by an Australian-based migration agent. The interviewees mentioned a couple of instances where the migration agent had given them incorrect information regarding entitlements. However, the option of progressing to permanent residency was promised to all three workers by the employer and is relayed by Natasha below. Overall, there was confusion about the pathway to permanency open to them as 457 visa holders and little distinction made between the information-giving entities they encountered. The employer, the migration agent and the host government were seen as one and the same and the veracity of the information provided by them was never doubted.

The company paid relocation costs and an administrative worker within the energy company was, by all accounts, most helpful to the newcomers. A relocation agency retained by the energy company for the purposes of assisting settlement did little for the families in terms of finding long-term accommodation or suitable schools, but there was little complaint as the migrants started their new lives. According to the women, their partners (the 457 employees) were initially happy at work. However, after induction, they were informed that ‘upskilling’ was required to enable them to meet Australian safety standards. The company offered to pay the cost of retraining, which was approximately \$5000 each, but only if the men agreed to sign a document extending their contract time with the company by 1 year. There had been no mention by the employer of the need for training during the 457 visa assessment or application process. Given that the workers and their families had arrived at different times—Peter arrived in February 2012 and Tom and Michael arrived in February 2013—it is unlikely that this was a new development that the company was unaware of prior to offering sponsorship. Julie (married to Michael) said:

He’d signed into the extra year’s contract—that was hanging over us all the time. If he’d left we’d have had to repay the relocation. He was told they [the new 457 employees] weren’t to Australian standards and they wouldn’t be taken on by another company if they didn’t do the training course. Even though they’d [the company] come to Ireland to take skilled labour over there? So how can they tell you then you’re not up to standard? It’s totally immoral. You’re enslaved ... we’d be up for all that [repayment of relocation] money. I think it was well into \$20,000 ... that was hanging over us all the time—that we’d have to pay the money back. We were in contract but they [the employer] never thought to tell us that if they broke the contract they’d have to pay to send us all home.

After retraining, the men assumed work would begin in earnest and that the overtime the company had promised would also start. Julie continued:

The deal was that he [Michael] would be away three weeks out of the month so we said grand because I’d be able to be home with the kids—[in Ireland] we were passing each other by on shift work and the kids were spending a lot of time in childcare—so we thought it would be a better life there [in Australia].⁸

However, the basic employment hours (40 hours per week at the base pay rate) continued, with the company saying that there was no overtime available despite having claimed that the workers would have a substantial wage top-up with overtime earnings:

Then they [the men] went for their first bout of ‘away’ work and were there three days and they had to come back—whoever had planned it had planned it for the wrong time of the year and the landowners wouldn’t let them in because it was crop season. So they spent three days in the back of beyond and then they had to come home ... it actually cost them [the workers] money because they had to pay for the digs [accommodation] and they only got paid the basic pay. (Julie)

An outcome of this failure, by the company, to fulfil the earnings promise was that Natasha and Julie each had to find a job to supplement the household income:

They [the company] promised us everything. Everything was grand at the start ... It was kind of holiday mode because he was doing courses and coming home early. He was promised overtime and he never got it. Money started getting tight then because I couldn’t get work. It was just impossible. Julie minded my wee lad and I got a job cleaning—it was for

buttons. I was away from 7am until 7pm and got maybe \$50 for it because they only give you the money for the hours and I was travelling 1.5 hours there and the same back so it didn't pay me to work by the time I paid Julie. (Natasha)

... they [the men] didn't have the work that they thought they'd have ... the great news was that they could come home every evening but it was a quarter of the wages [that they had been promised] so that meant Mike was getting about \$1200 a week and our rent was \$560 a week so I then had to go back to work ... it meant we were back to square one—he was working, I was working and the kids were being minded. (Julie)

Michael and Julie's family of seven could not survive on the income they had and Julie obtained a job at a play café. Paid childcare was undertaken by local Irish mums or university students and, while much cheaper than the registered centres it was still a strain on the families' finances because 457 families cannot access the Child Care Rebate.⁹ Social fallout followed:

I was great at the start because I was able to go to all the GAA [Gaelic Athletic Association] matches, the hurling and all is brilliant over there—the standard was fantastic but once I started to work ... like I used to go to an Irish mothers and toddler group—we had all the catch-ups, coffee mornings and everything and then once I had to work, I worked weekends and I missed out on all that and totally lost the connection. (Julie)

Relationship breakdowns also ensued. Julie recalls that the company often miscalculated the wages and on one particular occasion, the wages were late when the rent was due. This was her breaking point. She asked the company for flights home for her and the five children and left after 15 months in Western Australia. Michael stayed, and for a while she was unsure if he would return to Ireland. The implications for their marriage have been long-lasting

My marriage is totally different. There's a lot of resentment built up and a lot of defensiveness and it might sort itself out and then again it might not, but it definitely changed us totally ... we had to start from scratch coming back and we lost a lot, the house and all and we're going to be in debt forever and we might never get a loan again. (Julie)

Six months after the interview Julie revealed: 'My marriage has not survived. I'm on my own now with the kids. I firmly believe that the disaster that was Oz played a big part in the breakdown.' Natasha and Peter also separated:

Peter ended up turning violent because of the stress from work. He was coming in and everything was getting to him—he wasn't getting what he was told he'd get and he was taking it out on me. The last straw was when he hit me ... When we first went [to Australia] he was grand. It started to turn bad about 8 months in and he ended up hitting me one night. I had a nervous breakdown and I had just had enough and I had to come home with the child ... I just had to go and I had to leave him [Peter] behind and I had to leave everything behind. I just had to.

Only Emily and Tom returned from Perth unscathed by the experience. Tom was made redundant and there seemed little point in pursuing another 457 sponsor as Emily fell pregnant and the couple decided to have the baby at home in Ireland. However, Emily explained that at the time he was made redundant Tom had questioned the extended contract that had been presented in exchange for the company paying for the required retraining. The migrant workers viewed signing an extension to their employment contract as

additional job security rather than a burden of servitude. But the burden of fulfilling the 1-year contract extension was entirely on the workers. The company, as it emerged, was not required to keep the workers on for the additional year:

... he [Tom] thought at the time when he signed for the course that he did sign something and then when we questioned it when he was being made redundant, because he'd only the two years served, they came back and said no, there wasn't any obligation on them to give him work for another year. (Emily)

The experience seems to have had less of a negative impact on Emily and Tom than on Natasha and Peter and Julie and Michael. Emily said that the lesser hours did not affect them as severely as the other couples because they did not have children and were able to save money each week. When they returned to Ireland, they did so to the home they had built previously:

We were both working [in Australia]—like poor Julie and that, they'd an awful experience even money-wise with the five children whereas myself and Tom, we were never short of money—we were so lucky: both working, no kids so we got to save a bit of money there whereas Julie had the opposite end of the stick—they had an awful time of it.

Overall, Emily and Tom's journey differed substantially from that of the other couples. They didn't see themselves completing the 4 years of the 457 visa and didn't intend to stay in Australia:

I knew we weren't staying forever and the whole thing about Australia was the two of us were going out there, something different and to make money, you know ... We'd only ever planned on staying maybe 3 of the 4 years of the visa. (Emily)

While Julie, Natasha and Emily's spouses all worked for the same company, the problems they faced in terms of retraining and a lack of information about qualification transferability was not specific to either their employer or the industry. Other respondents from the larger dataset who worked in childcare, social work and teaching all faced similar hurdles to career employment in Australia. Teachers reported registration taking several months; a childcare worker had the option of paying \$6000 to get the Australian equivalent of the Diploma she already held, or work as an assistant rather than room leader; and an educational psychologist had to pay astronomical costs for qualification assessment and supervision for registration.¹⁰

As highlighted by Julie's and Natasha's migration experiences (in comparison to Emily's), family composition played a part in the migration failures related here, since the lack of anticipated earnings severely affected the ability of families with children to settle in Australia. Fewer work hours and consequently lower wages have been a feature of previous temporary labour schemes and it may be that labour requirements are difficult for companies to estimate (Connell 2010). However, the migrant families interviewed as part of this study had placed their trust in a sponsoring employer. The information they were given with regard to expected income and prospective permanency, as well as their access to schooling and medical care, was provided by the employer and a registered MARA migration agent.¹¹ Their feelings that the employer had been duplicitous when promised enticements did not materialise are somewhat justified. Lower earnings impacted a myriad of factors—housing affordability, general lifestyle expectations, a need for costly childcare providers—all of which affected the happiness of the migrants,

particularly the mothers who had to seek paid employment. Furthermore, changes in state school fees had a detrimental effect on these families, particularly on Julie and Michael who had four children of school age. When the West Australian State government introduced a \$4000 per year charge for each 457 child in its public school system, a group of 457 families, mostly Irish, challenged the State. Through protest and negotiation, the charge was reduced to \$4000 per family per year. During the debate the point was made by the protestors that changed policies, whether federal and state-sponsored, should, in fairness, only be applicable to new applicants, not to those already *in situ*.¹² The retrospective application of ministerial decisions and ensuing changed policies is inherently unfair.

The changed school fees were introduced by the State government under whose remit education policy falls. The 457 families protested against this as a new condition of their visa since it was their visa status which made the new State education policy applicable to them. They did not consider the two to be separate. It is important to consider at this point who the migrants saw as responsible for controlling their experiences in Australia; who could affect their well-being. From the interviews, it is clear that this was the 'Australian government' with no distinctions made between separate departments or even State and federal levels of government. The visa was the control mechanism for access to all employment, financial and social benefits and it was administered by the federal government so all ensuing benefits or discriminations were also seen to be coming from this source. Consideration should also be given to the 'sales' method of Australian visas by Australian companies, and indeed migration agents, given Julie's statement about their understanding of what the 457 meant in the long term. During the school fees campaign Julie rang the local MP's office:

... it was actually a British man I spoke to and I asked what did they think of the whole thing and he said 'What are you on about? What are you complaining about? You're only here to fill a gap or to train up Australians and then you're supposed to go home. It's a temporary visa'. I said that we were of the understanding that once we were in we could apply for residency and he was like, 'No, no, that's not the idea of it'. And I said 'Well that's the way you're selling it [the 457 visa] in Ireland—'c'mon and get your foot in the door' and he said 'No that's not the idea of it. You must understand you're just here to fill a gap' and I said 'Do you really think that people would be uprooting their families to come over here and fill a gap? Come on now'. But they just don't care.

A route to permanent residency for 457 visa holders exists in a further visa process through the Employer Nomination Scheme (ENS). The ENS allows for a permanent residency application after two years for eligible 457 visa-holders under the Temporary Residence Transition stream. The families here were somewhat confused by this distinction. They thought that, by being in Australia on a 457 visa, they were automatically entitled to apply for a permanent visa. Confusion on the part of the migrating families is understandable when the possibility of permanent residency under the 457 is introduced. Promises made by the energy subcontractor to Natasha's partner, Peter, that 'they would put him through PR at some stage' only strengthened the migrants' impression that permanent residency was a matter of course. While there may have been an element of naivety or trustfulness on the part of these families, it is not unreasonable for them to have expected to have been treated fairly by the employer and migration agent, and in the larger sense by the Australian government. Neither is it reasonable to expect them to independently verify all the information they are given considering the various

health, education and other social structures a new arrival in Australia has to contend with after the visa process. Various interviewees reported that even some Medicare staff were unsure of the Reciprocal Health Care Agreement and the differences in rights between migrants from Northern Ireland and those from the Republic of Ireland. The multitude and very separateness of the various departments one needs to deal with upon arrival in Australia prompts the question of the feasibility of introducing a whole-of-government, interdepartmental source for incoming migrants which could help fill a perceived responsibility of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection to extend its remit of care beyond the simple issuance of entry visas.

Conclusion

The participants involved in this study are not alone in raising concerns about issues of skill recognition and qualification transferability under the 457 visa programme. In a submission to the Productivity Commission, the ACTU (2015) noted that the Australian government should seek opportunities to improve the recognition of overseas qualifications obtained at high-quality institutions, including through bridging courses. Union support comes 'provided the qualifications are formally assessed by an independent body against the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) occupational requirements and other relevant Australian endorsed standards' (ACTU 2015, 6). The argument here is not that there should be any undue concessions made for skilled migrants, but that the qualification matching process should be clear from the outset and that it should be as efficient as possible in order to facilitate an expeditious entry to the labour market. Similarly, in its response to the Discussion Paper *Reviewing the Skilled Migration and 400 Series Visa Programmes* (DIBP 2014a) in September 2014, the Australian Psychological Society acknowledged the difficulty that migrants faced in obtaining a general registration and that they were not considered 'work ready' until this was granted since employers did not want psychologists with a provisional registration who required supervision. One of its recommendations was that 'the Department of Immigration work with the national assessment authority and the regulator to move forward on the issue using "comparability" as the basis for decisions about migration' (Hammond 2014, 5). The Law Society of Australia's submission to the above-mentioned Discussion Paper stated that 'poor legislative drafting ... and Reg. 5.19 of the Migration Regulations 1994 has resulted in a range of confusion and (presumably) unintended consequences'. The submission went on to cite inflexibility as a barrier to career development and progression to the permanent subclass 186/187 visa (Law Society of Australia 2014).

This article has examined a number of cases where policy and practice have detrimentally affected the migration experiences of Irish migrants. The stories told by the partners of three former 457 visa holders highlight a number of problems faced by newcomers to Australia under this visa. Specifically, they demonstrate how ill-considered policy relating to qualification transferability makes entering the workplace, and, therefore, transition to life in Australia, more difficult than it needs to be. It also supports previous research which illustrates the particular vulnerability of this worker group because of their hope for continuing employer sponsorship so that they can achieve permanent residency (Howe and Reilly 2014). Based on these data, this article concludes that to ensure that the actual performance of policy is both practicable and fair, a bilateral commitment to national

industry and trade recognition of qualifications between Australia and the origin countries of its migrants is required, most especially for occupations on the Skilled Occupation List. This is not to suggest that industry bodies should set the skills requirements for prospective migrants (Howe and Reilly 2014); rather, they should work with a government agency to streamline qualification assessment *before* migration occurs. Pre-migration assessment should be done in a timely fashion so that any necessary training gaps can be addressed as soon as possible, thereby maximising the possibility of a migrant being work ready upon arrival. The provision of a clear and accessible information portal for this process would assist prospective migrants in understanding the intricacies of skilled migration, and reduce the likelihood of migration failure—as experienced by the three families whose stories are discussed in this paper.

Qualitative data from this research project suggest that elements of the Temporary Work (Skilled) (subclass 457) visa are illogical and outdated. Migrants are not made aware of the cost and time required for qualification assessment, and skilled workers hired for the very skills they possess are left uninformed about necessary retraining. There appears to be no stated obligation in the 457 sponsorship requirements on an employer to inform prospective sponsored employees of Australian industry standards. Whilst acknowledging the need for strict regulation of health and safety procedures, especially in a highly dangerous sector such as electricity and energy, time and technology could also be utilised more effectively to assess overseas qualifications and provide online training to assist newcomers to meet Australian industry standards in qualifications and safety prior to migration. While there is currently no evidence of the use of technology to close skill gaps in trade work, a body of research outlines the progress of online training in the vocational education and training sector (Curtain 2002; McKavanagh et al. 2002; Salmon 2004; Webster, Walker, and Barrett 2005). Telemedicine or telehealth is another area where e-learning is evident. This could be similarly successful in filling competency gaps in skilled trades (Foroudi et al. 2013; Mather, Marlow, and Cummings 2013). Online workplace health and safety training is also the norm for many workplaces across different sectors in Australia currently.¹³ With reference to the case study explored herein, the receipt of necessary training prior to migration would have equipped the migrant workers to be ready to start their jobs in Australia immediately. The uncertainty regarding hours of employment and expected income would likely have been greatly reduced. Whilst acknowledging that the decline in the Australian resource sector in general, and mining in particular, played its part in the difficulty that the power company experienced obtaining tenders (and thus its inability to provide the promised overtime work hours for Michael, Tom and Peter), there is a possibility it may have met with more success with a ready workforce.

In referencing Hugo's (2005) call for the migration experience to be a 'win' for all, including the migrant, the practical and personal effects of the 457 visa deserve scrutiny. Despite knowing, as we do, that 'neo-liberalist governments which dominate in OECD nations like Australia [are not] sensitive to policy advice which is based in part on ethical considerations, altruism, social justice and [which] flies in the face of what are perceived as "market forces"' (Hugo 2005, 201), an onus remains on researchers to highlight aspects of policy practice where there is little consideration given to ethical behaviour and aspects of social justice. In short, policy is rarely based on justice, morals or ethics yet the case studies presented in this paper show the disturbing effects of this—the very real, human effects. Union bodies, of course, do this in a systematic way by dealing with

individual worker protection issues and breaches of employment legislation on a day-to-day basis. The focus here on the moral geography (Castree 2007) of this migrating cohort adds weight to the suggestion that policy and practice should be amended to improve the prospects of immediate and fulfilling participation in the labour market for skilled temporary migrants. Critical evaluation of the case study leads not just to policy prescription but to a bridge between migration geography and labour geography in considering the 'normative issues at the level of both policy and principle' (Castree 2007, 860).

The likely cost of streamlining qualification recognition across industries should not deter the governments of Australia and Ireland and other migrant source countries from a commitment to this activity since faster and more efficient entry to the workplace is a highly probable outcome. Given that 457 migrants earn middle to high incomes and pay tax on those incomes, while presenting no burden to the state in terms of health care or social assistance, they deserve better than the scenarios outlined above.

Notes

1. Betzien (2008) argued that the proposed Pacific guest worker scheme would 'create a semi-indentured subservient class of workers, as has occurred under the 457 visa program' (emphasis added).
2. Visa holders have 90 days in which to secure a new employer sponsor if they have a valid reason for terminating the contract with their current employer.
3. DIBP officials stated recently (April 2016) that promotion could jeopardise the continuation of a 457 visa and/or hamper a subsequent permanent residency application since discontinuing employment in the position specified in the employment contract meant the visa holder did not comply with the conditions of the visa granted.
4. The 400 series visa programme allows for the temporary entry of people to Australia for economic, social or cultural purposes (DIBP 2014a).
5. It should be noted that Hugo's report stated that

In 1986/87 the highest workforce participation rates (in excess of 50 per cent) were in the independent, skilled labour, concessional and 'other' categories although those of the Family 1C and 1A and refugees were also high (between 40 and 49 per cent). On the other hand, the rates for the Family 1B (18 per cent), Special Eligibility (29.2) and Business (31.9) categories are relatively low. (Hugo 1988, 17)

6. The SSAS was the first step towards a structured migrant assessment protocol. Immigration officers had to complete a two-part interview report—Part A related to economic factors and Part B required the interviewing officer to make an 'Assessment of Personal and Social Factors' regarding the applicant (Hawkins 1991). 'NUMAS was an amalgamation of the Canadian points system and the SSAS which preserved the two-part assessment format but added numerical weightings to a total of 100' (Hawkins 1991, 142). Opposition to it lay in the widely held perception that it indicated a return to the White Australia policy. The Canadian system did not require family migrants to be assessed under the points system and for other migrants, 90 of the 100 points focused on economic factors with only 10 points awarded for 'personal suitability'.
7. Pseudonyms are used to de-identify participants.
8. Julie's assertion that everything would be 'grand' reflected her ability to stay at home with the children rather than a sense of pleasure at Michael being away 3 weeks out of 4. In her eyes, the reduction of the time the children would need to spend outside the home at childminding facilities was the primary benefit of the move. For Julie, having to work outside the home was an economic necessity in Ireland, rather than a choice.

9. The Department of Human Services pays a Child Care Rebate of 50 per cent of out-of-pocket childcare expenses for approved childcare, up to an annual limit of \$7500 per child, for eligible carers (usually permanent residents and citizens) who meet the Work, Training, Study test for the rebate.
10. \$1500 to have her transcripts assessed by the Australian Psychological Society, \$5400 for supervision and around \$3000 on registration.
11. Having fulfilled the requirements to be registered as a migration agent with the Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority.
12. Lobbying group, Interview 45.
13. Some examples: Flinders University: <http://www.flinders.edu.au/ppmanual/health-safety/ohs-training.cfm>; University of Sydney: <http://sydney.edu.au/whs/activities/training.shtml>; Coles Group contractors: <http://contractor.colesgroup.com.au/content150.asp>; DFAT: <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/corporate/annual-reports/annual-report-2014-2015/dfat-annual-report-2014-15.pdf>.

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Appendix 12

Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10)

The experiences of migrants in Australia – Taking the K10 test

In the past 30 days how often

1. Did you feel tired out for no good reason?

1	2	3	4	5
none of the time	a little of the time	some of the time	most of the time	all of the time

2. Did you feel nervous?

1	2	3	4	5
none of the time	a little of the time	some of the time	most of the time	all of the time

3. Did you feel so nervous that nothing could calm you down?

1	2	3	4	5
none of the time	a little of the time	some of the time	most of the time	all of the time

4. Did you feel hopeless?

1	2	3	4	5
none of the time	a little of the time	some of the time	most of the time	all of the time

5. Did you feel restless or fidgety?

1	2	3	4	5
none of the time	a little of the time	some of the time	most of the time	all of the time

6. Did you feel so restless that you could not sit still?

1	2	3	4	5
none of the time	a little of the time	some of the time	most of the time	all of the time

7. Did you feel depressed?

1	2	3	4	5
none of the time	a little of the time	some of the time	most of the time	all of the time

8. Did you feel that everything was an effort?

1	2	3	4	5
none of the time	a little of the time	some of the time	most of the time	all of the time

9. Did you feel so sad that nothing could cheer you up?

1	2	3	4	5
none of the time	a little of the time	some of the time	most of the time	all of the time

10. Did you feel worthless?

1	2	3	4	5
none of the time	a little of the time	some of the time	most of the time	all of the time

ABOUT THE K10 TEST:

The K-10 scale consists of 10 questions on non-specific psychological distress and is about the level of anxiety and depressive symptoms a person may have experienced in the most recent four-week period.

The 10-item (or K10) scale is:

In the past 30 days how often ...

1. Did you feel tired out for no good reason.
2. Did you feel nervous.
3. Did you feel so nervous that nothing could calm you down.
4. Did you feel hopeless.
5. Did you feel restless or fidgety.
6. Did you feel so restless that you could not sit still.
7. Did you feel depressed.
8. Did you feel that everything was an effort.
9. Did you feel so sad that nothing could cheer you up.
10. Did you feel worthless.

K10 Scoring:

The scale uses a five-value response option for each question – all of the time, most of the time, some of the time, a little of the time, and none of the time – that are scored from five through to one. The maximum score is therefore 50, indicating severe distress, and the minimum score is 10, indicating no distress. Items 3 and 6 are not asked if the response to the preceding question was 'none of the time'.

Answer	Score
none of the time	1
a little of the time	2
some of the time	3
most of the time	4
all of the time	5

Minimum possible score	10
Maximum possible score	50

K10 score groupings and categorisation

K10 Total

Score Levels	Score
10-15	Low
16-21	Moderate
22-29	High
30-50	Very high

(Source: CATEGORISING K10 RESULTS (AUSTRALIA))

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/lookup/4817.0.55.001Chapter92007-08>

Results email:

Dear

Thank you for completing and returning the K-10 test to me. This simple measure will allow us to include information on mental well-being in the study regarding the experiences of Irish migrants in Australia.

Your score sheet is attached along and some further information which I hope you find helpful.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about this research. Once again, thank you for your contribution to this study.

Kind regards,

Dr Helen Feist

Supervisor of *The experiences of migrants in Australia* project being conducted by Fidelma Breen

Results High

Your Score

__ (High)

What does your score mean?

Your score falls in to the high range.

What should I do now I have my score?

- We strongly recommend you talk to your GP or other health professional.
- If you are in crisis and need urgent help, call emergency services (Triple zero – 000), Lifeline (13 11 14) or go to your local hospital emergency department.
- Find out where to [get help](#).
- [Find a doctor or health professional in your area](#).
- Access online programs and trusted information on depression, stress and anxiety at [mindhealthconnect](#)
- Go to [MindSpot](#) who provide a free telephone and online therapist-guided treatment courses and referrals to help people recover and stay well.
- If you are concerned about how you are feeling and need information, advice or support call the [beyondblue](#) support line on 1300 22 4636 or make an appointment to talk to your GP.
- It's important to seek help early – the sooner you get treatment, the sooner you can recover.

Results Moderate

Your Score

__ (Moderate)

What does your score mean?

Your score falls in to the moderate range.

What should I do now I have my score?

- Find out more about the signs and symptoms of [depression](#) and [anxiety](#).
- Access online programs and trusted information on depression, stress and anxiety at [mindhealthconnect](#).
- Go to [MindSpot](#) who provide a free telephone and online therapist-guided treatment courses and referrals to help people recover and stay well.
- Do you live in Adelaide, Canberra or North Coast NSW? [NewAccess](#) is a free and confidential service that provides support in the form of a coach. The program includes six free sessions tailored to your individual needs.
- If you are concerned about how you are feeling and need information, advice or support call the *beyondblue* support line on 1300 22 4636 or make an appointment to talk to your GP.
- Find out where to [get help](#).
- Depression and anxiety are common and there are treatments that work. It's important to seek help early – the sooner you talk to someone, the sooner you will be on the road to recovery.

Results Low

Your Score

__ (Low)

What does your score mean?

Your score falls into the low range.

What should I do now I have my score?

- Learn about how to stay well and look after your mental health
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of [depression](#) and [anxiety](#).
- If you are concerned about how you are feeling, call the *beyondblue* Support Service on 1300 22 4636 or talk to your GP or contact MindSpot. [MindSpot](#) provide a free telephone and online therapist guided treatment course and referrals to help people recover and stay well.

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