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Dr Raymond Russell

Migration in Northern Ireland: an update

NIAR 10-12

Almost 122,000 long-term international migrants are estimated to have arrived in Northern Ireland between 2000 and 2010. This paper, which contains the latest unpublished statistics from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), updates a previous paper (June 2011) and describes the key elements of this remarkable demographic change.

Key Points

- During the period July 2000 – June 2010, an estimated 122,000 international long-term migrants arrived in Northern Ireland, while 97,000 left.
- The recent rise in migration began in 2000 with the arrival of Portuguese workers and nurses from India and Philippines.
- In May 2004, the EU expanded from 15 to 25 countries with the Accession of eight central and eastern European (A8) countries, along with Malta and Cyprus. The A8 Accession proved to be the trigger for an unprecedented wave of migration.
- Since 2004, Northern Ireland has welcomed a disproportionate number of A8 citizens (particularly Polish citizens) compared with the rest of the UK.
- The A8 stock population is estimated to have risen from 30,000 in 2007 to 39,000 in 2009 (latest figures available).
- In geographical terms, although migrants are dispersed throughout the country, they tend to be more concentrated in the West and South-West of Northern Ireland. In particular, Dungannon, Newry and Mourne, Craigavon and Belfast.
- Migrants tend to be young, male and well-educated (NIAR 246-11 contains a more detailed profile of the migrant population, and their reasons for coming to Northern Ireland).
- The unexpectedly high level of migration since 2004 has created additional pressures on maternity services, health care, housing and education.
- Long-term predictions are challenging. Net Migration (difference between inflows and outflows) is projected to fall from 1,000 per year in 2012 to zero in 2016, and to continue at this level until 2021 and beyond. However, the stock of international migrants already residing in Northern Ireland, notably Polish people and other A8 citizens, seems likely to grow.

Executive Summary

1 Introduction

Almost 122,000 international migrants are estimated to have arrived in Northern Ireland between 2000 and 2010.

Migration in recent decades can be viewed in terms of three phases. In the first phase, during the 1970s and 1980s, Northern Ireland experienced a consistently large net population loss due to out-migration. This period coincided with the 'Troubles'. During the second phase, from the early 1990s until 2004, population movement was approaching balance, with similar numbers of people coming to Northern Ireland as leaving. In phase 3, from 2004 onwards, there has been an annual net inflow of people. Immigration peaked in 2007, when an estimated 32,000 migrants arrived in Northern Ireland. Since the economic recession began in 2008, there has been a downward trend in migration, which is expected to continue.

The situation started to change in 2000 – 2001, when the food processing industry began recruiting workers from Portugal to fill vacancies, and some hospital trusts started to hire nursing staff from South Asia and the Philippines. The tipping point, however, came in 2004.

2 EU Accession

On 1 May 2004, eight central and eastern European countries (the "A8") joined the EU. Twelve of the EU-15 Member States imposed labour market restrictions on A8 nationals; the exceptions were Sweden, Ireland and the UK. With comparatively free access to the labour market, citizens from the A8 countries began to arrive in the UK and Ireland in large numbers.

In 2007, Romania and Bulgaria (the "A2") joined the EU. In contrast to the A8 countries, the UK Government severely limited the access of A2 nationals to employment.

3 Estimating International Migration to Northern Ireland

There is no single statistical source for estimating the number of long-term international migrants who have come to Northern Ireland in recent years. Instead, NISRA have used a number of administrative and statistical sources to build up a composite picture. These include the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS); National Insurance numbers (NINos) registered to foreign workers; the annual School Census; and the country of birth of new Northern Ireland mothers.

Data from the WRS reveals that, relative to the rest of the UK, Northern Ireland has received a disproportionate number of A8 migrants. Between May 2004 and March 2011, Northern Ireland had 25 per cent more A8 citizens registering with the WRS on a

per capita basis, than the UK as a whole. This is one measure of the relative scale of A8 migration to Northern Ireland.

During the above period, over half (55.2%) of the 42,525 registrations were from Poland, followed by Lithuania (18.8%) and Slovakia (13.3%). Nearly two-thirds (62%) were male and just over three-quarters (77%) were aged 18 – 34 years. This tends to confirm other sources, which indicate that A8 nationals migrate to Northern Ireland, mainly for work but also for family reasons.

Estimate of International Migration

NISRA's most recent estimate (2011) is that almost 122,000 international migrants arrived in Northern Ireland during the decade, July 2000 to June 2010. With an estimated 97,000 leaving during the same period, this leaves a net total of 25,000 international migrants. In the early part of the decade (2000 – 2003) there was a net migration loss of 3,800. The peak years were June 2005 – June 2007, with net totals of 9,000 and 8,000 respectively. By the year-ending June 2010, the net total had fallen to 590.

With regard to migration flows during the period 2004 - 2010, Dungannon accounted for the largest proportion (20%), followed by Newry & Mourne (16%), Craigavon (16%) and Belfast (12%). NISRA estimate that the A8 stock population numbered 39,000 in 2009, an increase from 30,000 in 2007.

4 A2 Migrants

In comparison with A8 nationals, the number of Bulgarian and Romanian citizens migrating to Northern Ireland since 2007 has been relatively modest. This is primarily due to severe restrictions placed on A2 citizens by the UK Government.

In addition to the UK and Sweden, Ireland was the only other EU country to permit relatively unrestricted access to their labour market in 2004. Immigration to Ireland peaked in 2007 at 109,500, before falling sharply to an estimated 30,900 in 2010.

5 Migration in Ireland

Provisional census results for April 2011 show the population of Ireland at 4,484,300, an increase of 13,600 on the previous year. The arrival of the 'Celtic Tiger' economy in the later part of the 1990s created a demand for labour in Ireland. As a consequence, net migration began to rise from 1996 onwards, reaching a peak of 71,800 in 2006. However, the sharp contraction in the Irish economy from 2008 resulted in a significant decline in net migration. By the year ending April 2011, emigration exceeded immigration by 34,100 persons.

6 Impact of Migration

The large number of new arrivals over the past decade has had a significant impact on public services. For example, almost 10 per cent of babies born in Northern Ireland during 2010 had foreign-born mothers, compared with 3 per cent in 2001. Similarly, the number of GP registrations by non-UK nationals rose from 7,200 in 2003 to 19,400 in 2007, before falling back to 11,900 in 2010. Social housing has also been affected, with over 650 Housing Executive tenancies held by migrant workers (2010). With the ending of A8 restrictions in April 2011, this number is expected to increase.

In relation to school enrolments, the 2010 School Census shows that just under 7,500 school children (primary and post-primary) have a language other than English as their first language, around 2.5 per cent of the total school population.

It is important to note however that, while the scale of migration since 2004 has contributed to the growing pressure on public services, this must be set against the positive economic benefits of migration. An earlier paper (NIAR 246-11) reviewed a study by Oxford Economics (2009) which estimated that migration had resulted in an additional 40,000 jobs and £1.2 bn GVA (a measure of wages and profits). The health service has also benefitted from the skills and experience of highly-skilled doctors and nurses from India and the Philippines.

Whatever the pros and cons of migration, there is little doubt that the inflow of new residents from countries as far apart as Poland, Brazil and East Timor, has enriched the culture and society of Northern Ireland.

The various migrant populations who have arrived in Northern Ireland since the millennium have brought with them, not only their skills and experience, but also their traditions, music, food and language. Ten years ago, Northern Ireland was a relatively insular and inward-looking country. Today, it is a vibrant and culturally diverse society. Our new residents deserve credit for contributing to this transformation.

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1 Introduction

In the past decade, Northern Ireland has witnessed an unprecedented wave of international migration mainly, but not exclusively, from central and eastern Europe. Between 2000 and 2010, almost 122,000 long-term international migrants are estimated to have arrived in Northern Ireland. In the process, Northern Ireland has moved from a position of net migration loss to one of annual population gain.

Using the latest, unpublished data from NISRA, this paper updates a previous paper (NIAR 246-11). The paper begins in the modern era, post-1973, and charts trends in international migration up to the present day (2010 – 11). The focus then switches to EU enlargement in 2004, the pivotal moment in modern-day migration to Northern Ireland. The inflow of citizens from central and eastern Europe (A8 and A2 countries) is profiled and reviewed. This is followed by a short outline of migration trends in our nearest neighbour, Ireland. The paper concludes with a brief outline of some effects of recent migration on the host community in Northern Ireland.

2 The Modern Era

As noted in an earlier paper (NIAR 246-11), although migrants have been coming to Northern Ireland since the mid-19th century, it was not until the millennium that migration inflows began to have a substantial impact on the local economy. Figure 1 presents estimates for long-term¹ net migration² in Northern Ireland during the period 1973 – 20010³. According to NISRA, the graph can be viewed in terms of three distinct phases

In the first phase, during the 1970s and 1980s, Northern Ireland experienced a consistently high annual net population loss due to out-migration (people leaving the country). In 1973 – 74, for example, net migration was estimated at -13,700 persons and as late as 1989 – 90 net outflow was around 4,800. This phase coincided with the ‘Troubles’ in Northern Ireland.

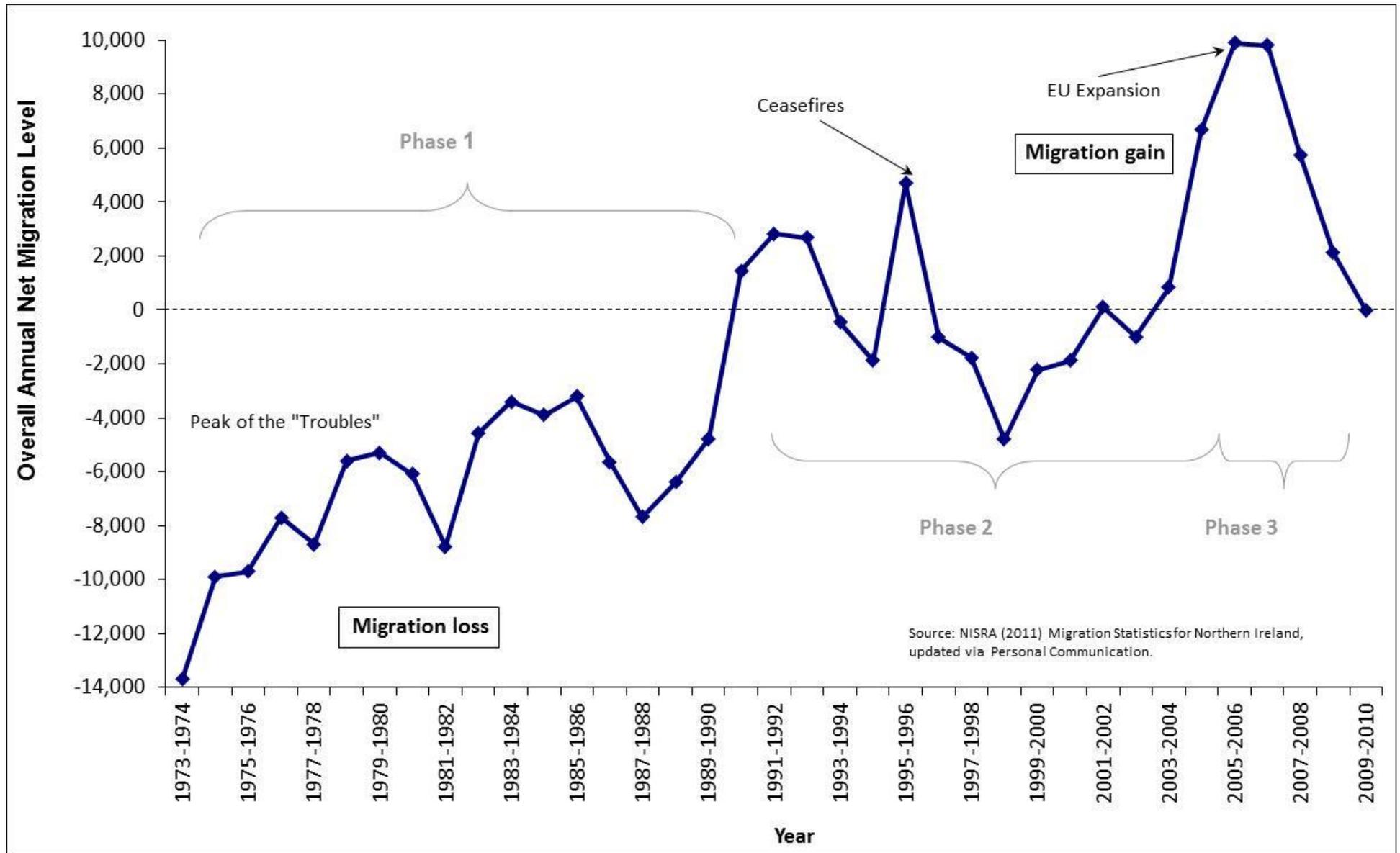
In the second phase, from the early 1990s to 2004, population movement was roughly in balance, with broadly the same number of people coming to Northern Ireland as leaving. During this period, an estimated 20,000 people came to live in Northern Ireland each year and 20,000 left. Phase two coincided with seminal events such as the Ceasefires (1994) and the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement 1998. International migration began to gather momentum in 2000 – 2001, when the food processing

¹ All data in this report refers to **long-term migration only**, as no official figures are currently available in Northern Ireland for short-term or transient migration. *Long-term migration* is defined as “A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence ...”.

² **Net Migration** is the difference between the number of immigrants (those entering Northern Ireland) and the number of emigrants (those leaving Northern Ireland). It includes both international migrants, and those moving between GB and Northern Ireland..

³ Source: NISRA (2011). **Migration Statistics for Northern Ireland (2010)**. Unpublished, personal communication.

Fig 1: Trends in Annual Total Net Migration, 1973 – 2010



industry started recruiting workers from Portugal to fill vacancies, and hospital trusts began offering employment to nursing staff from South Asia and the Philippines^{4 5}.

The third phase, which began in 2004, coincided with the enlargement of the EU, when the citizens of eight countries in central and eastern Europe (A8) were permitted to work in the UK and Ireland for the first time. This triggered a significant increase in migration which peaked in 2007 with an estimated 32,000 persons coming to live in Northern recent years.

3 Estimating International Migration in Northern Ireland

There is no single statistical source for estimating the number of long-term international migrants, including A8 citizens, who have come to Northern Ireland in recent years. Instead, NISRA use a range of administrative sources to build up a composite picture of migration including the following:

- Workers Registration Scheme (WRS)
- National Insurance numbers registered to foreign workers
- Department of Education Annual School Census
- Country of birth of new Northern Ireland mothers (see Section 6.1)
- New registrations with a GP (see Section 6.1)

In the sections which follow, each of these sources are reviewed and updated with the latest available data.

3.1 Workers Registration Scheme

The main strength of the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) is that it was specifically designed to monitor A8 access to the UK labour market. During the transition period (2004 – 2011) all A8 nationals planning to work for longer than one month in the UK, or claim benefits, were required to register with the Scheme⁶. As a result, the figures include both long-term and short-term migrants. A limitation is that, as there is no

⁴ Bell, J., Caughey, A. Hansson, U., Martynowicz, A. and Scully, M. (2009). **Experiences of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland**, Institute for Conflict Research, Belfast: Department for Employment and Learning. Available at: http://www.delni.gov.uk/a_report_on_the_experiences_of_migrant_workers_in_northern_ireland.pdf

⁵ In response to a Parliamentary Question by Iris Robinson (PQ No. 111799, 1 May 2003) it was revealed there were 560 overseas nurses employed by 12 of the 18 Health and Social Services Trusts as of 31 March 2003. 502 of these nurses were from the Philippines and 50 were from India, while the remainder were from Africa (2), Australia, Bulgaria, Kenya, New Zealand, Palestine and Yugoslavia (one each).

⁶ The Scheme ended on 30 April 2011. Henceforth, A8 nationals have the same rights as other EU citizens to take up employment in the UK.

obligation to de-register, this source can only be used to monitor the *inflow* of A8 migrants⁷.

Table 1 reveals that, since 2004, Northern Ireland has seen a disproportionate number of A8 citizens seeking work relative to the rest of the UK. Between May 2004 and March 2011, Northern Ireland had around a quarter more A8 citizens (25%) registering with the WRS on a per capita basis than the rest of the UK. There were over 23 WRS registrations for every 1,000 persons in Northern Ireland, compared with just under 19 WRS registrations for every 1,000 persons in the UK as a whole. Wales had the lowest per capita registrations (10.2 per thousand).

Table 1 WRS Registrations per 1,000 population (May 2004 – March 2011)

| Country | WRS Registrations (May 2004 – Mar 2011) | 2010 Population Estimate | WRS Registrations per 1,000 population |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|
| England | 1,005,000 | 52,234,000 | 19.2 |
| Scotland | 97,000 | 5,222,100 | 18.6 |
| Wales | 30,800 | 3,006,400 | 10.2 |
| Northern Ireland | 42,500 | 1,799,400 | 23.6 |
| United Kingdom | 1,175,115 | 62,262,000 | 18.9 |

Source: NISRA (2011), unpublished, personal communication.

Figure 2 presents data on the number of WRS registrations in Northern Ireland by A8 nationality during the period May 2004 – March 2011. The chart reveals that, of the 42,525 registrations during this period, over half (55%) were from Poland, followed by Lithuania (19%) and Slovakia (13%).

The WRS also provides information on A8 migrants by age and gender. Figure 3 shows the number of Northern Ireland WRS registrations by age band, May 2004 – March 2011. As one might expect, migrant workers from the A8 countries are typically young and male: over three-quarters (77%) were aged 18 – 34 while nearly two-thirds (62%) were male. This tends to confirm other sources which indicate that A8 citizens migrate to Northern Ireland mainly for work but also for family reasons (i.e. to join other family members who are already living and working in Northern Ireland).

⁷ For more information on the WRS, see: Gillingham, E. (2010) **Understanding A8 migration to the UK since Accession**. Office for National Statistics, November 2010. Available at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/articles/nojournal/a8_migration_since_accession.pdf

Fig 2: Northern Ireland WRS Registrations by Nationality (May 2004 – March 2011)⁸

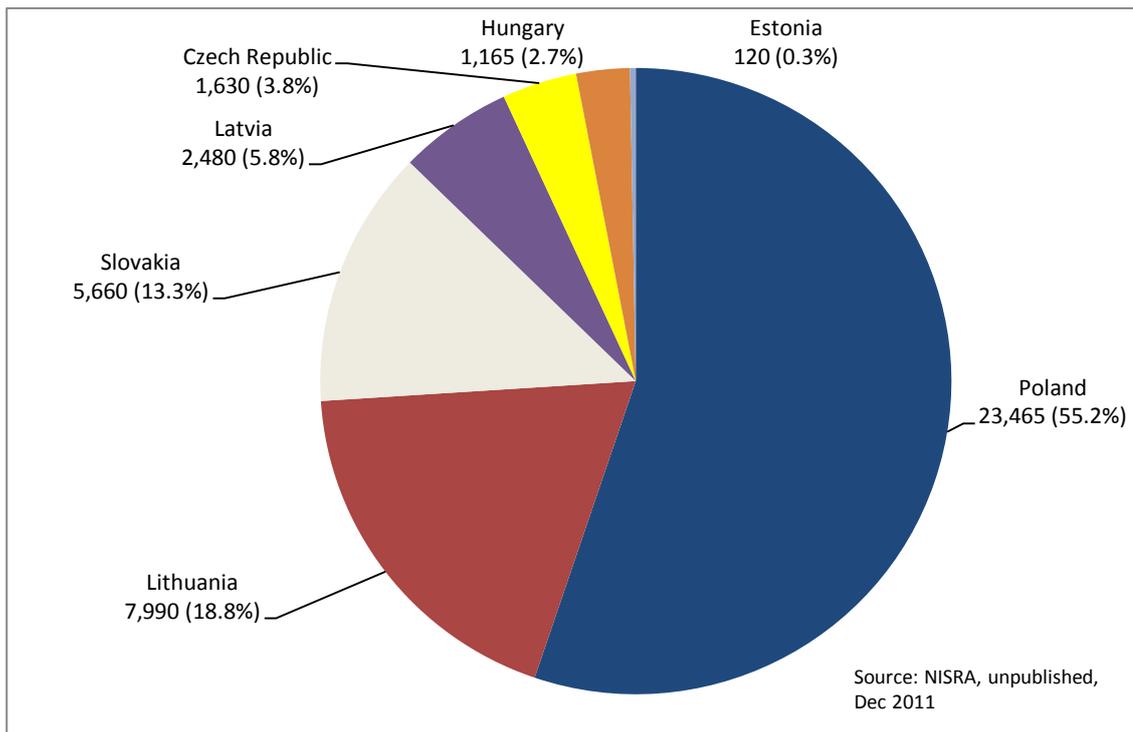
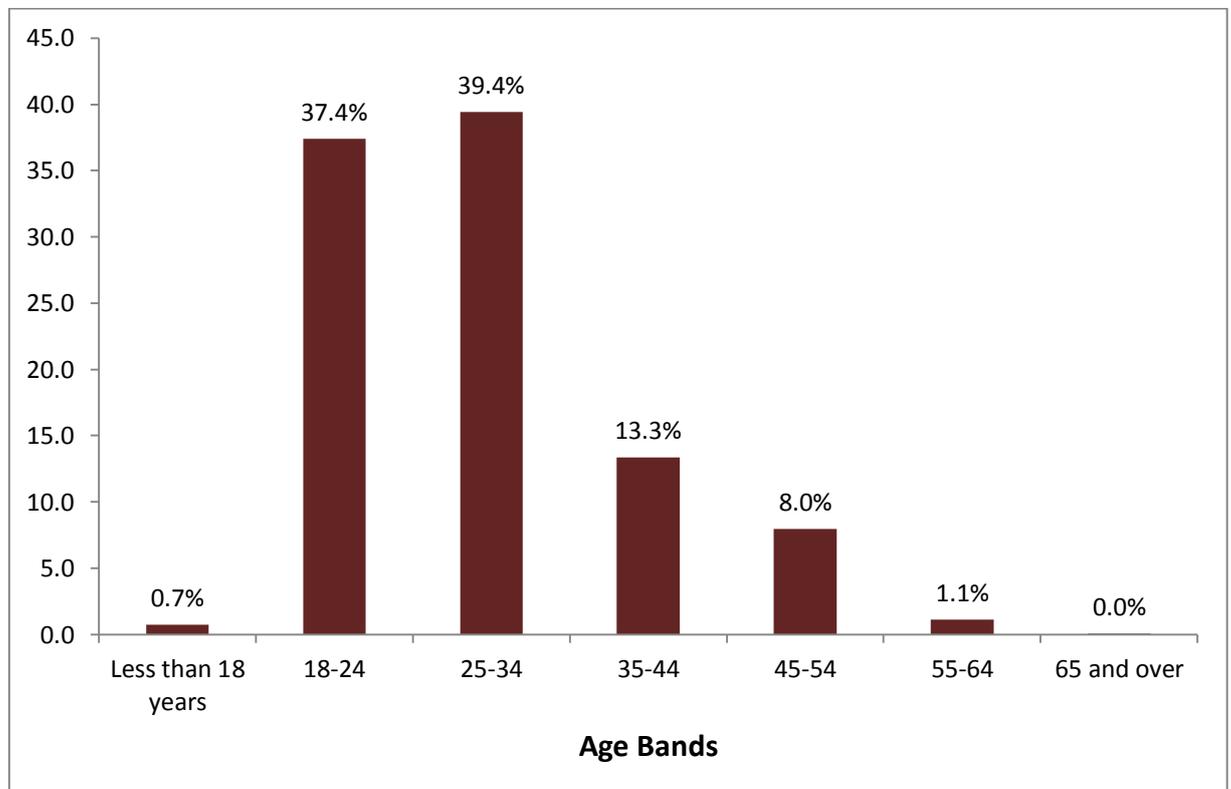


Fig 3: Northern Ireland WRS Registrations by Age Band (May 2004 – March 2011)⁸



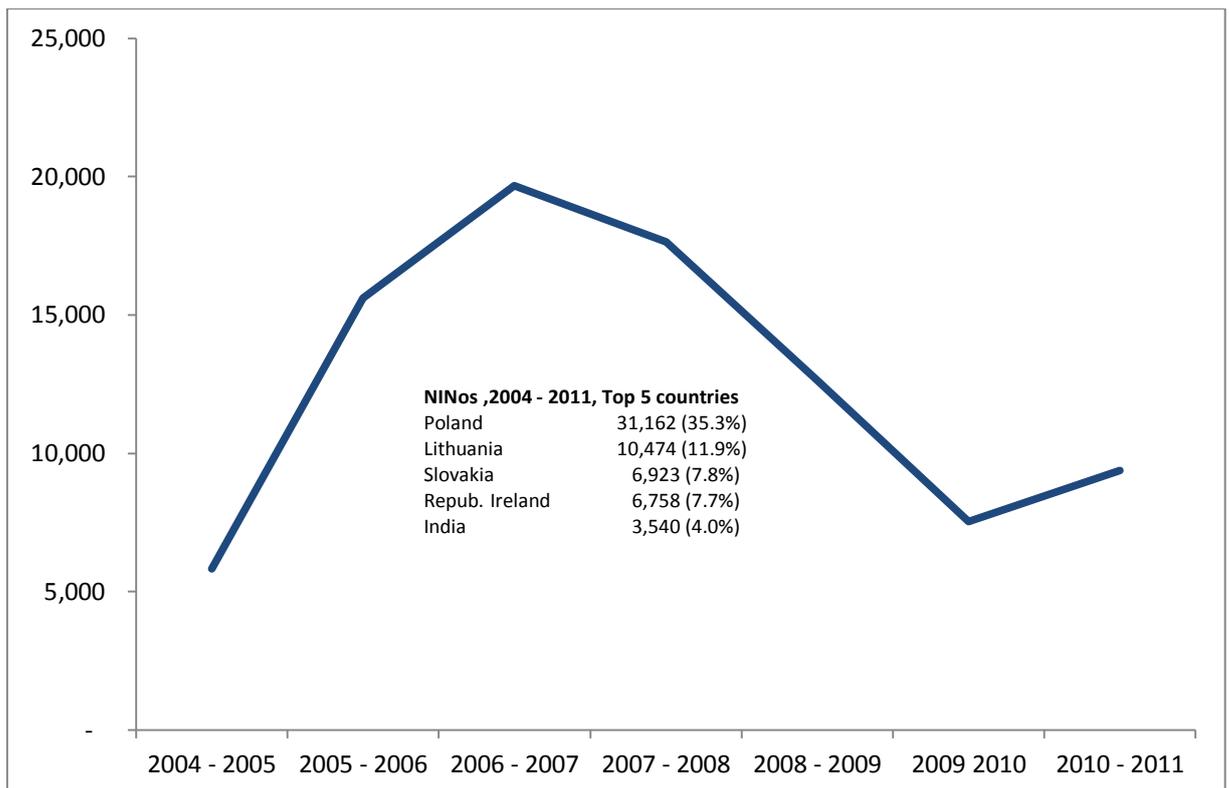
⁸ Source: NISRA (2011). **Migration Statistics for Northern Ireland (2010)**. Unpublished, personal communication.

3.2 National Insurance Numbers (NINOs)

National Insurance Numbers (NINOs) are an important, additional source of information on international migrants coming to Northern Ireland. NINOs are required for employment purposes, or to claim benefits and tax credits, and are supplied by local Social Security or Jobs and Benefits Offices.

Figure 4 presents trend data relating to the issue of NINOs to non-UK nationals in Northern Ireland during the period, April 2004 – March 2011. Over 40 countries are represented in the figures. The chart reveals that in 2004 – 2005 there were 5,800 NINOs issued to non-UK nationals in Northern Ireland. This increased year-on-year to 19,700 registrations in 2006 – 2007, before falling back to 7,500 registrations in 2009 – 2010. In the year ending March 2011, the total had risen again to 9,390. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of the NINOs issued during the seven-year period were claimed by A8 nationals. Polish citizens accounted for over half (56%) of all NINOs issued to A8 citizens during the six-year period, and over a third (35%) of the total NINOs issued to non-UK nationals.

Fig 4: NINOs issued to non-UK Nationals in Northern Ireland, April 2004 – March 2011⁹



⁹ Source: NISRA (2011). **Migration Statistics for Northern Ireland (2010)**. Unpublished, personal communication.

3.3 Estimate of Net International Migration, 2000 - 2010

Using Health Card data, NISRA has produced an estimate of net international long-term migration for the complete period, July 2000 – June 2010 (see Table 2).

Table 2 shows that almost 122,000 long-term international migrants are estimated to have arrived in Northern Ireland during the ten-year period, July 2000 – June 2010, with an estimated 97,000 leaving the country during the same period. In the early part of the decade (2000 – 2003) there was a net international migration loss of 3,800. The peak years were June 2005 – June 2007, with net totals of 9,000 and 8,000 respectively. By the year-ending June 2010, the net total had fallen to 590.

Table 2 – Estimated Net International Migration to Northern Ireland, 2000 – 2010

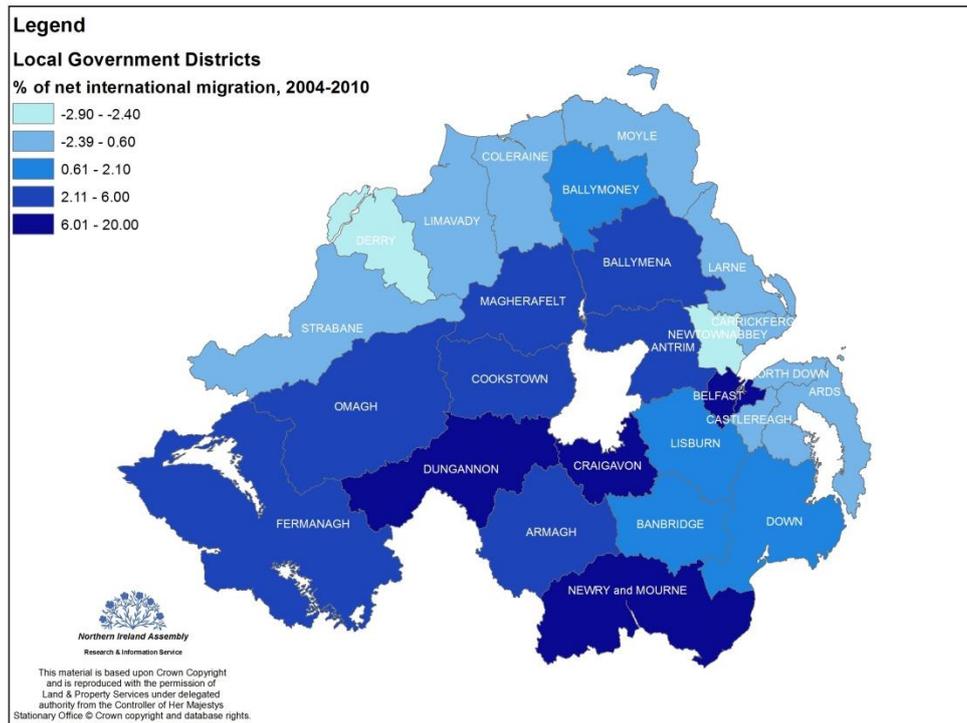
| Time-period | Estimated International Inflows | Estimated International Outflows | Estimated Net International Migration |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Jul 2000 - Jun 2001 | 6,737 | 8,605 | -1,868 |
| Jul 2001 - Jun 2002 | 8,791 | 9,613 | -822 |
| Jul 2002 - Jun 2003 | 7,230 | 8,332 | -1,102 |
| Jul 2003 - Jun 2004 | 8,060 | 7,644 | 416 |
| Jul 2004 - Jun 2005 | 13,607 | 8,936 | 4,671 |
| Jul 2005 - Jun 2006 | 18,118 | 9,095 | 9,023 |
| Jul 2006 - Jun 2007 | 19,369 | 11,332 | 8,037 |
| Jul 2007 - Jun 2008 | 15,350 | 11,039 | 4,311 |
| Jul 2008 - Jun 2009 | 12,690 | 11,229 | 1,461 |
| Jul 2009 – Jun 2010 | 11,854 | 11,262 | 592 |
| Totals | 121,806 | 97,087 | 24,719 |

Map 1 presents an estimate of net international migration by local government district (LGD) for the full period July 2004 – June 2010. For each LGD, the map shows net international migrant flows as a proportion of the total net international flow in Northern Ireland during the reference period. In geographical terms, this provides an indication of where the flow of migrants has been most pronounced since 2004.

During the six-year period, three LGDs, namely Dungannon, Newry & Mourne, and Craigavon, accounted for just over half (51%) of net international migration flows. Dungannon acquired the largest proportion (20% of the total), followed by Newry and Mourne (16%), Craigavon (16%) and Belfast (12%).

Significant flows were also recorded in Fermanagh, Armagh, Ballymena, Omagh and Cookstown. An estimated net loss of migrants (800) occurred in Derry City Council area during the six-year period.

Map 1: Net International Migration by Local Government District, 2004 – 2010¹⁰



In broad terms, the map reveals that the highest net migrant flows were in the west and south of Northern Ireland, while the smallest flows were in the north-east and south-east.

So far, this Paper has examined multiple data sources relating to international migration **flows** to and from Northern Ireland. However, for a fuller understanding of migration it is also helpful to estimate the size of the migrant population living in the region (the **stock**). Of particular interest are the A8 countries, as considerable numbers have arrived since 2004.

NISRA combined and adjusted a number of administrative data sources to arrive at an estimate of 39,000 for the total number of A8 nationals living in Northern Ireland at 30 June 2009¹¹. As this figure has not been updated since, we must await the Census 2011 outputs for a more robust count.

As noted earlier, enlargement of the EU occurred in two phases, namely May 2004 for the A8 countries, and January 2007 for Bulgaria and Romania, commonly referred to as the 'A2' countries. The next section will consider the migration of A2 citizens to Northern Ireland.

¹⁰ Source: NISRA (2011). **Migration Statistics for Northern Ireland (2010)**. Unpublished, personal communication.

¹¹ Administrative sources include the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS), Health Card registrations, births to A8 mothers, and school children with English as an Additional Language (DENI School Census). For details of the geographical location of the A8 stock population, see NIAR 246-11.

4 A2 Migrants

In comparison with A8 nationals, the number of Bulgarian and Romanian citizens migrating to Northern Ireland since 2008 has been relatively modest. This is primarily due to severe restrictions placed on A2 citizens by the UK Government¹²¹³.

Between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2011 there were 358 approvals for Accession Worker cards in Northern Ireland, mainly for work in the food processing industry.

Those exempt from the worker authorisation restrictions (i.e. highly skilled migrants, students, the self-employed, and family members of main applicants) may seek a Registration Certificate. A total of 940 applications were approved during the period 2008 – 2011¹⁴.

5 Migration in Ireland

Preliminary results from the latest Census reveal that the population of Ireland was 4,484,300 in April 2011. The overall small increase of 13,600 on the previous year resulted from the combined effects of strong natural increase and negative net migration.

Fig 5 illustrates the components of population growth in Ireland during the period 1987 – 2011. The chart reveals the sudden surge in positive net migration between 2004 – 2007, and the subsequent fall in 2008 – 2011. The consistently strong trend in natural increase (excess of births over deaths) is also illustrated by the chart.

The arrival of the ‘Celtic Tiger’ economy in the later part of the 1990s created a demand for labour in Ireland. As a consequence, net migration began to rise from 1996 onwards, reaching a peak of 71,800 in 2006. However, the sharp contraction in the Irish economy from 2008 resulted in a significant decline in net migration. By the year ending April 2011, emigration exceeded immigration by 34,100 persons¹⁵.

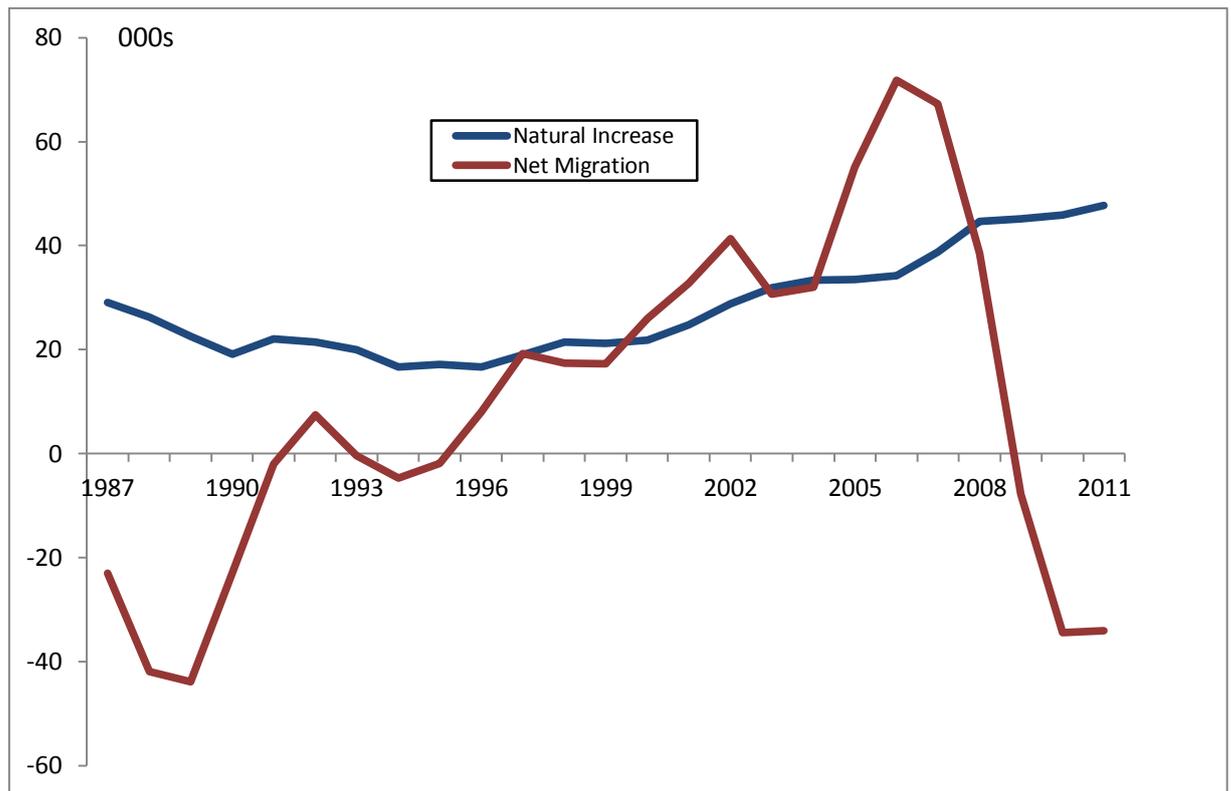
¹² All Bulgarian and Romanian nationals have an initial right of residence in the UK for three months, and a right to remain indefinitely if they are students, self-employed or self-sufficient persons. However, beyond these groups EU Member States can place restrictions on the migration of A2 workers for up to seven years. The UK Government chose to impose restrictions for an initial two-year period (since renewed). In effect, low-skilled Bulgarian or Romanian nationals may only apply to work as seasonal agricultural workers, or on sector-based schemes (currently limited to food processing). Those seeking to take up work through sector-based schemes must apply to the UK Border Agency for an Accession Worker Card. Bulgarian or Romanian workers with specialist skills are admitted through a Points-based system. For full details of the rules governing permission to work, see: Home Office (2007). **Guidance for Nationals of Bulgaria and Romania on obtaining Permission to Work in the United Kingdom**. UK Border Agency. Available at: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/bulgariaromania/guidanceforbulgariaromania0408>

¹³ Preliminary results from the Romanian Census 2011 reveals that the population now stands at the 1966 level, having fallen by 2.6 million since 2002 to a figure of 19 million. Emigration is a key factor in the decline. See Romania Observer (2012). **Romania Census**, 3 February 2012. Available at: <http://www.romaniaobserver.com/2012/02/03/newsfeed/romania+census%3A+population+stands+at+1966+level+of+19+million+people,+down+2.6+million+as+compared+to+2002+census/1712>

¹⁴ Source: NISRA (2011). **Migration Statistics for Northern Ireland (2010)**. Personal communication.

¹⁵ Central Statistics Office (2011). **Population and Migration Estimates, April 2011**, 15 September 2011. Available at: <http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/population/2011/Population%20and%20Migration%20Estimates%20April%202011.pdf>

Fig 5: Natural Increase and Net Migration in Ireland, 1987 - 2011



Source: Central Statistics Office (2011), Table 1.

Immigration to Ireland has fallen sharply in recent years, from a peak of 109,500 persons in 2007 to an estimated 30,800 in 2010, before recovering to 42,300 in 2011. Immigration from the EU12 countries¹⁶ has been particularly affected by the economic downturn, sliding from a peak of 52,700 persons in 2007 to 5,800 in 2010, before recovering slightly to 9,000 in 2011.

The effects of the downturn are also evident in emigration data. Emigration to the UK and the rest of the world in 2011 showed a large increase over the previous year, while there was a fall in emigration to the EU 12 nations. With fewer Accession citizens in Ireland, fewer are also returning home.

So far, this paper has reviewed the available data on international migration stocks and flows in Northern Ireland. The data reveals that net migration in Northern Ireland was generally negative until 2004, when EU expansion acted as a catalyst for the arrival of a considerable number of migrants from Central and Eastern Europe (the A8 countries). A further expansion of the EU in 2007 facilitated the arrival of a relatively modest number of migrants from Bulgaria and Romania.

¹⁶ The EU12 includes the A8 countries plus Cyprus and Malta, and the A2 countries (Bulgaria and Romania) who joined the EU in 2007.

Having developed a picture of how many migrants have arrived in Northern Ireland, where they are located, and some key characteristics, it is now appropriate to consider some of the effects of international migration on the host community.

6 Impact of Migration on Host Community in Northern Ireland

As noted earlier, almost 122,000 international migrants are estimated to have arrived in Northern Ireland during the ten-year period, July 2000 – June 2010. The unprecedented arrival of migrants in such large numbers has had a considerable impact on the provision of public services, such as health and social care, social housing, and school enrolments. Further, the movement of large numbers of people over a relatively short time to areas of Northern Ireland where migration was previously unknown, poses questions for social attitudes and social cohesion. Each of these factors was examined in NIAR 246-11, and will now be updated with the latest available data.

6.1 Health and Social Care

Birth Registration Data

Table 3 illustrates the general upward trend in births since 2003. By December 2011, the number of live births in Northern Ireland had risen to 25,266, an increase of 16.7 per cent compared with 2003.

The number of births to mothers born outside the UK and Ireland accounts for a growing proportion of births, with a three-fold over the last nine years. In 2001, 3 per cent of babies born in Northern Ireland had foreign-born mothers (661 babies out of 21,962) while in 2010 this rose to almost 10 per cent (2,473 babies out of 25,315) ¹⁷.

Table 3: Live Births in Northern Ireland, 2003 - 2011

| Year | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 ^P |
|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------------------|
| Births | 21,648 | 22,318 | 22,328 | 23,272 | 24,451 | 25,631 | 24,910 | 25,315 | 25,266 |

^P Provisional Data

Sources: NISRA (2011) **Live Births, 1887- 2010**. Available at:

http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/vital/births/live_births1887-2010.xls

NISRA (2012). **Live Births by Month, 2006-2011**. Available at:

http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/vital/births/MonthlyBirths_Dec11.xls

Births to mothers from the A8 countries rose from 12 in 2001 to 1,235 in 2010 and accounted for half (49.9%) of all births to foreign-born mothers in Northern Ireland.

¹⁷ Source: Source: NISRA (2011). **Statistical Bulletin – Births in Northern Ireland (2010)** Available at: http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/publications/births_deaths/births_2010.pdf

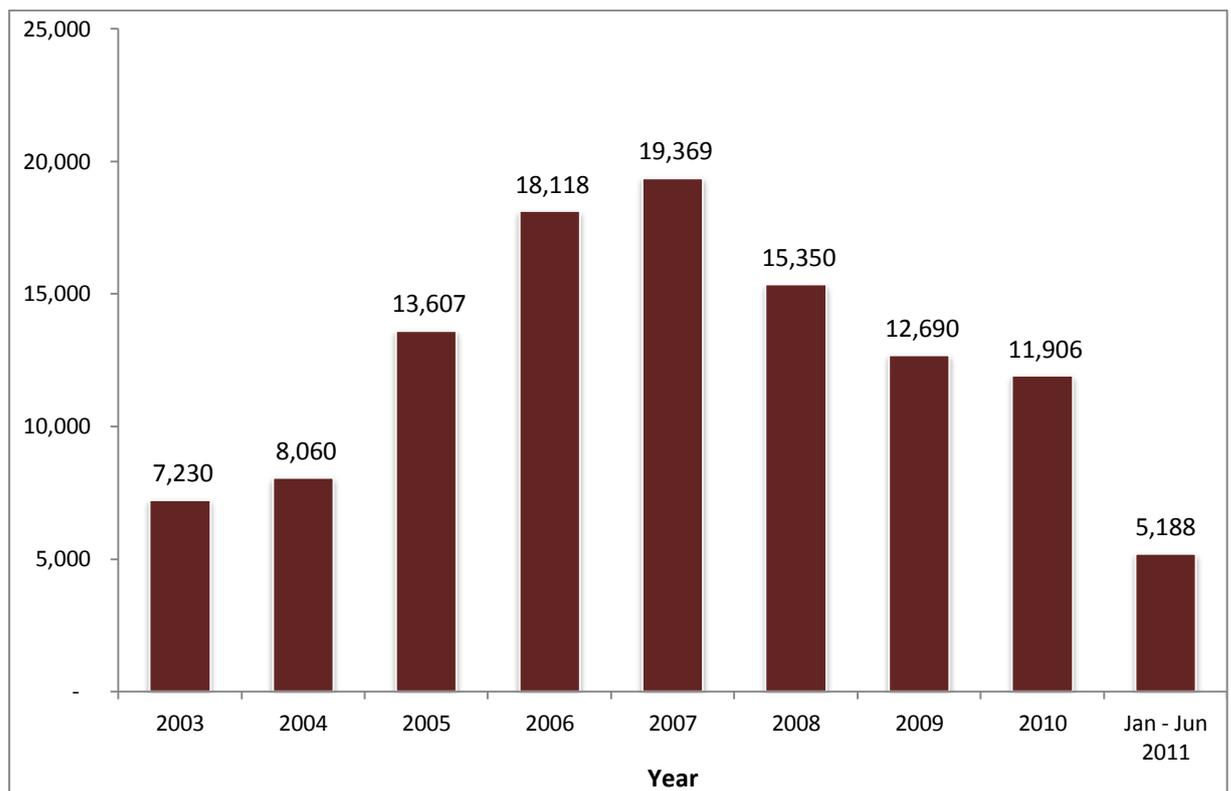
With regard to location, in 2010 the percentage of births to mothers born outside the UK and Ireland ranged from 25 per cent (1 birth in every 4) in Dungannon LGD (236 births), to 3 per cent in Limavady (13 births). Antrim, Armagh, Ballymena, Belfast, Castlereagh, Coleraine and Craigavon LGDs also had relatively high percentages of births (at least 10%) to mothers born outside the UK and Ireland ¹⁸.

In brief, the inflow of new residents since 2004 has contributed to the general increase in births recorded during the past decade. With maternity services under growing pressure, this has important implications for policy makers.

Health Card Registrations

According to NISRA, family doctor registration (the Health Card system) ¹⁹ is the most complete source that can currently be used to estimate international migration (both in- and out-) ²⁰. Figure 6 shows the number of registrations for the period January 2003 – June 2011.

Fig 6: New Health Card Registrations to non-UK nationals in Northern Ireland, 2003 – 2011.



¹⁸ Source: NISRA (2011). **Statistical Bulletin – Births in Northern Ireland (2010)**. *Op. Cit.*

¹⁹ To register with a family GP in Northern Ireland, a person must provide information on his/ her age, place of residence and time of stay in Northern Ireland to the Business Services Organisation of Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland (HSC-BSO). Only those who plan to stay for a period of at least three months or more can be registered with a family GP – short term visitors are not formally registered. Unlike the WRS, there is a facility for de-registering health cards which can then provide an estimate of international out-migration. Source: NISRA (2010) **Migration Statistics for Northern Ireland (2009)**. *Op. Cit.*

²⁰ It is recognised that health card registrations are an imperfect measure of migration. Young adult males, for example, may be slow to register with a GP, while a significant proportion of migrants may fail to de-register before leaving Northern Ireland. NISRA, therefore, make a number of adjustments to arrive at a robust estimate of international migration.

Source: NISRA (2011). **Migration Statistics for Northern Ireland (2010)**. Unpublished, personal communication

In 2010 the total number of new GP registrations in Northern Ireland from outside the UK was 11,900 people. This number has fallen from a peak of 19,400 registrations in 2007. Latest figures for the first six months of 2011 indicate a further decrease.

The fiscal impact of international migration on public services is complex, with statistical data being either absent or inconclusive²¹. Nonetheless, at a time when the migrant stock population is continuing to grow, demands on health care resources are also likely to grow.

6.2 Social Housing

The majority of international migrants initially find accommodation in the private rental sector. However, with rental costs in the private sector increasing, affordability and security of tenure are key drivers for increasing numbers of migrant workers and their families applying for social housing.

The latest statistics available (year ending 31 July 2010), show there were an estimated 653 migrant worker tenant households in Northern Ireland, a 30 per cent increase on the previous year's figure (505 in 2009)²². Approximately 40 per cent of migrant worker tenants in 2010 were Polish, followed by Portuguese (19%) and Lithuanian (13%). During 2009 – 2010, there were:

- 1,368 applications for social housing from migrants;
- 256 allocations; and
- 517 households applied for housing under the homelessness legislation.

In July 2009, nearly two-thirds (61.4%) of tenant households were concentrated in four LGDs²³, namely: Craigavon (26%), Dungannon (15%), Belfast (12%) and Lisburn (9%).

A number of NIHE district offices reported in 2010 that a proportion of migrants attend their offices only to discover that they are ineligible for social housing. The main reason for being ineligible is not having registered under the A8 Workers Registration Scheme, or being employed for less than one year. These restrictions no longer apply after 30th April 2011, as A8 countries became full EU members, and their citizens now enjoy the same rights as those of established Member States. With the removal of a major barrier to A8 nationals accessing social housing, the NIHE notes that this change may

²¹ See House of Lords (2008). **The economic impact of immigration**. House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs, 1st Report of Session 2007 – 2008, Vol. 1. London: TSO. Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200708/ldselect/ldeconaf/82/82.pdf>

²² Source: Northern Ireland Housing Executive (2011). **Black and Minority ethnic and migrant worker mapping exercise update, February 2011**. Belfast: NIHE. Available at: http://www.nihe.gov.uk/black_and_minority_ethnic_and_migrant_worker_mapping_update_-_february_2011.pdf

²³ Source: NISRA (2010). **Migration Statistics for Northern Ireland (2009)**, Table 1.39. Available at: [http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/NI_Migration_Report\(2009\).pdf](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/NI_Migration_Report(2009).pdf)

impact on case loads, with increasing numbers of migrant workers and their families eligible to use their services ²⁴.

6.3 School Enrolments

Each year the Department for Education in Northern Ireland (DENI) undertakes a School Census. The 2010 School Census, which was held in October 2010, includes a standard question on the number of pupils who have enrolled in a school but who do not have the satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum, and the wider environment, and do not have a language in common with the teacher, whether that is English or Irish (newcomer pupils). This has previously been referred to as *English as an Additional Language*.

In 2010, a total of 7,470 primary and post-primary pupils had a language other than English as their first language ²⁵, representing 2.5 per cent of the total school population ²⁶. This figure is a 4 per cent increase on the 7,190 school children who had English as an Additional Language in the 2009 School Census.

Polish was ranked as the top non-English language spoken by pupils, followed by Lithuanian and Portuguese. Chinese (including Cantonese and Mandarin) were the top non-European languages.

Map 2 displays the number of school children (primary and post-primary) in 2010 with English as an additional language as a percentage of the total school population in each LGD.

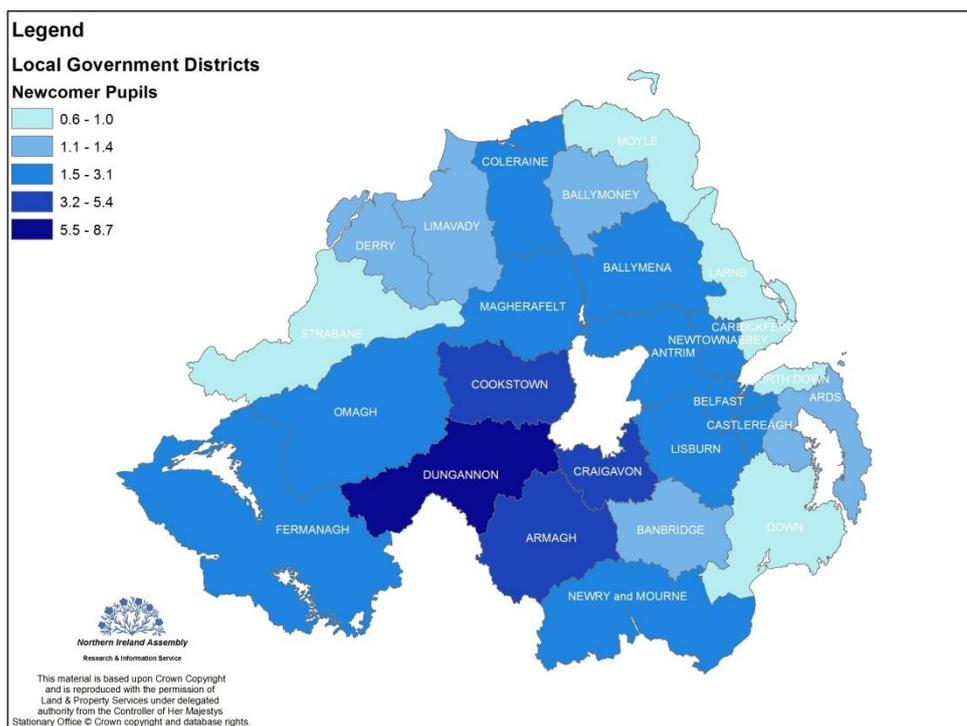
Dungannon had the largest concentration of school pupils with English as an additional language (6.2%) in 2010, followed by Craigavon (5.4%) and Cookstown (4.2%). Larne (0.6%) and Carrickfergus (0.7%) had the lowest proportions.

²⁴ Source: Northern Ireland Housing Executive (2011). *Op. Cit.*

²⁵ It is important to note that children recorded as having *English as an Additional Language* are not necessarily new migrants. Some children who have English as an additional language will have moved to Northern Ireland a number of years ago, and others will have been born and lived in Northern Ireland throughout their life.

²⁶ Source: NISRA (2011). **Migration Statistics for Northern Ireland (2010)**. Unpublished, personal communication

Map 2: Percentage Primary School Pupils with English as Additional Language by LGD, 2010.



6.4 Social Attitudes towards Migrants and Minority Ethnic Groups

In 2010, the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey (NILT)²⁷ incorporated a series of questions on attitudes towards minority ethnic groups, including migrant workers²⁸. Almost half (49%) of respondents thought that migrants were creating a strain on schools, while 39 per cent were of the view that the number of migrant workers was leading to a shortage of local housing. A higher proportion (59%) stated that migrants were creating additional pressures for the NHS. In contrast, half (50%) of respondents indicated that migrant workers were good for Northern Ireland's economy, and 79 per cent were favourable towards the employment of foreign doctors and nurses.

Ambivalence towards migrants was most marked on the questions relating to jobs. While 42 per cent believed that migrants took jobs away from local people, 74 per cent thought that migrants took jobs that local people don't want.

The survey also found that migrants, and minority ethnic groups in general, were becoming more visible to the host community. Nearly a third (30%) reported direct contact with minority ethnic groups on a daily basis, and a further quarter (25%) said they met them once or twice per week. Only a third of respondents (34%) stated they met migrants rarely or not at all.

²⁷ The 2010 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey involved 1,205 face-to-face interviews with adults aged 18 years or over. The number of respondents has been reduced from 1,800 as in previous years due to problems in securing funding for the survey. The main interview was carried out using computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI).

²⁸ Source: ARK (2011). **Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, 2010: Attitudes to Minority Ethnic People module**, June 2011. Available at: http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2010/Minority_Ethnic_People/index.html

Finally, a substantial majority (69%) stated that migrants had enriched the country, by making Northern Ireland open to new ideas and cultures.

6.5 Racist Incidents and Crimes in Northern Ireland

PSNI's Central Statistics Unit began compiling statistics on racist incidents and crimes in April 2004. Incidents with a racial motive can range along a continuum, from relatively mild comments about displacing local people from employment, to more serious incidents involving intimidation or violence. During the year 2010 - 11 there were 842 race hate incidents reported in Northern Ireland ²⁹, a fall of 196 (18.9%) compared with the previous year ³⁰. The number of incidents subsequently declared as crimes also fell, from 712 in 2009/10 to 531 in 2010/11. This is the lowest number of racist crimes recorded since data collection began in 2004.

Fig 7: Trends in racist motivated incidents and crimes, 2004/05 to 2010/11

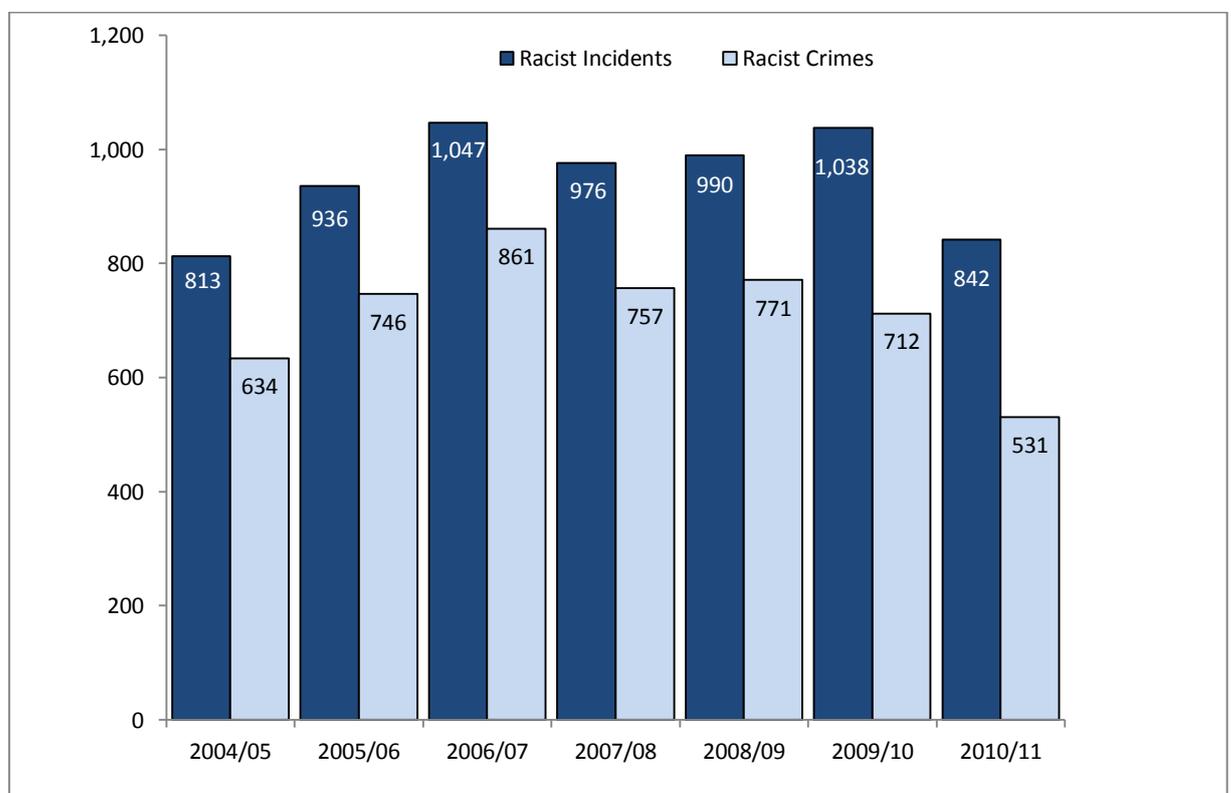


Fig 7 shows trends in racist motivated incidents and crimes, 2004 – 2011. Racist incidents spiked in 2006/07 and 2009/10, while racist crimes have exhibited a steady decline since 2006/07.

²⁹ A *race hate incident* is defined by the PSNI as any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person. In the same way as incidents are identified as having a hate motivation, a *crime* will be recorded as having the relevant hate motivation where the victim or any other person perceives it as such. Not all incidents will result in the recording of a crime.

³⁰ Source: Police Service of Northern Ireland (2011). **Trends in hate motivated incidents and crimes recorded by the police in Northern Ireland, 2004/05 to 2010/11**, Central Statistics Branch, 28 July 2011. Available at: http://www.psnipolice.uk/hate_motivated_incidents_and_crimes_in_northern_ireland_2004-05_to_2010-11.pdf

In summary, this section has outlined some of the more salient impacts of migration on the host population of Northern Ireland. Firstly, the unexpectedly large number of new residents have created additional pressures on public services; in particular, maternity and health services, housing and education. Secondly, the movement of migrants in significant numbers to areas of Northern Ireland where immigration was previously unknown, has created the potential for alienation and conflict. Recent PSNI data, however, suggests that racist incidents and crimes appear to be in decline.

Instead, as Gilligan (2009) has pointed out, Northern Ireland has experienced remarkable change since the signing of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in 1998. From being a country of net outward migration, it has shifted to a country of net inward migration. Beginning in 2001, and accelerating after EU enlargement in 2004, there has been a substantial increase in the number of migrant workers coming to Northern Ireland. This change has been dramatic for a part of the world where for so long the majority of its citizens were white and English-speaking. Yet despite media claims to the contrary, this change in Northern Ireland has been relatively trouble-free³¹.

7 Future Trends in International Migration

Future trends in international migration are difficult to predict with any degree of accuracy. Factors such as current migrant stocks; future performance of the local economy; performance of the prospective migrants' home economies; Sterling – Euro exchange rates; Government and EU policy on migration; plus events such as the possible Accession of Turkey, Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia, may all influence future developments.

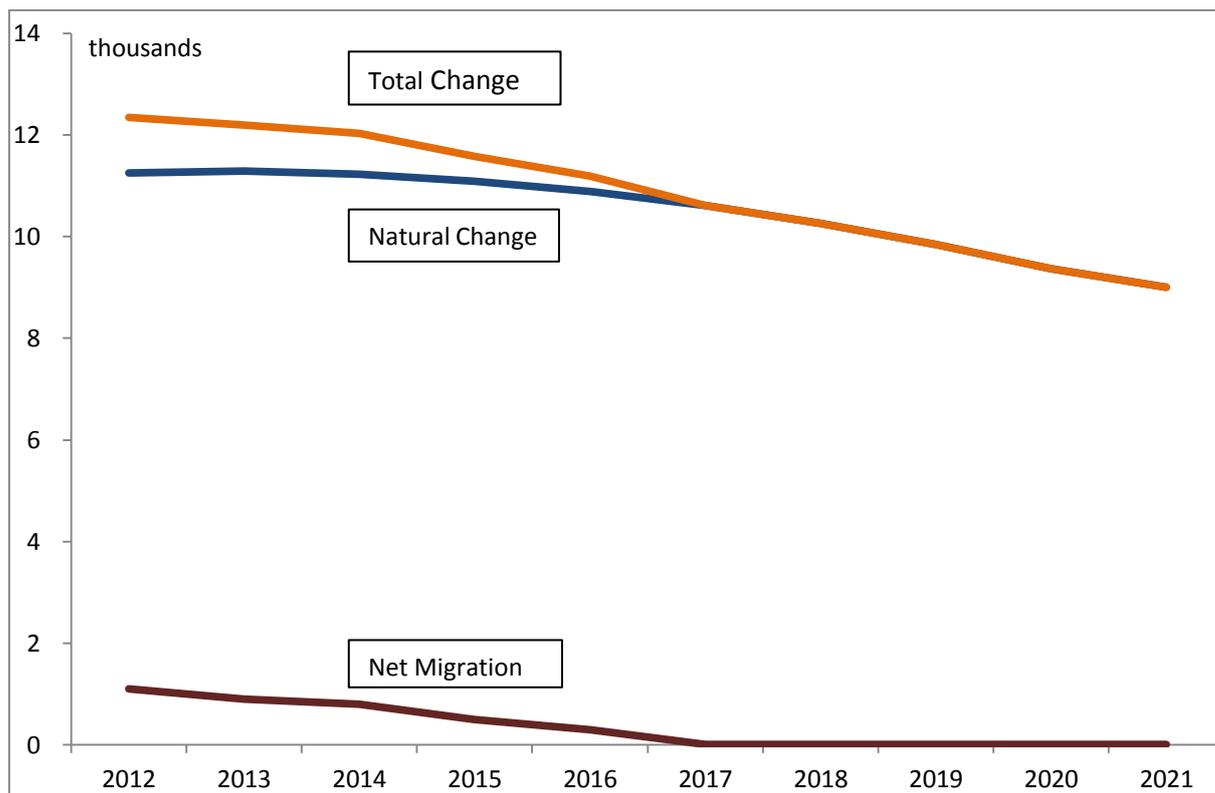
Currently, the only available official forecasts come from the ONS / NISRA. Figure 8 presents their most recent projection (2010-based) for the components of change in the Northern Ireland population, 2012 – 2021. Net Migration (difference between inflows and outflows) is projected to fall from 1,000 per year in 2012 to zero in 2016, and to continue at this level until the end of the reference period³². Overall, the population is projected to rise from 1.823 million in mid-2012 to 1.919 million by 2021. Net migration is expected to account for only 3.3 per cent of the total increase in population over this period.

The view that the spike in international migration, which occurred between 2004 – 2008, is past its peak is supported by the latest data for 2010. This shows a continuing fall in inward flows. In contrast, the latest data from the School Census and birth registration remain strong. This suggests that a proportion of the migrant stock population is developing roots in Northern Ireland, and may gradually form part of the indigenous population.

³¹ Gilligan, C. (2009) **Northern Ireland: the capital of 'race hate'?** Available at: <http://www.spiked-online.com/index.php/site/article/7043/>

³² Source: NISRA (2011). **Components of Change, 2010 to 2060.** Available at: <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/projections/wni10cc.xls>

Fig 8: Projected Components of Change in Northern Ireland Population, 2012 - 2021



8 Concluding Remarks

This paper has presented an updated profile of modern-day international migration to Northern Ireland. Details of earlier waves of migration can be found in NIAR 246-11.

Whatever the pros and cons of migration, there is little doubt that the inflow of new residents from countries as far apart as Poland, Portugal, China, Brazil and East Timor has enriched the culture and fabric of Northern Ireland.

The various migrant populations who have arrived in Northern Ireland since the millennium have brought with them, not only their skills and experience, but also their traditions, music, food and language. Ten years ago, Northern Ireland was a relatively insular and inward-looking country. Today, it is a vibrant and culturally diverse society.

Around 122,000 long-term international migrants have arrived here over the past decade. This figure is probably an under-estimate of the true scale of population movement, as short-term or temporary migrants are not counted in the data. While many have returned to their country of origin, a significant proportion have decided to remain. And it is those who settle in Northern Ireland to bring up their families who will transform and irreversibly change our society.

The inflow of significant numbers of people to areas where migrants were previously unknown, has not been without incident. Reports of harassment and intimidation have been regularly reported in the media. And yet, as surveys have demonstrated, the

majority of new residents have integrated well into the host community, and incidents of serious communal violence are noticeable by their absence.