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Migration in Northern Ireland: a demographic perspective

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Almost 110,000 international migrants are estimated to have arrived in Northern Ireland between 2000 and 2009. In the process, Northern Ireland has moved from a position of net migration loss to one of annual population gain. This paper outlines the key elements of this remarkable, demographic change.

Key Points

- During the period July 2000 – June 2009, an estimated 110,000 international long-term migrants arrived in Northern Ireland, while 86,000 left, giving a net total of around 24,000.
- Migration, however, is not a new phenomenon. In fact, it has been a feature of life in Northern Ireland for many years. Earlier waves include the Jewish, Indian and Chinese communities etc.
- The modern era 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 people) 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.
- 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 and well-educated. Increasingly, whole families are moving to Northern Ireland.
- Survey data indicates that the majority do not come to Northern Ireland to escape unemployment, but rather to improve their income and gain work experience abroad. A significant number are 'under-employed'
- A study by Oxford Economics on behalf of DEL concluded that overall, migrant workers have made a significant positive contribution to the Northern Ireland economy.
- However, the unprecedented wave of migration since 2004 has created additional pressures on health and social care resources, housing and education.
- Long-term predictions are challenging. Currently, net migration flows are predicted to taper off until 2014. Thereafter, net migration is projected to remain at modest levels (500 per year) until 2021. However, the stock of international migrants already residing in Northern Ireland, notably Polish people and other A8 citizens, will continue to grow.

Executive Summary

1 Historical Background

Almost 110,000 international migrants are estimated to have arrived in Northern Ireland between 2000 and 2009. International migration, however, is not a new phenomenon. In 1869, for example, a settlement of German Jews in Belfast was sufficiently large to support a synagogue. Indian migrants began arriving in Belfast during the 1920s, and in 1938 unaccompanied Jewish children from central Europe came to Northern Ireland to escape growing persecution in Germany. Chinese citizens began to arrive in the early 1960s while Vietnamese ‘boat people’ were locating in Craigavon by 1979.

2 The Modern Era

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.

3 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 unprecedented 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.

4 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 June 2010, Northern Ireland had over a quarter 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 (56%) of the 40,000 registrations were from Poland, followed by Lithuania (19%) and Slovakia (14%). Two-thirds (67%) 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 estimate that almost 110,000 international migrants arrived in Northern Ireland during the nine-year period, July 2000 – June 2009. With an estimated 85,800 leaving during the same period, this leaves a net total of 24,100 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 2009, the net total had fallen to 1,500, representing a fall of 83.8 per cent from June 2006.

With regard to migration flows during the period 2004 - 2009, Dungannon accounted for the largest proportion (19%), followed by Newry & Mourne (15%) and Belfast (12%). NISRA estimate that the A8 stock population numbered 39,000 in 2009, an increase from 30,000 in 2007.

5 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 because of severe restrictions placed on A2 citizens by the UK Government.

6 Profile of International Migrants

A recent large-scale survey indicates that the majority of migrants in Northern Ireland are young (typically aged 18 – 34), male, and well-educated. Three-quarters had either further or higher educational qualifications, and were often under-employed: almost a quarter (24%) of those with higher educational qualifications were working in elementary occupations. A lack of proficiency in English was the main reason cited for being unable to use their skills and education.

Most interviewees in the survey reported very positive experiences of life in Northern Ireland. In general, local people were seen as polite, helpful, welcoming and friendly, although some instances of discrimination were reported, with verbal attacks being the most prominent. However another study found some evidence of extreme exploitation in the mushroom, fishing and catering industries. Romanian Roma were particularly vulnerable.

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.

7 Impact of Migration

Between 2000 and 2009, almost 110,000 international migrants arrived in Northern Ireland, often in areas with no prior experience of migration. This has important implications for 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 12,700 in 2009. 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 over 5,000 primary school children has a language other than English as their first language, around 3 per cent of the total primary 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. A study by Oxford Economics (2009) 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 merits of the economic and fiscal arguments, there is no doubt that the inflow of new residents from countries as far apart as Poland, 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. 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. Almost 110,000 migrants are estimated to have arrived over a nine-year period. In the process, Northern Ireland has moved from a position of net migration loss to one of annual population gain.

This paper outlines the key elements of this remarkable, demographic change. Beginning with some historical background, the paper moves to the modern era, post-1973, and charts trends in international migration up to the present day (2009). The paper then focuses on EU enlargement in 2004, the pivotal moment in modern migration. The inflow of citizens from central and eastern Europe (A8 and A2 countries) is then profiled and discussed. This is followed by a short outline of migration trends in our nearest neighbour, Ireland. The paper concludes with a brief discussion of the impact of recent international migration on the host community in Northern Ireland.

2 Historical Background

Migration to Northern Ireland is not a new phenomenon. The 2001 Census recorded a total of 14,279 people as belonging to various minority ethnic communities. This suggests that migration and migrant communities have been a feature of life in Northern Ireland for some time¹. As will be illustrated in the following sub-sections, these historic patterns of migration have been diverse and varied.

2.1 Jewish Community

One example of migration is the **Jewish community**. Warm (1998) conducted a series of oral history interviews and discovered that Jewish people have had a long presence in Ireland, dating back to the thirteenth century. The current community in Belfast can be traced back to two settlement patterns. The first consisted of prosperous Jewish linen merchants from Germany who settled in Belfast during the 1860s in order to establish links with the flax industry here. By 1869, the settlement was sufficient to support a synagogue. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a second wave of Jewish immigrants arrived from Russia, Lithuania and eastern Europe. Unlike their predecessors, the new arrivals were relatively poor and tended to be orthodox in terms of religion and culture. According to Warm, eventually these immigrants were to become the dominant group in terms of size and influence. They tended to congregate in the working-class district of the Crumlin Road, Belfast, in close proximity to the new synagogue built in 1964.

At its peak in the late 1960s, the Jewish community in Belfast numbered around 1,500. However, as a consequence of the 'Troubles' and other factors, a decline began in the

¹ Jarman, N. (2005). **Migration and Northern Ireland**, Spectrum, Issue 10, December 2005, Dublin: NCCRI. Available at: <http://www.nccri.ie/pdf/spectrum10.pdf>

1970s. By 1997 the size of the community was estimated to be around 230 (140 families) ².

2.2 Jewish Kindertransport

During 1938 – 39, around 10,000 unaccompanied Jewish children aged between three and seventeen from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, were permitted entry into the United Kingdom without visas. Some of these children were sent to Northern Ireland. While many were looked after by foster parents, around 300 went to the Millisle Refugee Farm which took refugees from May 1938 until its closure in 1948 ³.

2.3 Vietnamese ‘Boat People’

In August 1979 the first of a small number of refugees from Vietnam arrived in Belfast. They came to Northern Ireland via camps in Hong Kong, with harrowing tales of escape and long periods of travel across the South China Sea. These were the so-called ‘Boat People’ whose plight captured newspaper headlines throughout the world in the 1980s.

Many of the new arrivals were actually Chinese by origin, who had fled Vietnam for fear of persecution from the Communist forces. The majority of those who migrated to Northern Ireland initially settled in Craigavon where many sought work in the Chinese catering trade. Today, few of the original ‘boat people’ remain. Most have moved on, either as a result of the worldwide programme of reunification of families from Vietnam, or because of local issues. It has been suggested that the estimated 30 or more Vietnamese families currently in Craigavon are unlikely to be ‘boat people’: instead, they are more likely to have arrived later during the 1980s directly from Vietnam and to be ethnically Vietnamese ⁴.

2.4 Chinese Community

The Chinese Community in Northern Ireland traces its roots to the early 1960s, when the first Chinese arrived here ⁵. They came mainly from the New Territories, an under-developed region in the hinterland around Hong Kong. The majority of those first arrivals set up or were employed in small catering establishments.

The Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962, and the implementation of the employment voucher system, limited further immigration into the UK to certain professionals and those workers with jobs already arranged. These factors created the conditions for *chain migration*, whereby those who had set up catering businesses in

² Warm, D. (1998) *The Jews of Northern Ireland*, in P. Hainsworth (ed.) *Divided Society: Ethnic Minorities and Racism in Northern Ireland*, cited in Connolly, P. (2002) **Race and Racism in Northern Ireland: a review of the research evidence**. Available at: <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/racereview.pdf>

³ Lynagh, C. (2008) **Kindertransport to Millisle**. Available at: <http://www.culturenorthernireland.org/article/1228/Kindertransport/0/0/1/kindertransport-to-millisle>

⁴ Gillespie, N., Yam, P. and Gadd, D. (1999) cited in Connolly, P. (2002) *Op. Cit.*

⁵ Chinese Welfare Association, NI (2010) **The Chinese Community in Northern Ireland** Available at: <http://www.cwa-ni.org/?tabindex=13&tabid=3404>

Northern Ireland were able to provide jobs for families and friends from their region to enable them to migrate. This had the effect of concentrating the Chinese community even further within the catering industry ⁶.

The settled Chinese population is into its second or even third generation. They have been born and brought up in Northern Ireland, are generally well integrated, and work outside the Chinese community in various types of employment ⁷.

2.5 The Indian Community

The first members of the Indian community arrived in Northern Ireland during the 1920s and 1930s. Many of the original settlers came from a few specific areas in Northern India, particularly the states of Punjab and Gujarat. The Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 also had a significant effect on the Indian community. The stricter controls operated through the employment voucher system led to an increasing professionalisation of Indian immigration during the 1960s and 1970s ⁸. The employment characteristics of the current Indian community is slightly more diversified than the Chinese community, with a higher concentration in particular professional occupations, and as self-employed in small businesses, such as small factories, clothing, shops and restaurants ⁹.

Table 2.1 presents the composition of the Northern Ireland population by ethnic group in 2001. With 4,145 persons, the Chinese community had the distinction of being the largest minority ethnic group at that time. As will be shown later in this paper, events were about to change the situation dramatically.

Table 2.1: Ethnic Groups in Northern Ireland, Census 2001

Ethnic Group	Number
White	1,670,988
Chinese	4,145
Mixed	3,319
Irish Traveller	1,710
Indian	1,567
Other ethnic group	1,290
Pakistani	666
Black African	494
Other Black	387
Black Caribbean	255
Bangladeshi	252
Other Asian	194
All Persons	1,685,267

Source: Table KS06, Census 2001

⁶ Braid, L. and Gadd, D. (1999) cited in Connolly, P. (2002) *Op. Cit.*

⁷ Northern Ireland Housing Executive (2007). **Home from Home: Older Chinese People – Housing Needs Assessment, North-West Area**. Belfast: NIHE. Available at: http://www.nihe.gov.uk/home_from_home.pdf

⁸ Irwin, G. (1998) cited in Connolly, P. (2002) *Op. Cit.*

⁹ Kapur, N. (1997) cited in Connolly, P. (2002) *Op. Cit.*

3 The Modern Era

Figure 3.1 presents estimates for long-term¹⁰ net migration¹¹ in Northern Ireland during the period 1973 – 2009¹². According to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (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 industry started recruiting workers from Portugal to fill vacancies, and hospital trusts began offering employment to nursing staff from South Asia and the Philippines^{13 14}.

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 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 Ireland. By 2008, the number had fallen back to 27,000, with a further decrease to 24,000 in 2009. The number leaving increased over the same period¹⁵.

¹⁰ 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 ...”.

¹¹ **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..

¹² Source: NISRA (2010). **Migration Statistics for Northern Ireland (2009)**. 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)

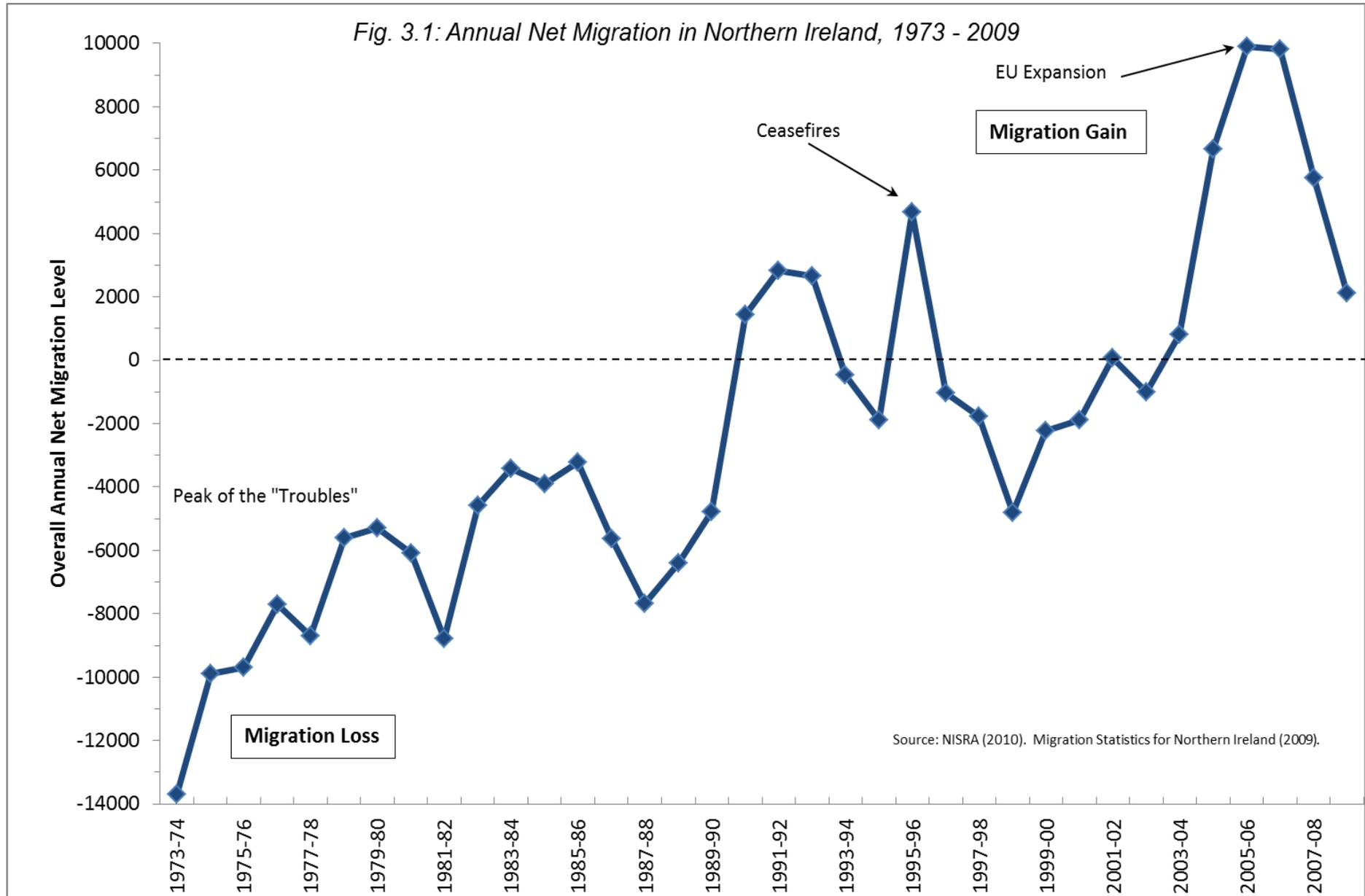
¹³ Bell, J., Caughey, A. Hansson, U., Martynowicz, A. and Scully, M. (2009). **Experiences of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland**, Institute for Conflict Research, Belfast: Department for Employment and Learning. Available at:

http://www.delni.gov.uk/a_report_on_the_experiences_of_migrant_workers_in_northern_ireland.pdf

¹⁴ 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).

¹⁵ Source: NISRA (2010). **Migration Statistics for Northern Ireland (2009)**. 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)



Having outlined recent events, and grounded them in a historical context, it is now appropriate to examine the period since 2004 more closely. In particular, the expansion of the European Union (EU) and the subsequent, unprecedented arrival of migrants from central and eastern Europe.

4 EU Enlargement

The number of Member States in the European Union (EU) increased from 15 in May 2004 to 27 by May 2007. EU enlargement took place in two phases. Firstly, in May 2004 ten countries, mainly from central and eastern Europe, joined the EU (collectively referred to as the 'A8' countries¹⁶, along with Malta and Cyprus). Secondly, in May 2007 Bulgaria and Romania (referred to as the 'A2' countries) joined the Union.

At the time of Accession, twelve of the EU-15 Member States placed temporary restrictions (transitional arrangements) on the right of A8 citizens to work in Member States: the exceptions were the *UK, Ireland and Sweden*¹⁷. The policy of the UK Government was different for A8 and A2 nationals. For A8 nationals, the UK granted full access to the labour market from May 2004, subject to a registration requirement (see Section 5). In contrast, for A2 nationals, the Government severely limited access to employment. The A2 restrictions were initially for a two-year period from 2007.

5 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. Prior to 2004, the Census was the only robust and systematic source for data collection and analysis. In an effort to provide more accurate information, NISRA (2006) published a comprehensive overview of long-term migration estimates, including the underlying methodology and sources used¹⁸. The report is now updated on an annual basis.

¹⁶ The A8 countries are the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. Malta and Cyprus also joined the EU on 1 May 2004 but are not referred to in this Paper, as they had full freedom of movement and the right to work in the UK after May 2004.

¹⁷ The 2003 EU Accession Treaty allowed Member States to restrict, for a period of seven years, the rights of A8 workers to move to another Member State to work. These restriction ended on 30 April 2011. Henceforth, all A8 nationals will now be able to take up employment freely in those Member States where labour market restrictions have been in place. For more information, see: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/506&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

¹⁸ Beatty, R. Fegan, G. and Marshall, D. (2004) **Long-term International Migration Estimates for Northern Ireland (2004-5)**. Belfast: NISRA. Available at: [http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/NI_Migration_Report\(2005\).pdf](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/NI_Migration_Report(2005).pdf)

NISRA use a range of administrative and statistical sources to build up a composite picture of migration. Although each data source has its own limitations, collectively they provide a comprehensive account of migration trends in Northern Ireland. Among the chief sources are 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 9.2)
- New registrations with a GP (see Section 9.2)

Each of these sources will now be reviewed to examine the nature and scale of international migration since 2004, particularly from the A8 countries.

6 A8 Citizens in Northern Ireland

6.1 Workers Registration Scheme

The Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) is managed by the UK Border Agency on behalf of the Home Office. 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 Scheme¹⁹. As a result, the figures include both long-term and short-term migrants. The main strength of the WRS is that it was specifically designed to monitor A8 access to the UK labour market. A limitation is that, as there is no obligation to de-register, this source can only be used to monitor the *inflow* of A8 migrants²⁰.

Since 2004, Northern Ireland has seen a disproportionate number of A8 citizens seeking work relative to the rest of the UK. Table 6.1 shows that between May 2004 and June 2010, Northern Ireland had over a quarter more A8 citizens (28%) registering with the WRS on a per capita basis than the rest of the UK. There were almost 23 WRS registrations for every 1,000 persons in Northern Ireland, compared with nearly 18 WRS registrations for every 1,000 persons in the UK as a whole. Wales had the lowest per capita registrations (9.6 per thousand).

¹⁹ The Scheme ended on 30 April 2011. Henceforth, A8 nationals will have the same rights as other EU citizens to take up employment in the UK.

²⁰ 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

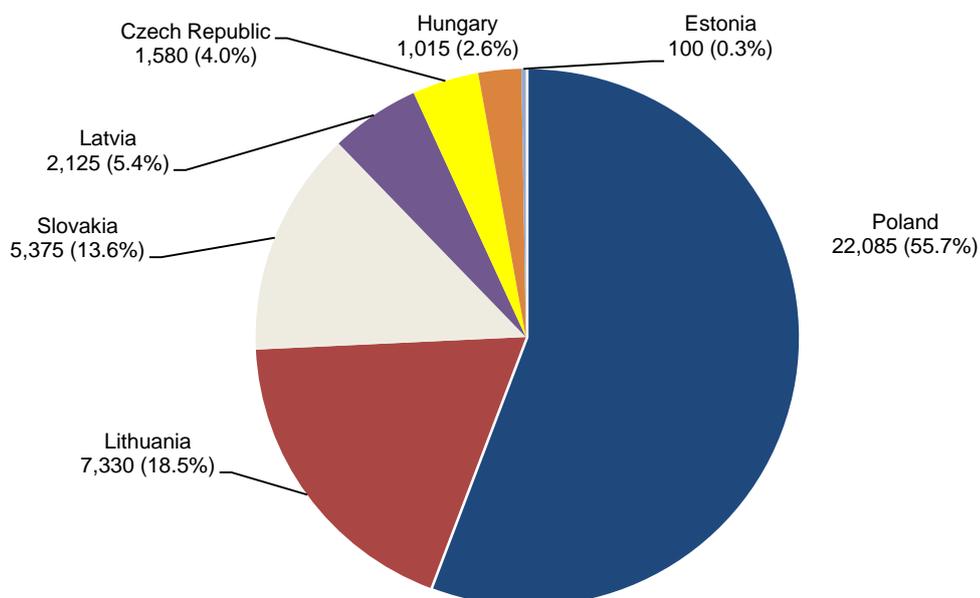
Table 6.1 WRS Registrations per 1,000 population (May 2004 – June 2010)

Country	WRS Registrations (May 2004 – June 2010)	2007 Population Estimate	WRS Registrations per 1,000 population
England	922,000	51,092,000	18.0
Scotland	90,000	5,144,000	17.5
Wales	28,500	2,980,000	9.6
Northern Ireland	40,000	1,759,000	22.7
United Kingdom	1,080,000	60,975,000	17.7

Source: NISRA (2010), Table 1. p. 10. *Op. Cit.*

Examining the data from a different perspective, between 1 May 2004 and 30 June 2010, a total of 1,080,000 people registered with the WRS in the UK. Of these, around 40,000 people (or 4% of the UK total) registered to work in Northern Ireland. In contrast the Northern Ireland population makes up around 3 per cent of the UK population. This indicates the relative scale of A8 migration to Northern Ireland.

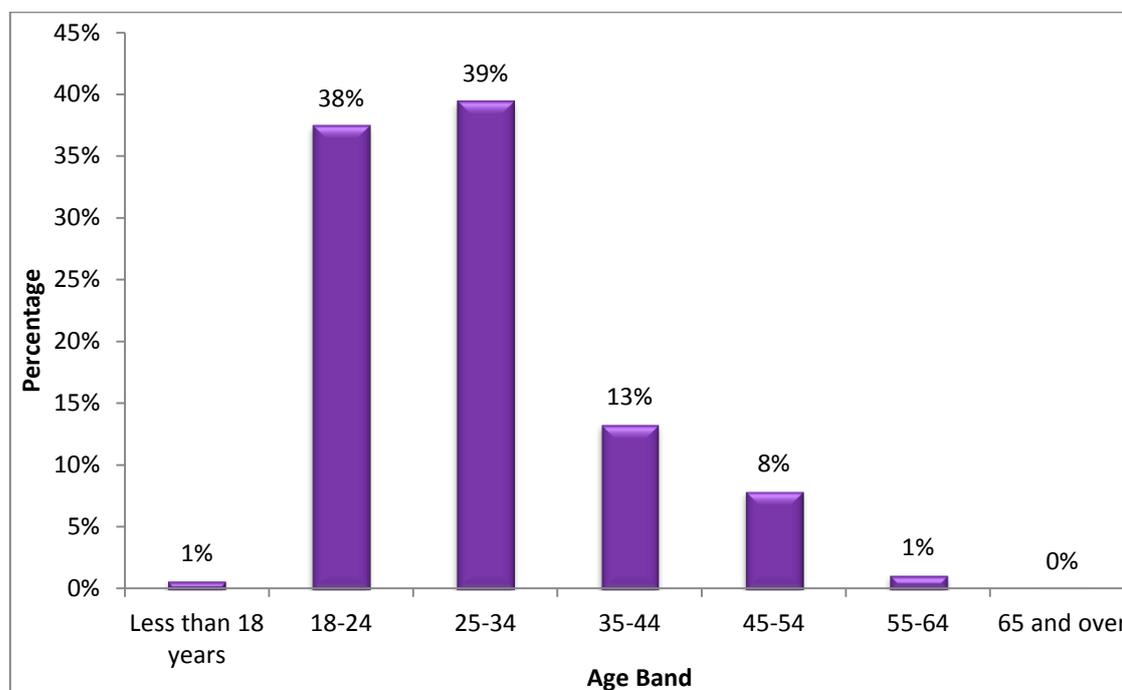
Figure 6.1 presents data on the number of WRS registrations in Northern Ireland by A8 nationality during the period May 2004 – March 2010. The chart reveals that, of the 39,615 registrations during this period, over half (55.7%) were from Poland, followed by Lithuania (18.5%) and Slovakia (13.6%).

Fig 6.1 Northern Ireland WRS Registrations by Nationality (May 2004 – March 2010) ²¹

²¹ Source: NISRA (2010). **All International Migration tables (2008 – 09)**. Table 1.3 Available at: http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/All_Mig0809.xls

The WRS also provides information on A8 migrants by age and gender. Figure 6.2 shows the number of Northern Ireland WRS registrations by age band, May 2004 – March 2010. As one might expect, migrant workers from the A8 countries are typically young and male: over three-quarters (77%) were aged 18 – 34 while two-thirds (67%) were male.

Fig 6.2 Northern Ireland WRS Registrations by Age Band (May 2004 – March 2010) ²²



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).

6.2 National Insurance Numbers (NINOs)

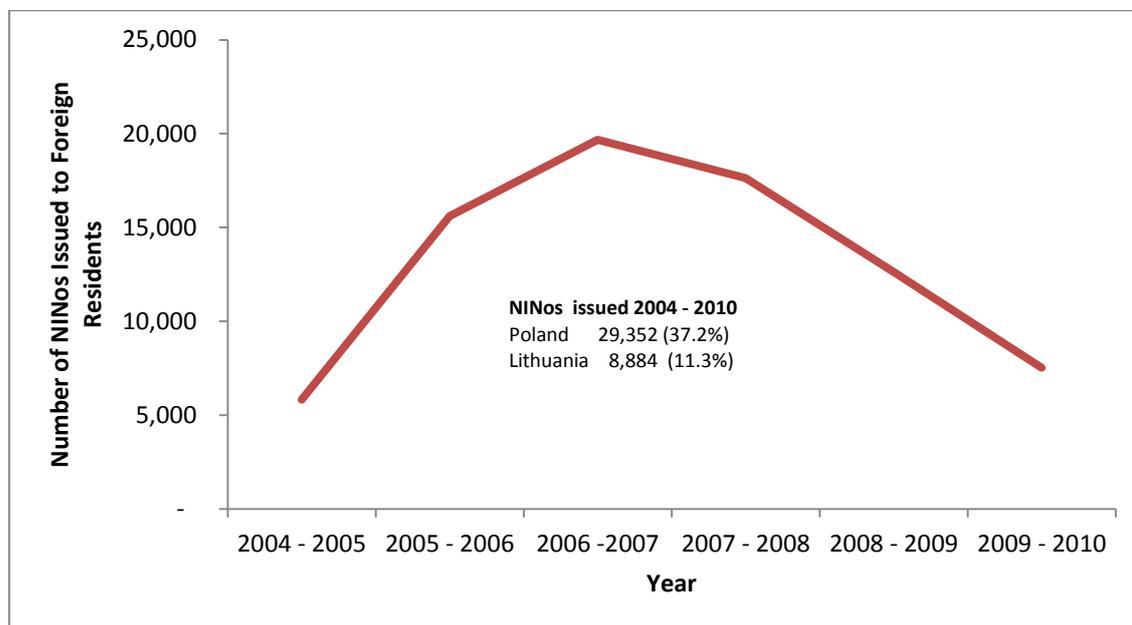
National Insurance Numbers (NINOs) are an important, additional source of information on international migrants coming to Northern Ireland. NINOs are required for employment purposes, or to claim benefits and tax credits, and are supplied by local Social Security or Jobs and Benefits Offices.

Figure 6.3 presents trend data relating to the issue of NINOs to non-UK nationals in Northern Ireland during the period, April 2004 – March 2010. It 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. Almost two-thirds (64.4%) were issued to A8 nationals. Polish citizens accounted for 58 per cent of NINOs issued to A8 citizens

²² Source: NISRA (2006 - 2010). **All International Migration Table Series, 2006-10**, Table 1.4. Available at: <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration>

during the six-year period, and over a third (37.2%) of the total NINos issued to non-UK nationals.

Fig 6.3 NINos issued to non-UK Nationals in Northern Ireland, April 2004 – March 2010²³



6.2 Estimate of Net International Migration, 2000 - 2009

Using Health Card data, NISRA have produced an estimate of net international migration for the complete period, July 2000 – June 2009 (see Table 6. 2).

Table 6.2 – Estimated Net International Migration to Northern Ireland, 2000 – 2009²⁴

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
Total	109,952	85,825	24,127

²³ Source: NISRA (2010). **All International Migration tables (2008 – 09)**, Table 1.17. Available at: http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/All_Mig0809.xls

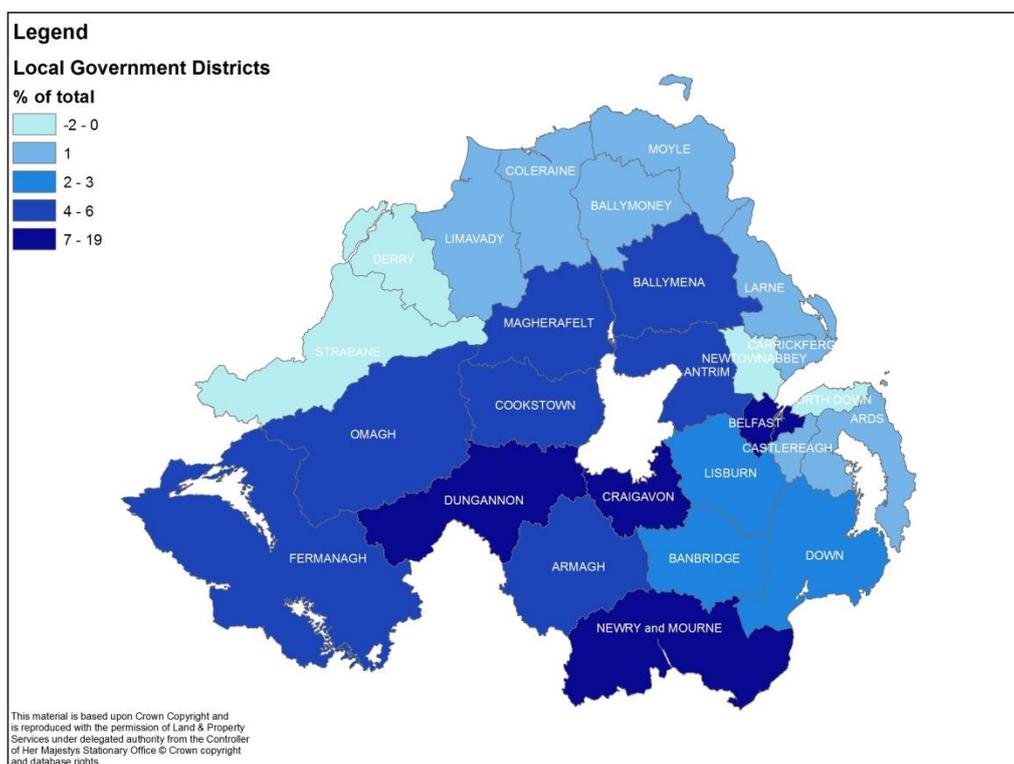
²⁴ Source: NISRA (2010). **Migration Statistics for Northern Ireland (2009)**, Annex C. Available at: [http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/NL_Migration_Report\(2009\).pdf](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/NL_Migration_Report(2009).pdf)

Table 6.2 shows that almost 110,000 international migrants are estimated to have arrived in Northern Ireland during the nine-year period, July 2000 – June 2009. With an estimated 85,800 leaving the country during the same period, this leaves a net total of 24,100 international migrants in Northern Ireland during the reference 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 2009, the net total had fallen to 1,500, representing a fall of 83.8 per cent from June 2006.

Map 6.1 presents an estimate of net international migration by local government district (LGD) for the full period July 2004 – June 2009. 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 (27,500). In geographical terms, this provides an indication of where the flow of migrants has been most pronounced since 2004.

During the five-year period, three LGDs, namely Dungannon, Newry & Mourne, and Craigavon, accounted for almost half (48.4%) of net international migration flows. Dungannon acquired the largest proportion (18.8% of the total), followed by Newry and Mourne (14.9%), Craigavon (14.7%) and Belfast (12.4%). Significant flows were also recorded in Ballymena, Magherafelt, Cookstown, Fermanagh and Armagh. An estimated net loss of migrants (500) occurred in Derry City Council area during the five-year period.

Map 6.1 Net International Migration as a proportion of total Net Migration, 2004 – 2009²⁵



²⁵ Source: NISRA (2010). **All International Migration tables (2008 – 09)**, Table 3.2. Available at: http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/All_Mig0809.xls

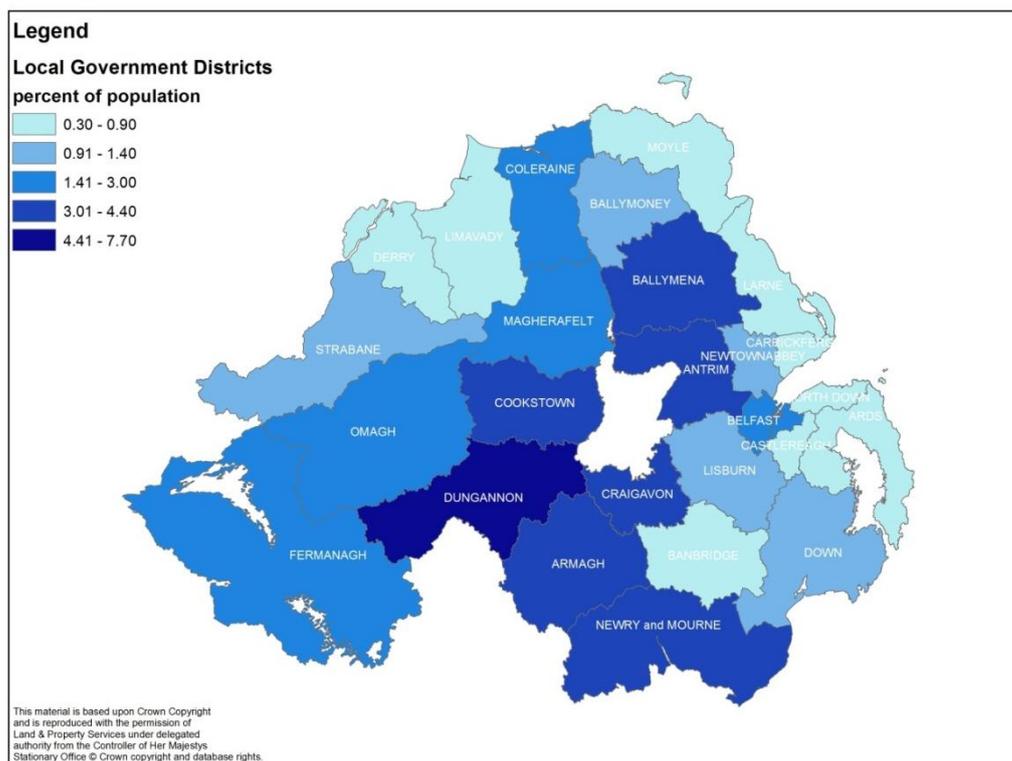
In broad terms, the map reveals that the highest net migrant flows were in the west and south of Northern Ireland, while the smallest flows were in the north-east and south-east.

So far, this Paper has examined multiple data sources relating to international migration **flows** to and from Northern Ireland. Although information on *flows* is useful for various purposes, for a fuller understanding of migration it is equally important to estimate the size of the migrant population living in Northern Ireland (the **stock**). Of particular interest are the A8 countries, as considerable numbers have arrived since Accession in 2004. The next section will consider data relating to the A8 stock population.

6.3 A8 Stock Population

NISRA have combined and adjusted a number of administrative data sources to arrive at an estimate of the total number of A8 nationals living in Northern Ireland by June 2009. They estimate that the A8 stock population has risen from 30,000 in 2007 to 39,000 in 2009²⁶.

Map 6.2 A8 Stock Population as a Percentage of Resident Population in LGDs, 2009²⁷



In terms of location, Map 6.2 shows the A8 stock population as a proportion of the total population in each of the 26 LGDs in 2009. As might be expected from the flow data in

²⁶ 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). See NISRA (2010) Table 7, p. 44. *Op. Cit.*

²⁷ Source: NINIS (2010). **A8 Stock Population by Local Government District, 2009**. Available at: http://www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk/mapxtreme/viewdata/Population_and_Migration/Migration/A8_Migrant_Population_2009.xls

Map 6.1, Dungannon (7.7%) had the highest stock proportion of A8 residents, followed by Craigavon (4.4%), Newry and Mourne (4.0%), Ballymena (3.4%) and Cookstown (3.3%). Significant numbers were also evident in Antrim, Armagh and Omagh.

In broad terms, the west and south of Northern Ireland have the highest concentrations of A8 residents, while the north-east and south-east have the lowest. In Belfast, A8 residents accounted for 2.5 per cent of the total population ²⁸.

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.

7 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 ²⁹.

Between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2010 there were 288 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 780 applications were approved during the period 2008 – 2010 ³⁰.

Although the number of A2 migrants is relatively small in comparison with A8 citizens, a new report (June 2011) alleges that a proportion of them have been subject to extreme exploitation, tantamount to forced labour.

²⁸ Data from Health Card registrations suggests that most of the A8 residents in Belfast are located in six electoral wards, namely: Botanic, Stranmillis, Windsor, Shaftesbury, Blackstaff and Ballynafeigh.

²⁹ 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>

³⁰ Source: NISRA (2010). **Migration Statistics for Northern Ireland (2009)**. 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)

8 Forced Labour in Northern Ireland ³¹

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has defined forced labour as a form of extreme exploitation involving two or more of the following:

1. Threats or physical harm to the worker.
2. Restrictions on movement, or confinement to a workplace.
3. Debt bondage, where someone works to pay off a debt or loan incurred securing the employment.
4. Withholding wages or excessive wage reductions.
5. Retaining the worker's passport.
6. The threat of denunciation to the authorities.

A recent study conducted in Northern Ireland found evidence of all six of the above indicators among migrants working in the *mushroom, fishing and catering industries*. The report found that, although victims of forced labour are not restricted to any one nationality, Romanian Roma (A2) and Filipino migrants were particularly vulnerable to exploitation. The report notes that some employers now prefer to employ A2 nationals from Romania or Bulgaria who do not have the same rights or social networks that A8 nationals enjoy.

Over the past few years, a small Roma community has been established in Belfast. They have limited rights to employment, and are mainly found selling newspapers and magazines on the streets or at major junctions; hawking flowers in restaurants; or working in car-wash facilities around the city. According to the report, a major issue is the low pay received for working long hours. It was found that some Roma in the car-wash business were earning as little as £20 for an eleven-hour shift, even less if turnover was low:

“You start eight till seven, always there, sometimes maybe seven days per week or maybe I was working one month with no time off.” (p. 47)

Those selling newspapers / magazines also worked long hours for little money.

“We get about eighty pence per hour ... But we have to stay on the streets until 6 or 7 o'clock at night ... you can get £10 to £12. Today I only make £3” (p. 47)

The fishing industry in Northern Ireland is based around the ports of Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie. According to the report, some skippers have taken to recruiting mainly Filipino workers to crew their boats, and an estimated 160 Filipinos now work in the industry. The report found allegations of poor conditions, long working hours, workers

³¹ All information in this section has been extracted from a multi-agency report published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 8 June 2011. See, Allamby, L., Bell, J., Hamilton, J., Hansson, U., Jarman, N., Potter, M. and Toma, S. (2011). **Forced labour in Northern Ireland: exploiting vulnerability**. Institute for Conflict Research et al., York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Available at: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/forced-labour-Northern-Ireland-full.pdf>.

being subjected to verbal and physical abuse, and earning well below the minimum wage.

The researchers found that people put up with working in very poor conditions, and extreme levels of exploitation, because their current situation was often better than the options available at home. According to the Report, migrants were exploited by members of their own community as well as indigenous employers. In most cases, the exploitation was based on the employees' vulnerability, with those with few contacts, limited English and limited understanding of their legal rights most at risk.

The report concluded by noting that, although exploitation of migrant workers for forced labour may be minor in scale at present, it is important to address the issue, rather than wait until it becomes a more extensive and widespread problem in Northern Ireland.

In this and previous sections, the migration of A8 and A2 nationals has been examined in some detail. It is now appropriate to present a brief profile of the key features of recent international migrants in general.

9 Profile of International Migrants

In 2008, the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) commissioned the first large-scale, Northern Ireland-wide research into the experiences of migrant workers in this jurisdiction^{32 33}. The key findings are as follows:

Demographics

- The survey data indicates that *the majority of migrant workers in Northern Ireland are young* – almost half were aged 25 – 34, while a further quarter (23%) were 18 – 24 years-old.
- Increasingly, *whole families are migrating to Northern Ireland*: slightly more than half of those respondents who had children stated that their children lived in Northern Ireland (58%). The majority had a partner, and of those who were in a relationship 90 per cent lived with their partner in Northern Ireland, indicating a very high incidence of family re-unification.
- The decision to move to Northern Ireland was mainly linked to economic motivation, with the *majority indicating they came here to look for a job*, or to take up pre-arranged employment. Other reasons include studying and family re-unification.

³² All data in Section 7 is drawn from: Bell, J., Caughey, A., Hansson, U., Martynowicz, A. and Scully, M. (2009). “... **Easy life, great people, bad weather**”: **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

³³ The project methodology included a survey of over 300 migrant workers; semi-structured interviews with 105 workers and members of their families, and a number of interviews with support organisations and service providers. Two-thirds (66%) of respondents came from the A8 countries, with 60 per cent of this group being Polish. The second largest group were from non-EU countries (18%), followed by other EU nationals (14%) and respondents from A2 countries (2%). The makeup of the sample closely mirrors the estimates produced by NISRA in relation to the composition of the migrant population.

- The survey also found that the majority of migrants who come to Northern Ireland do so *not to escape unemployment in their own country, but rather to improve their income situation or to gain work experience abroad*. Two-thirds (65%) had been employed in their country of origin prior to coming to Northern Ireland, with a further 19 per cent studying just before their arrival here.
- *The majority worked in jobs at lower levels of the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)*. A third (31%) were employed in elementary occupations, and a quarter (23%) employed as process, plant and machine operatives. This compares to 18 per cent employed in elementary occupations in their home country, and only 8 per cent previously employed as process, plant and machine operatives. **This suggests that a significant number of migrant workers in Northern Ireland are 'under-employed'**, i.e. employed below their level of qualifications or experience.

Education

- *Three-quarters (73%) of respondents had either further or higher educational qualifications*, while a further 19 per cent had qualifications equivalent to A-level. Almost a quarter (24%) of those with higher educational qualifications were working in elementary occupations, lending further support to the finding of 'underemployment' noted above.
- A lack of proficiency in English was quoted by interviewees as the main reason they were unable to use their skills and education.

Benefits

- Contrary to popular belief, nearly two-thirds of respondents (61%) did not receive any state benefits, with only 3 per cent receiving housing benefit and Job Seeker's Allowance. Sixteen per cent received Child Benefit.

Experience of Living in Northern Ireland

- A large number of interviewees reported very positive experiences of life in Northern Ireland, both in relation to the general quality of life, as well as their relationships with the wider community. In general, local people were seen as polite, helpful, welcoming, and friendly. A number of interviewees reported that they socialised with people from local communities, and made friends among them as well as among migrant communities.
- However, results of the large-scale survey revealed *some instances of discrimination, with verbal attacks being the most prevalent*. A quarter (25%) of respondents were verbally abused, while a further 22 per cent felt that they were discriminated against at least once since coming to Northern Ireland. Seven per cent were physically assaulted on at least one occasion.

- Respondents noted that young people in the street, or sometimes work colleagues, were the main protagonists regarding verbal harassment.

In brief, the survey found that international migrants were predominately young, well-educated and often under-employed. Increasingly, whole families were moving to Northern Ireland, with work the main motivation. Local people were generally described in very positive terms, although a significant minority reported instances of discrimination or harassment.

As noted earlier, only three EU countries permitted A8 nationals relatively unrestricted access to their labour markets in 2004, namely: the UK, Sweden and Ireland

10 Migration in Ireland

In April 2010, the population of Ireland was estimated to be 4.47 million. The overall small increase of 11,400 on the previous year resulted from the combined effects of strong natural increase and negative net migration.

Fig 10.1 illustrates the components of population growth in Ireland during the period 1987 – 2010. The chart reveals the sudden surge in positive net migration between 2004 – 2007, and the subsequent fall in 2008 – 2010. 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 2010, emigration exceeded immigration by 34,500 persons³⁴.

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. Immigration from the EU12 countries³⁵ has been particularly affected by the economic downturn, sliding from a peak of 52,700 persons in 2007 to 5,800 in 2010.

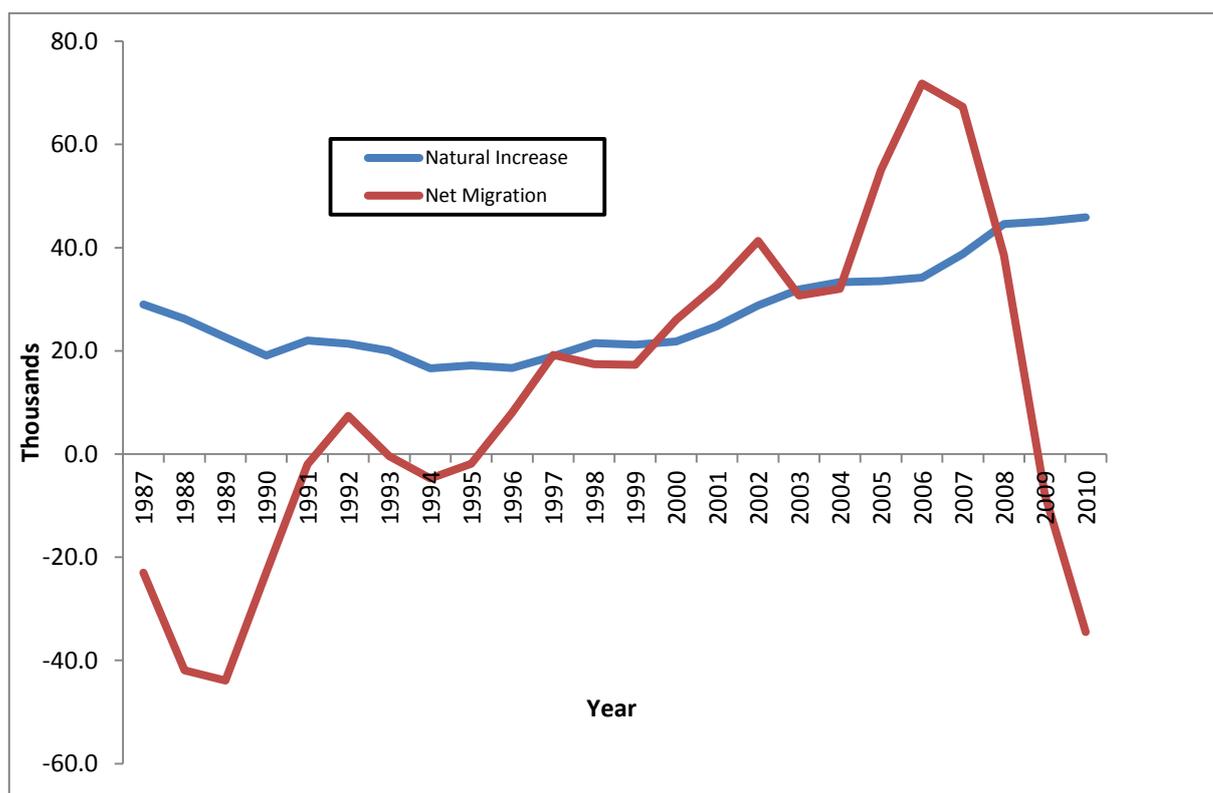
It is also worth noting that the 420,000 non-Irish nationals living in Ireland at the time of the April 2006 Census came from 188 different countries, with the top ten countries accounting for 82 per cent of the total. These were: the UK, Poland, Lithuania, Nigeria, Latvia, US, China, Germany, Philippines and France³⁶.

³⁴ Source: Central Statistics Office Ireland (2010). **Population and Migration Estimates April 2010**. Available at: <http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/documents/population/current/popmig.pdf>

³⁵ The EU12 includes the A8 countries plus Cyprus and Malta, and the A2 countries (Bulgaria and Romania) who joined the EU in 2007.

³⁶ Source: Central Statistics Office Ireland (2008). **Census 2006 - Non-Irish Nationals living in Ireland**. Dublin: CSO. Available at: <http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/documents/population/non-irish/nonirishnationalscomplete.pdf>

Fig 10.1 Natural Increase and Net Migration in Ireland, 1987 - 2010



Source: Central Statistics Office (2010), Table 1.

So far, this paper has reviewed the available data on international migration stocks and flows in Northern Ireland. The data reveals that net migration 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.

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

11 Implications of Migrants on Host Community in Northern Ireland

As noted earlier, almost 110,000 international migrants are estimated to have arrived in Northern Ireland during the nine-year period, July 2000 – June 2009. Although the economic benefits of migration are thought to be generally benign, the unprecedented arrival of migrants in such large numbers, particularly since 2004, has had a considerable impact on the host community in Northern Ireland. This includes the provision of public services, such as health and social care, social housing, and school enrolments. Finally, 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 will now be examined.

11.1 Economic Benefits of Migration: A brief Note

It is beyond the scope of this paper to present a detailed examination of the economic impact of migrant workers in Northern Ireland. Equally, it would be remiss to ignore this important topic completely. In 2008, Oxford Economics were asked by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) to assess the *net economic impact* of migrant workers (i.e. the genuine ‘additional’ impact of migrant workers over and above the economic growth that might have occurred anyway in Northern Ireland in the absence of immigration)³⁷.

For the year 2008, their central estimate for the overall net economic impact of post-2004 migrant workers in Northern Ireland was an additional 40,000 jobs and £1.2bn GVA³⁸. Overall, the authors concluded that migrant workers have made a significant positive contribution to the Northern Ireland economy, filling labour shortages during a ‘golden era’ period (when unemployment was at a historic low).

The controversial topic of *Displacement*, the extent to which migrants are employed at the direct expense of local workers, was also considered. Based upon a survey of 600 local employers, the authors concluded that displacement effects had been relatively modest, largely due to ‘occupational segregation’ – the tendency for migrants to be employed in a very different section of the market to indigenous workers, thereby creating minimal displacement effects³⁹.

Since 2008, however, the economic outlook in Northern Ireland has worsened considerably, with significant job losses and looming cuts in public expenditure. With

³⁷ Source: Department for Employment and Learning (2009). **The Economic, Labour Market and Skills Impacts of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland**. Oxford Economics with FGS McClure Watters and Perceptive Insight Market Research. Belfast: DEL. Available at:

http://www.delni.gov.uk/the_economic_labour_market_and_skills_impact_of_migrant_workers_in_northern_ireland.pdf

³⁸ GVA is defined by the authors as ‘Gross value added, a common measure of the value of economic output, which is primarily made up of wages and profits’ (page ii).

³⁹ An example is the food processing industry which, according to the authors, may have disappeared entirely from Northern Ireland in the absence of migrant workers.

migrants now likely to be competing with indigenous workers for a smaller pool of jobs, the balance of net benefits may change.

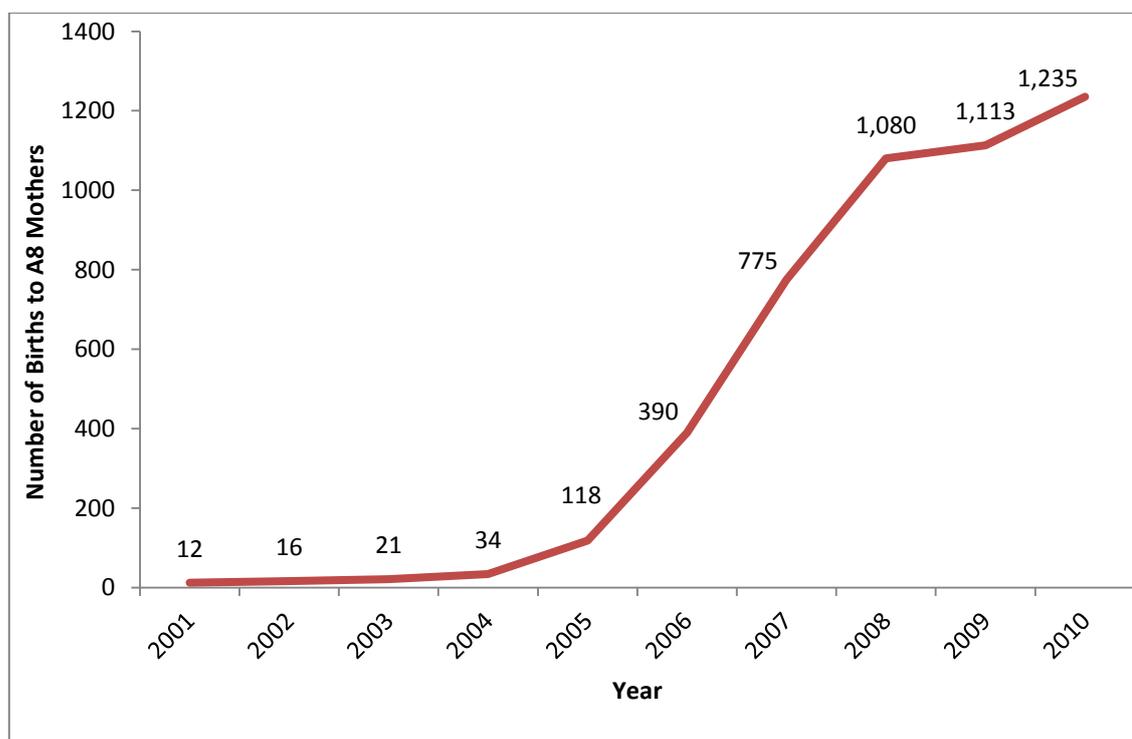
11.2 Health and Social Care

Birth Registration Data

One measure of the impact of migration on Northern Ireland's health and social care system is the number of births to mothers born outside the UK and Ireland. Birth registration data show that the proportion of such births has risen three fold over the last nine years. In 2001, 3 per cent of babies had foreign-born mothers (621 babies out of 21,962) while in 2010 this rose to almost 10 per cent (2,473 babies out of 25,315)⁴⁰.

Fig 11.1 reveals that births to mothers from the eight eastern European countries rose from 12 in 2001 to 1,235 in 2010. During 2010, births to A8 mothers accounted for half (49.9%) of all births to foreign-born mothers in Northern Ireland.

Fig 11.1 Births in Northern Ireland to Mothers born in A8 Countries, 2001 - 2010



Source: NISRA (2011) Births in Northern Ireland, 2010

The overall number of births in Northern Ireland also increased during this period, from 21,962 in 2001 to 25,315 in 2010. However, the number of births registered in 2010 remains below that observed in the mid-1980s, when around 27,000 births were registered each year.

⁴⁰ 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

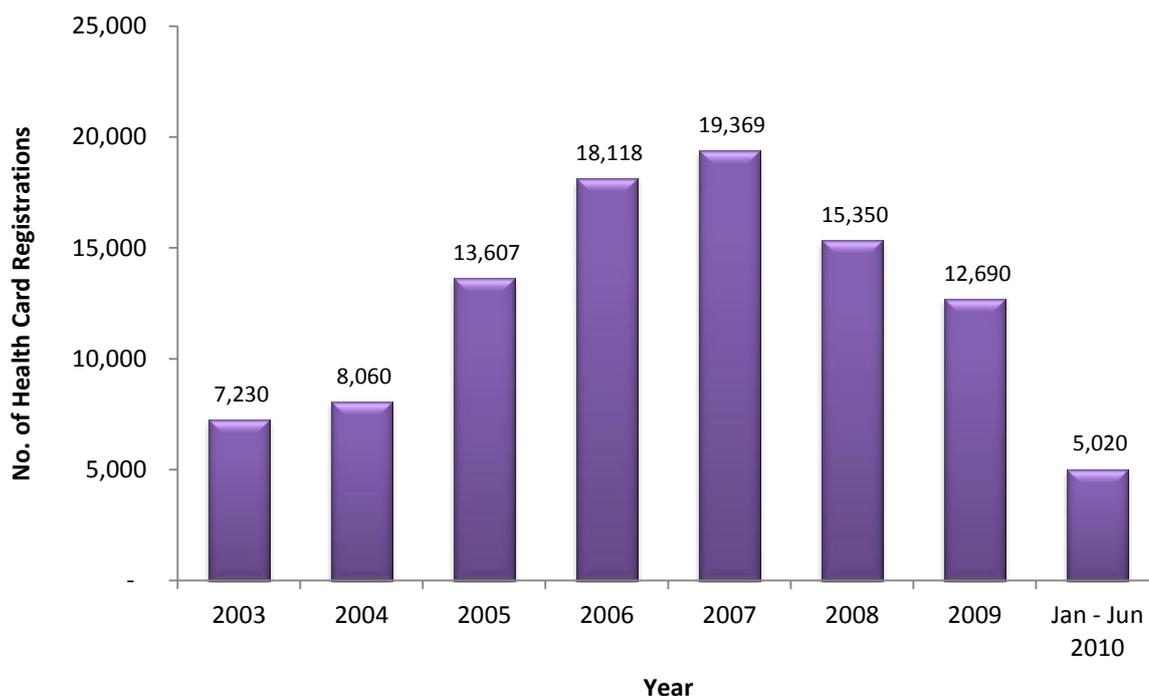
With regard to location, in 2010 the percentage of births to mothers born outside the UK and Ireland ranged from 25 per cent (1 birth in every 4) in Dungannon LGD (236 births), to 3 per cent in Limavady (13 births). Antrim, Armagh, Ballymena, Belfast, Castlereagh, Coleraine and Craigavon LGDs also had relatively high percentages of births (at least 10%) to mothers born outside the UK and Ireland ⁴¹.

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) ⁴² is the most complete source that can currently be used to estimate international migration (both in- and out-) ⁴³. Figure 11.2 shows the number of registrations for the period January 2003 – June 2010.

Fig 11.2 New Health Card Registrations to non-UK nationals in Northern Ireland, 2003 – 2010.



Source: NISRA (2010). Fig 4: New Health Card Registrations from outside UK, 2003 – 2010, p. 26. *Op. Cit.*

⁴¹ Source: NISRA (2011). **Statistical Bulletin – Births in Northern Ireland (2010)**. *Op. Cit.*

⁴² 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.*

⁴³ 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.

In 2009 the total number of new GP registrations in Northern Ireland from outside the UK was 12,700 people. This number has fallen from a peak of 19,400 registrations in 2007. Latest figures for the first six months of 2010 indicate a further decrease.

The fiscal impact of international migration on public services is complex, with statistical data being either absent or inconclusive⁴⁴. Nonetheless, at a time when the population is continuing to grow, Fig 11.2 illustrates the potential for an additional workload on the primary care system in Northern Ireland.

However, the cost incurred when migrants utilise health and social care services is only one part of the equation. Set against this are the benefits accrued from employing overseas doctors and nursing staff in local hospitals and clinics. In oral evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee, Dr Borman of the BMA explained⁴⁵:

“Migrants are carrying their primary qualifications and their expertise to the United Kingdom effectively for free. It costs in the order of ... a quarter of a million pounds to qualify a doctor within the United Kingdom medical school system and clearly, having a doctor who has qualified abroad, bringing those qualifications means a net gain to the United Kingdom.” (p. 37).

A similar case can be made for the employment of foreign-born nurses.

11.3 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. To be eligible for social housing, A8 nationals must register with the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) and be employed in Northern Ireland for one year.

At 31 July 2010, 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)⁴⁶. Approximately 40 per cent of migrant worker tenants 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.

⁴⁴ 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>

⁴⁵ House of Lords (2008). *Op. Cit.*

⁴⁶ 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

In July 2009, nearly two-thirds (61.4%) of tenant households were concentrated in four LGDs⁴⁷, 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 will no longer apply after 30th April 2011, as A8 countries will become full EU members, and their citizens will 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 impact on case loads, with increasing numbers of migrant workers and their families eligible to use their services⁴⁸.

The 2006 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILT) incorporated a number of questions on attitudes towards migration and migrant workers. It was found that 51 per cent of respondents thought that the number of migrant workers was leading to a shortage of local housing⁴⁹. This view may not be entirely without merit. The number of tenancies awarded to migrants is still relatively small, and there are various factors implicated in the shortage of social housing (e.g. high demand and low turnover in NIHE properties). However, as the NIHE have indicated, the imminent removal of restrictions on A8 citizens is likely to create additional pressures on social housing in future.

11.4 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. This has previously been referred to as *English as an Additional Language*.

Primary Pupils

The 2010 School Census shows that 5,020 primary school children (year 1 – 7 pupils) had a language other than English as their first language⁵⁰, around 3 per cent of the

⁴⁷ 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)

⁴⁸ Source: Northern Ireland Housing Executive (2011). *Op. Cit.*

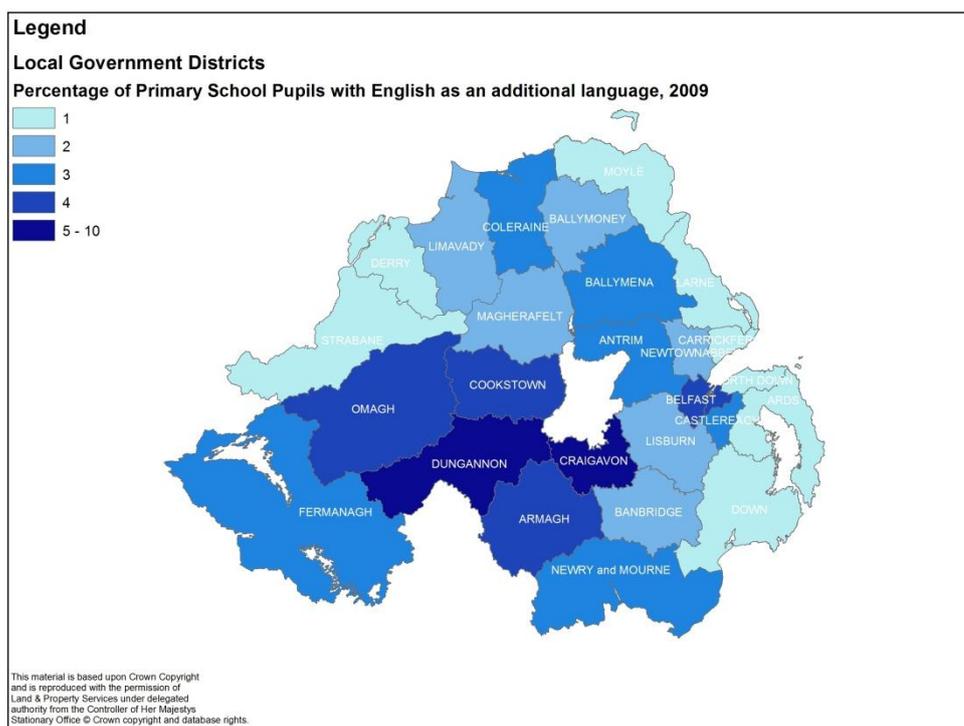
⁴⁹ Source: Gilligan, C. (2008). **Migration and migrant workers in Northern Ireland**. Research Update No. 53. Belfast: ARK. Available at: www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update53.pdf

⁵⁰ 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.

primary school population⁵¹. This figure is a 5 per cent increase on the 4,788 primary school children who had English as an Additional Language in the 2009 School Census. Polish was the most common first language. Of the non-A8 languages, Portuguese and Filipino were the most common.

Map 11.1 displays the number of primary school children in 2009 with English as an additional language, as a percentage of the total primary school population in each LGD⁵².

Map 11.1 Percentage Primary School Pupils with English as Additional Language by LGD, 2009.



Post-primary Pupils

In the 2010 School Census, 2,450 post-primary school children had a language other than English as their “first” language, a 2% increase on the 2,402 post-primary school children recorded in the 2009 School Census⁵³. In 2009, Dungannon again had the largest concentration of post-primary pupils with English as an additional language (6.2% of all post-primary pupils), followed by Cookstown (4.1%) and Craigavon (3.8%).

In brief, this section has shown that the scale of migration since 2004 has contributed somewhat to the growing pressure on public services, including health and education.

⁵¹ Source: DENI (2011). ‘Newcomer’ pupils in Northern Ireland Schools, 2001 – 2010. (English as Additional Language). Available at: http://www.deni.gov.uk/newcomer_time_series_-_suppressed_updated_1011.xls

⁵² Source: NISRA (2010). All International Migration tables (2008 – 09), Table 1.21. Available at: http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/All_Mig0809.xls

⁵³ Source: DENI (2011). ‘Newcomer’ pupils in Northern Ireland Schools, 2001 – 2010. (English as Additional Language). Available at: http://www.deni.gov.uk/newcomer_time_series_-_suppressed_updated_1011.xls

Set against these costs are the benefits of employing highly-skilled professionals, such as doctors and nurses, in hospitals and other settings.

11.5 Social Attitudes and Social Cohesion

In 2006, the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey (NILT) incorporated a series of questions on attitudes towards migration and migrant workers⁵⁴. 44 per cent of respondents thought that migrants were creating a strain on schools, while half (51%) were of the view that the number of migrant workers was leading to a shortage of local housing. A higher proportion (60%) thought that migrants were creating additional pressures for the NHS. In contrast, a majority (54%) thought that migrant workers were good for Northern Ireland, and 83 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 almost half (48%) believed that migrants took jobs away from local people, 80 per cent thought that migrants took jobs that local people don't want.

The job-related responses from the NILT survey found echoes in a more recent survey of migrants (mostly nurses) conducted by their trade union, UNISON (2009)⁵⁵. When describing their experience of racism, a majority of respondents cited comments overheard from colleagues or patients about migrant workers taking local people's jobs.

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 intimidation⁵⁶ or violence⁵⁷. During the year 2009 - 10 there were 1,038 race hate incidents reported in Northern Ireland⁵⁸, 712 of which were subsequently recorded as crimes⁵⁹. Between 2005 - 06 and 2009 - 10, the number of reported race hate incidents rose from 936 to 1,038, an increase of 11 per cent. However, as Gilligan (2009) has pointed out, although the absolute number of race incidents has risen in the past few years, this must be set against the dramatic increase in the number of migrants during the same period. Thus, in relative terms a migrant was less

⁵⁴ Gilligan, C. (2008) **Migration and migrant workers in Northern Ireland**. Research Update 53, ARK. Available at : <http://www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update53.pdf>

⁵⁵ UNISON (2009). **Migrant workers, racism and the recession**. Available at: http://www.unison.org.uk/file/MW_Racism_and_the_Recession_-_final_report%5B1%5D.pdf

⁵⁶ Belfast Telegraph (2011). **Swastikas daubed on the homes of South Belfast migrants. 3 March 2011**. Available at: <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/swastikas-daubed-on-homes-of-south-belfast-migrants-15102474.html>

⁵⁷ In June 2009, around 100 members of the Roma community decided to leave Belfast and return to Romania after two homes were attacked and vandalised in the university area of the city. See Daily Telegraph (2009). **Northern Ireland: further racist attack against Romanians in Belfast**. 18 June 2009. Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/5565531/Northern-Ireland-further-racist-attack-against-Romanians-in-Belfast.html>

⁵⁸ 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.

⁵⁹ For further details, see: Police Service of Northern Ireland (2010). **Annual Statistical Report, Report No. 3, Hate Incidents and Crimes, 1st April 2009 - 31st March 2010**, Central Statistics Branch, Belfast: PSNI. Available at: http://www.psnipolice.uk/3_hate_incidents_and_crimes_final.pdf

likely to be on the receiving end of a racist incident in 2009 - 10 than he was in 2005-06, even though there were more incidents in 2009 - 10.

In summary, this section has outlined some of the more salient impacts of migration on the host population of Northern Ireland. Firstly, there is some evidence that migrant workers have made a positive contribution to the Northern Ireland economy. Secondly, the unexpectedly large number of new residents have created additional pressures on public services; in particular, health, housing and education. Thirdly, 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. Official data, however suggests that, while race hate incidents have increased in recent years, there is no evidence of general conflict between the host and migrant communities.

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-free⁶⁰.

12 Future Trends in International Migration

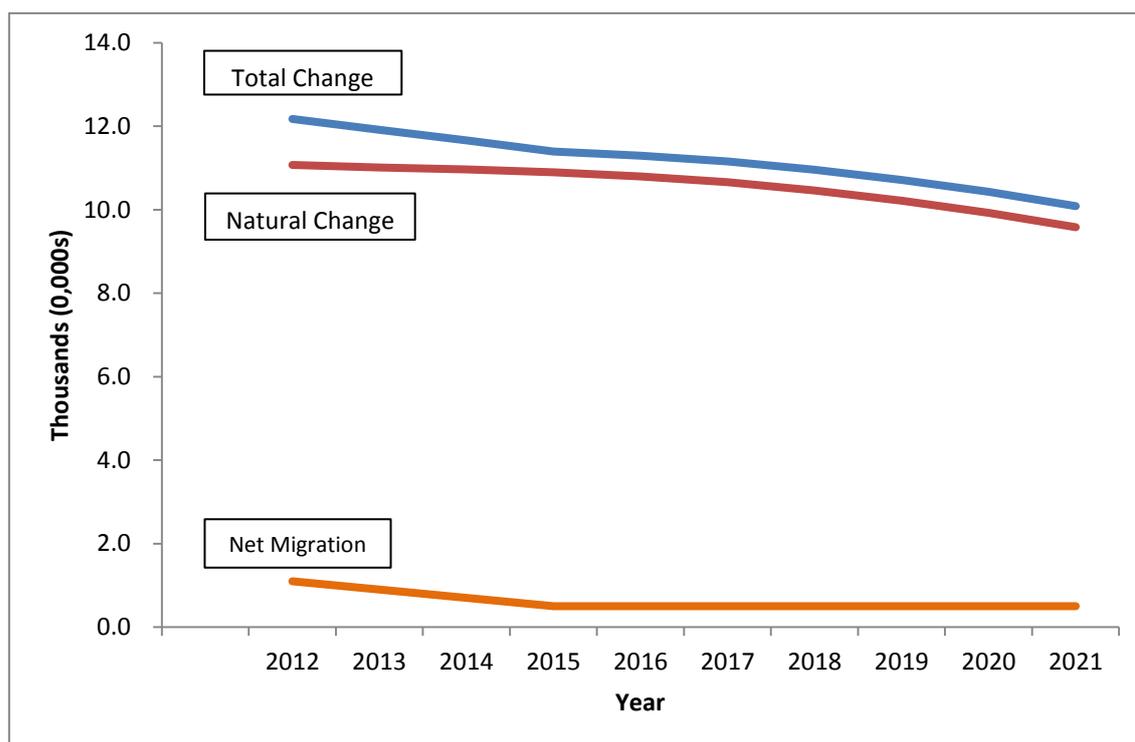
Future trends in international migration are difficult to predict with any degree of accuracy. Factors such as current migrant stocks; future performance of the local economy; performance of the prospective migrants' home economy; Sterling – Euro exchange rates; Government and EU policy on migration; 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. Fig 12.1 presents their projection (2008-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 1,100 per year in 2012 to 500 in 2015, and to continue at this low level until the end of the reference period⁶¹. Overall, the population is projected to rise from 1.827 million in 2012 to 1.927 million by 2021, with net migration accounting for only 5.5 per cent of the increase.

⁶⁰ Gilligan, C. (2009) **Northern Ireland: the capital of 'race hate'?** Available at: <http://www.spiked-online.com/index.php/site/article/7043/>

⁶¹ Source: NISRA (2010). **Components of Change, 2008 to 2058**. Available at: <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/projections/wni08cc.xls>

Fig 12.1 Projected Components of Change in Northern Ireland Population, 2012 - 2021



Oxford Economics, in their recent study of the economic impact of migrants, provide a supplementary source of information. Drawing on a broad range of sources, the authors suggest that the high levels of net migration seen in the past few years ‘... may well be a thing of the past’ (p. 80)^{62 63}. For the population as a whole, their forecast predicts an overall stabilisation in net migration levels during the reference period, with a positive net flow of 1,000 per year up to 2014, followed by a zero balance between 2015 – 2019. This is broadly similar to the NISRA projection.

The assertion 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 flows⁶⁴. In contrast, the latest data from the School Census and birth registration remain strong. This suggests that a proportion of the stock migrant

⁶² Just 7 per cent of Northern Ireland employers in the Oxford Economics survey said they expected future migrant inflows to be as high as those seen in recent years. Source: Department for Employment and Learning (2009). **The Economic, Labour Market and Skills Impacts of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland**. Oxford Economics with FGS McClure Watters and Perceptive Insight Market Research. *Op. Cit.*

⁶³ In the short to medium term, Northern Ireland may become a less attractive destination for migrants because (i) the UK economy is relatively weak compared with other EU countries such as Germany and France; and (ii) the Sterling exchange rate is unfavorable. Further, the end of restrictions on A8 nationals now enables free access to neighboring countries such as Germany.

⁶⁴ National Insurance number registrations, WRS applications and points-based system data are all showing a fall in Northern Ireland registrations. In the first six months of 2010, health card registrations from non-UK nationals also fell, by 11 per cent, compared with the first six months of 2009. According to NISRA, early indications suggest that net migration for 2009 – 2010 will be in the balance, or a small net outward migration. See : NISRA (2010). **Migration Statistics for Northern Ireland (2009)**. *Op. Cit.*

population is developing roots in Northern Ireland, and will gradually become part of the indigenous population.

13 Concluding Remarks

This paper has presented a profile of international migration to Northern Ireland, from the early settlement of German Jews in Belfast during the 1860s, right through to the present day inflow of migrants from eastern Europe. By necessity, the paper has involved a large quantity of statistical information and analysis.

The substantial amount of data, however, tends to obscure the fact that if migration is about anything, it is ultimately about people. This paper has outlined or alluded to some of the arguments relating to the costs and benefits of migration for the people of Northern Ireland. Whatever the merits of these arguments, however, there is no doubt that the inflow of new residents from countries as far apart as Poland, 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 110,000 long-term international migrants have arrived in Northern Ireland 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 even further.

The inflow of significant numbers of people over a relatively short time-frame, 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.

Perhaps the last words in this paper should come from a migrant worker who was interviewed as part of a large-scale survey in 2009⁶⁵.

“It’s an easy life, great people, bad weather. I like it here because I have many friends. [...] before I came I expected more harassment and I’m pleasantly surprised often by how friendly and open people are.” (page 132)

⁶⁵ Source: Bell, J., Caughey, A., Hansson, U., Martynowicz, A. and Scully, M. (2009). “... **Easy life, great people, bad weather**”: **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