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1

Migration and Irish Migration Studies

Ireland in Europe

The scale of the shift in Europe's migration story, driven by the twin engines of industrialisation and urbanisation, is seen most starkly in the growth of its cities in relation to its population. Between 1800 and 1900 London grew by 340 per cent to 6.5 million; Paris by 345 per cent to 2.5 million; Vienna by 490 per cent to about 2 million; and Berlin by a staggering 872 per cent also to about 2 million. In 1800, when Europe's population was about 200 million, 6 million (3 per cent) were living in its 23 major cities with populations over 100,000, but by 1900, when the population had reached 400 million, about 50 million (12 per cent) were living in 135 major cities. By 1914 there were a dozen million-plus conurbations in Europe, with London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, St Petersburg and Istanbul having reached that status first, followed by Glasgow, Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Birmingham, the Ruhr, Hamburg and Moscow (Manning 2005, 169). Dublin and Belfast in 1901 had populations of 290,000 and 350,000, respectively.

A major component of this growth was internal and transnational migration within Europe (always more significant than emigration) which was highly complex according to the diversity of both the receiving and sending areas and of the causes and effects of the migration flows between them as changing cross-currents and counter-currents were driven by economic cycles of boom and bust as well as intermittent crises of famine and war. Towns and cities grew differently, as for example London and Paris, whose growth rate due to in-migration in the second half of the nineteenth century was 16 and 64 per cent respectively. While all towns had service sectors of administration and commerce, they varied greatly in the relative importance of their primary and secondary manufacturing sectors. Predominantly service towns, such as Amiens in France and Cologne in Germany, had low birth rates and grew mainly through in-migration, especially through women going into domestic

service. Textile towns, such as Manchester in England, Roubaix in France and Barmen in Germany, had high birth rates (decreasing after 1870) and high in-migration, mostly from the immediate vicinity, with a very high proportion of women; and coal and steel towns, like Sheffield in England and Duisburg in Germany, had the highest volume of in-migration with high birth rates and a very high proportion of men.

Cultures of migration

The migration process did not affect all parts of a country equally of course. Therefore, as Dudley Baines (1991) has warned, the country may not be the appropriate unit of analysis because of the high degree of regional variation. It is important to bear in mind that some countries, such as Germany after unification in 1871, were particularly large and heterogeneous to the point of developing different ‘cultures’ of migration within them. In all the European countries, even the smallest, some regions produced relatively large numbers of migrants, while others produced relatively few, with sharp contrasts often observable down at the level of neighbouring sub-regions, and even between and within local communities. So as well as seeing the countries of western, central and northern Europe as ‘core’ and the southern and eastern countries as ‘peripheral’ in the nineteenth century, we need to be aware of both the core and periphery areas *within* the countries of western, central and northern Europe. One such example of an internal core–periphery relationship was that between Britain and Ireland, within the United Kingdom.

In the history of the migration streams between these areas lies the explanation for the take-off of mass overseas migration from Europe during the crisis years of the 1840s, when between 200,000 and 300,000 left each year. Not surprisingly, it was the countries of western, central and northern Europe which initially supplied the largest proportion of overseas migrants, especially Britain and Ireland. Of the 50 million or so Europeans who migrated overseas between 1800 and 1914 (40 million to the United States), about 10 million were from Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) and 6 million from Ireland, together accounting for over 30 per cent of the mass emigration. That said, however, overseas migration in the long nineteenth century (1815–1914) was at a rate of only 3 per 1,000 per year and migration *within* remained the dominant aspect of Europe’s migration story (Baines 1991, 22).

It is understandable then that Ireland, with its migration story dominated by emigration, should receive little attention in a survey of European migration from 1650 to the present, notwithstanding the acknowledgement of its importance as a special case (Moch 2003, 120–1). The focus shifts between different areas across four main periods, but not to Ireland. Thus in the first period, between 1650 and 1750 (the ‘pre-industrial’ period), the focus is on the rural

English midlands, Artois in northern France, Tuscany and some parishes south of Stockholm, as well as on the German cities of western and central Europe, London, Amsterdam and the North Sea migration 'system' which linked seasonal workers from northern Germany to the western Netherlands. In the second period, between 1750 and 1815 (the 'rural industrialisation' period), the focus is on rural industrial villages in Normandy, the English midlands and today's Belgium, as well as on the industrial towns of Bordeaux, Rouen and Verviers and the migration system that connected the highlands of France with Spain. In the third period of 'urbanisation', between 1815 and 1914, the focus is on the deindustrialising countryside of Normandy and Languedoc as well as the prosperous agrarian areas of Prussia and northern France, and also the growing cities of Roubaix (France) and Duisburg and Cologne (Germany), and the links between the Polish territories of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and eastern Prussia and western Germany and the United States. Finally, in the fourth period, between 1914 and the present, the focus is on international migration, especially the movement of Belgians, Italians, Portuguese and North Africans into France, and of Poles, wartime forced labourers, post-war Turks and eastern Europeans into Germany.

Multi-level migration studies

Any survey of this kind cannot include every country, let alone region. Having offered the 'big picture' in outline, grounded in these detailed case studies, Moch (2003, 143) points to the need for further case studies and comparative research at the national, regional and local levels. As another leading migration historian points out, 'the more we know about other regions, the more partial our explanations become. But the comparative method, although difficult, is the one that yields the insights' (Baines 1991, 28; see also MacRaild 2000, 42–6). We may see the overall picture, but we can only explain it in terms of detailed and local studies because, like any other highly complex phenomenon, migration cannot be explained adequately in terms of simple patterns or relationships. This is true, for example, of the effect of immigration on a receiving economy where the outcome may be negative or positive, and not necessarily one or the other. As we have noted, regional and local studies can reveal an astonishing diversity of migration experience down to the level of families in the same small community, where the tradition of migration may be common in some and rare in others. Hence there is great value in the reconstruction of individual migration stories. Rarely, however, have individual migrants left full records of their own stories, such as *Mes mémoires* by Jeanne Bouvier, who was born into a peasant family in eastern France near Lyon in 1865, moved to Paris as a domestic servant, became a skilled dressmaker and found, when she returned to her home village in the 1890s, that she could no longer understand the local *patois* (Moch 2003, 102–3).

Through tracing such individual migration stories we may discover the network of connections between the poor uplands that exported people and the fertile plains of crowded villages, between the growing towns and their hinterlands, and between the towns and the great, labour-hungry metropolitan centres and the developing economies that lay beyond them overseas (Hoerder and Moch 1996, 3). This is not to suggest that the ‘big picture’ of the macro-level is nothing more than the sum of all activity at the micro-level, but it is to assert the value of both disaggregating and aggregating migration data ‘so that neither large-scale change nor the migrants themselves are lost’. While our main concern is Ireland’s migration story, we need to be able, as it were, to keep zooming in to the level of the individual migrants and their communities and zooming out to where we see Ireland as a region of Europe, and even further to where we see Europe as a region of a world economic system. The more we modulate or move coherently between the meso-, micro- and macro-levels, the more finely grained and comprehensive our picture of migration.

Defining migration

As we have noted, the definition of migration by Everett S. Lee, quoted as the epigraph to this Part, as movement that involves a semi-permanent or permanent change of residence is too broad for some. Moch, for example, prefers to narrow it to include only change of residence that is ‘beyond a municipal boundary, be it village or town’, while others prefer to exclude seasonal moves (i.e. lasting less than a year) (2003, 18). However broadly or narrowly defined, what distinguishes migration from movement in general is that it results in resettlement, and therefore, putting it at its simplest, we can say that migration is about ‘moving house’. Whether or not this also means ‘moving home’ depends on the attitudes of those involved, which brings us to the core idea of ‘migration’: movement between an ‘old world’ and a ‘new world’. As a leading sociologist of migration has pointed out:

it is migration, albeit of a limited kind, when a child moves from cradle to bed, leaves home for his first day at school or goes courting in the next village ... every such movement implies an element of disassociation from the usual and familiar world, a transition and an involvement with a new environment, a new context of physical space and – most significantly – social relationships.

(Jackson 1969, 1–2)

Given this fundamental definition of a process that involves disassociation, transition and re-association, we are free to impose our own limits on the types of migration with which to concern ourselves. In this book we have

limited ourselves more narrowly than Lee in that we have excluded migration within units smaller than the townland, but more broadly in that we have included seasonal migration.

Types of migration

Recent research into the history of European migration has shown that different types of migration – seasonal, temporary, rural–rural, rural–urban, urban–urban, urban–rural – have long existed alongside emigration from and immigration to Europe. It has also shown how, over time, the balance between the different directions of migration (immigration, internal migration and emigration) has varied greatly. (For further discussion of the typologies of migration, see Appendix I.)

Numbers of migrants

Having distinguished between different types of migrants it is necessary to obtain as accurate data about them as possible, which in the first instance means counting them. As we noted in the Preface, obtaining precise numbers of migrants from the surviving records is difficult if not impossible before the middle of the nineteenth century and even today, as we note in chapter 16, the accuracy of migration statistics can be questionable. Nevertheless, there has been a massive improvement in the collection of demographic data, which can be seen vividly by comparing the records of the Census (c. 1659) and the Poll and Hearth Taxes conserved by Sir William Petty (1623–87), for example, with the standard forms used by the enumerators of the 1841 Census (Gurrin 2002; Pender 2002; Crawford 2003, 21). Ever since the pioneering work of E. G. Ravenstein in the 1880s on Census data (see Appendix II), demographers have been concerned with the statistics of migration as one of the three components of population change, along with fertility and mortality. As Akenson warns in his *Primer*,

Numbers are not much fun. But before one becomes engaged in the enjoyable aspects of chronicling the Irish diaspora (things such as the heroics of individual migrants, the flash of sectarian riots, the machinations of ambitious politicians) one needs to know where within the big picture the individual story is situated.

(1993, 11)

Thanks to a lot of hard work by economic historians and historical geographers with fragmentary materials, we are provided with a big picture of Ireland's population in which to situate migration. In 1607 there were about

750,000 people on the island (compared with one million in 1300). By 1641 there were between 1.5 and 1.6 million, declining to 1.3 million in 1652, and rising again to 1.97 million in 1687 (Cullen 1975; Connolly 2007, 405). By 1712 there were between 2 and 2.3 million, rising to between 4.2 and 4.6 million in 1791. By 1821, the year of the first major, modern Census, there were 6.8 million, rising to 8.2 million in 1841, and then falling to 4.5 million in 1901, 4.4 million in 1911 and 4.2 million in 1926 (Houston 1992; Kennedy and Clarkson 1993, 160; Crawford 2003, 13–15). In the Census years of 2001 and 2002, the populations of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland were 1.7 and 3.9 million respectively, a total of 5.6 million. In 2006 the population of the Republic of Ireland was 4.2 million (Fahey 2007, 14).

Emergence of Irish migration studies

So great has been the growth of interest in migration over the last 20 years that it has resulted in the emergence of a new academic field of study, distinct from demography (population studies), which is concerned with fertility and mortality as well as migration (Brettell and Hollifield 2000, 27–42). Such has been the volume and quality of research devoted to the theme of migration by scholars in long-established disciplines, including history, geography, politics, economics, sociology, anthropology and literary and art criticism, that we now have a ‘turbulent’ body of theory, consisting of a number of theoretical frameworks, by which we may better understand the whole phenomenon of migration (Hammar 1997; Castles and Miller 1998; Massey 1998; Papastergiadis 1999; Brettell and Hollifield 2000). The discipline is now known broadly as migration studies and includes the rather more specialised settlement, integration and diaspora studies. The *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* was founded in the late 1990s. It is concerned mainly with exploring five basic questions: Why does migration occur? Who migrates? What are the patterns of ‘old worlds’ and ‘new worlds’ and of the flows between them? What are the effects of migration on the ‘old world’? What are the effects of migration on the ‘new world’? (White and Woods 1980, 1; Guinness 2002, 1). The already vast and growing literature of global migration studies has been surveyed by Cohen (1997), Hoerder (2002), Bade (2003), Manning (2005) and others.

As mentioned in the Preface, there is now a well-developed historiography into which *Migration in Irish History* can be fitted. At the global level there is *Migration in World History* (Manning 2005) and also *World Migrations in the Second Millennium* (Hoerder 2002), *Global Diasporas: an Introduction* (Cohen, R. 1997), *Migration, Migration History, History* (Lucassen and Lucassen 1999), *Migration in History: Human Migration in Comparative Perspective* (Rodriguez and Grafton 2007; see also Olson 2003; Hatton and Williamson 2005). At the European level there is *Migration in European History* (Bade 2003) and also

Moving Europeans: Migration in Western Europe since 1650 (Moch 1992; 2003) and the *Encyclopaedia of European Migration: from 1600 to the present* (Bade et al. 2007; see also Emmer and Mörner 1992, 1–11). At the national level, with a UK focus, there is *Britannia's Children: Emigration from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland since 1600* (Richards 2004); and, with an all-Ireland focus, *Irish Emigration 1801–1921* (Fitzpatrick 1984), *Irish Emigration since 1921* (Delaney 2002), *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer* (Akenson 1993) and *The Irish Diaspora* (Bielenberg 2000). In recent years, within migration studies generally, 'diasporic' and 'transnational' approaches have been highly productive, much thought having been given in particular by Patrick O'Sullivan and Kevin Kenny to future directions in Irish migration and diaspora studies, about which there is currently lively debate (Akenson 1993; Vertovec and Cohen 1999; Kenny 2003ab; O'Sullivan 2003; Delaney, Kenny and MacRaild 2006).

The emergence of Irish migration studies was marked by the publication of the six-volume series *The Irish World-Wide* (O'Sullivan 1992–7) and *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer* (Akenson 1993), and also by the launch in 1997 of the on-line Irish Diaspora Studies Discussion List, moderated by Patrick O'Sullivan. Subsequent surveys include those by Cullen (1994), Delaney (2000), Bielenberg (2000), Gray (2002b; 2004), Hickman (2002; 2005), Walter et al. (2002), Mac Éinrí and Lambkin (2002), O'Sullivan (2003), Kenny (2003ab), and Delaney, Kenny and MacRaild (2006). We refer readers with further interest in the emergence of the multidisciplinary analytical framework of Irish migration studies to Appendix II.

To sum up our central concern here with migration in Irish history, we return to the related ideas of 'home' and 'homelessness': the relationship between those who feel themselves to be 'at home' and 'settled', and those who feel themselves to be 'homeless', either as 'pilgrims' seeking arrival in a 'new world', or as 'exiles' seeking return to an 'old world'. A powerful image of this relationship is that of the walled town or city, and Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) provides us with a paradigm illustration of how migration works in its picture of arrivals at the Celestial City:

When he [Ignorance] was come up to the gate, he looked up to the writing that was above, and then began to knock, supposing that entrance would have been quickly administered to him; but he was asked by the men that looked over the top of the gate, Whence came you? and what would you have? ... Then they asked him for his certificate, that they might go and show it to the King. So he fumbled in his bosom for one, and found none. Then said they, Have you none? But the man answered never a word. So they told the King, but He would not come down to see him, but commanded the two shining ones, that conducted Christian and Hopeful to

the City, to go out, and take Ignorance, and bind him hand and foot, and have him away.

On arrival, pilgrims read the inscription written in letters of gold over the city gates: 'Blessed Are They That Do His Commandments, That They May Have Right To The Tree Of Life, And May Enter Through The Gates Into The City'. They request admission by knocking, and the gatekeepers respond by demanding that they produce the necessary 'certificate' as proof of conformity to the City's 'commandments' and eligibility to enter (for the frontispiece of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, see Chadwick 1995, 217; compare also the illustration of 'The Departure of Sir Henry Sidney from Dublin Castle' by John Derricke 1581, with the heads of executed Irish rebels shown above the entrance between the towers of the gatehouse, Quinn 1985, Plate VI).

As we mentioned in the Preface, a concern in every community, whether at the level of the family, townland, parish, town, city, region or nation, has been to decide what, if anything, the 'family' should write over its 'gates'; what 'commandments' or laws and regulations it should bind its members by; what restrictions it should place on their access to its 'tree of life' or resources; who its 'gatekeepers' and 'king' should be; and what kind of 'certificate', if any, it should require of migrants that arrive seeking sanctuary, residence and full citizenship.

The religious idea of transmigration to an otherworld is not possible without some grounding in the migration of this world. Thus, in picturing how admission is regulated through the gates of the Heavenly City, writers have inevitably been influenced by the 'cities' of their day (McDannell and Lang 1988, 73–6, 117–18, 189–93). We know, for instance, how migration was regulated by Columba's community on Iona in the eighth century and by Bunyan's Bedford in the seventeenth century (Lambkin 2007b; Farrar 1926; see also Clark and Souden 1987; Barry 1990; Borsay and Proudfoot 2002, 198). We also know how migration was regulated by the walled towns of Ireland:

Undesirable aliens, beggars, vagabonds or people suffering from diseases such as leprosy could easily be turned back at the gates, as could those who were not residents. This may have led to the development of the many 'Irishtowns' which appeared particularly in the seventeenth century outside gates, for example at Clonmel's West Gate and Athlone's Dublin Gate.

(Thomas 1992, 131)

In chapter 10 we refer to the gates of Cork city being shut in 1847 during the Great Famine against the arrival of the starving from the countryside. Although the walls of Ireland's towns were largely removed or allowed to fall into disrepair

in the eighteenth century, they were replaced by new barriers, the latest of which are to be seen operating most clearly perhaps at our airports in International Arrivals. As well as physical barriers, such as those across the car parks of Ireland that bar entry to the caravans of Travellers, there are the less easily detectable mental barriers, which both settled communities and migrants erect in order to try to manage, or cope with, migration.

The walled town or city, with its citadel or fortress, remains a dominant image in thinking about migration, as when the European Union, in its efforts to keep non-EU goods, businesses and nationals out of its 27 member states, is referred to as 'Fortress Europe' (Loshitzky 2006). It was reported in 2007 that at least 11,521 people had died since 1988 along Europe's frontiers, among them 4,134 at sea. In the case of Ireland we need only mention Derry's walls and the role of the siege of Derry in Ulster Protestant mythology. The injunction 'to close the gates and man the walls' is often seen as 'emblematic of a closed ideological system, incapable of responding to a changing world' (MacBride 1997, 81). The distinction between communities that are 'open' and 'closed' is widely applicable, even at the level of the parish (Wrightson 1982, 171–3). We should not, however, let the 'closed' image of the walled community under siege obscure the fact that normally the gates are open, permitting migration in and out.

As well as in and out, there is also movement within the walled town, making up the three main directions of migration: immigration (including return migration), internal migration and emigration. Given the archetypal importance of St Columba in the history of Irish migration, we may reflect that the three patron saints of Ireland – Patrick, Brigid and Columba – usefully symbolise the three directions: Patrick the immigrant, arriving from Britain and making at least one return visit; Brigid (also called 'Mary of the Irish') the internal migrant, whose traditional life portrays her as a wanderer (*seachrán*) visiting virtually every part of the island; and Columba the emigrant, who left for Britain and made several return visits. The migration stories of all three follow the same linear, three-stage pattern of leaving, crossing and arriving, made circular in reverse by return. The outcome of the migration of all three can be characterised as skilful modulation between segregation and integration: the establishment of networks of monastic churches which were both separate from and well integrated into the secular life of Ireland and Britain, and in continental Europe, in what was called *comúaim n-eclasa fri túaith*, 'the sewing together of Church and State' (McCone 1990, 83). Having commended the value of 'putting migration into Irish history' and traced the emergence of Irish migration studies, in the next three chapters we look in more detail at migration as a three-stage, three-directional and three-outcome process.

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