

## Recent Anglo-Irish Migration — The Evidence of the British Labour Force Surveys

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*Précis:* This paper uses unpublished data from the British Labour Force Surveys of 1973, 1975 and 1977 to shed some light on recent Anglo-Irish Migration. The focus throughout is on the migration of Irish-born persons to and from Britain. A comparison of the results of the British Census of Population 1971 and the Labour Force Survey of 1977 suggests net emigration of some 71,000 Irish-born persons from Britain during this interval. The age structure of this emigrant stream is compared with that revealed for immigrants to Ireland by the 1979 Irish Census. Notwithstanding this net outflow of Irish-born from Britain, the Labour Force Surveys suggest that significant numbers of young persons still emigrate from Ireland to Britain. The paper also attempts to establish the importance of the recession in the British economy as a factor inducing the return migration of a significant number of Irish-born persons from Britain.

### I INTRODUCTION

This paper uses unpublished results from the British Labour Force Surveys<sup>1</sup> of 1973, 1975 and 1977 to interpret the pattern of recent Anglo-Irish migration. In particular it attempts to quantify the extent to which net immigration to Ireland during the decade of the 'seventies may have reflected the return of Irish-born people previously resident in Britain,

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1. See Labour Force Surveys 1973, 1975 and 1977. Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, Series LFS No. 1, HMSO, London.

and to explore reasons for their return. It also attempts to quantify the extent of Irish emigration to Britain during this period, and to give some information on the characteristics of such emigrants.

In assessing the conclusions presented here several points need to be borne in mind. First, the data analysed are survey based. The average sample size in each survey was approximately one in two hundred. This fact needs to be taken into account when interpreting small magnitudes in the tables. The Office of Population Census and Surveys (OPCS) also cautions that, because of geographical clustering of the sample, the resulting estimates of the numbers of immigrants in the population may be subject to relatively large errors. Secondly, the grossed up results of the British Labour Force Surveys refer only to those persons resident in private households.<sup>2</sup> This fact may be particularly important in the case of the Irish in Britain, large numbers of whom are employed in medical and paramedical establishments. An attempt has been made in this paper to calculate the numbers thus excluded and to distribute them appropriately across age and sex bands. However, as the available data do not permit anything more than a fairly crude allocation, the results must obviously be treated with caution. Finally, the subject of this paper is those persons resident in Britain who gave their country of birth as Ireland or the Republic of Ireland.<sup>3</sup> As such, no account can be taken of foreign-born children of Irish-born parents, and an important component of the flow of immigrants to Ireland is, therefore, excluded from this data source (see Hughes and Walsh (1975)).

This paper deals only with the migration of Irish-born people between Ireland and Britain. Therefore it can provide only a partial perspective on Irish migration. None the less, the results presented here suggest that Britain was not only the prime source of immigrants to Ireland during the 'seventies, but also remained an important destination for young Irish emigrants.

## II THE SCALE OF MIGRANT FLOWS

The years 1971-79 were characterised by significant net immigration to Ireland,<sup>4</sup> much of it, if the pattern identified by Hughes and Walsh (1975) in earlier years has persisted, representing return migration of the Irish from Britain. However, it appears to be generally believed, especially in the media, that the experience of net immigration to Ireland during the 1970s implied that emigration from Ireland was insignificant during that period. This view

2. The 1973 and 1975 surveys included institutional dwellers but the results from this category were not included in the grossing up process.

3. In the survey results this category also includes those who simply cited "Ireland" as their place of birth, without specifying which part of Ireland.

4. Census of Population of Ireland 1981, Preliminary Report.

is mistaken. Table 1 reveals significant gross outflows of emigrants from Ireland to Britain in three of the four years during the past decade for which data are presently available.<sup>5</sup>

In interpreting Table 1, several points should be noted. First, the estimate of the number of Irish immigrants to Britain during the year to May 1973 has been calculated as follows: the 1973 LFS recorded 6,993 economically active Irish-born persons who had not been resident in Britain one year prior to the survey data. If such persons displayed the activity rates recorded by the 1971 British Census of Population for Irish-born immigrants, a gross inflow of some 9,380 Irish-born persons to Britain is implied in the year to May 1973.

Table 1: *Anglo-Irish migration flows, 1969-1977*

<i>Period</i>	<i>Irish-born emigrants to Britain</i>	<i>Net immigration to Ireland</i>	<i>Gross immigration to Ireland</i>
31/12/1969 – 10/4/1971	16,400	2,910	24,859 (census, data)
5/72 – 5/73	9,380	12,800	22,180 } implied
5/74 – 5/75	719	19,100	19,800 } from
5/76 – 5/77	7,284	9,000	16,700 } (i) and (ii)

*Sources:*

1971 data: UK Census 1971, Country of Birth Table 5, Hughes and Walsh (1975) Table 1.

1973 data: Unpublished tables DT 4367 (1973) and DT 4465U (1975), UK Labour Force Survey.

1975 data: Unpublished Table DT 4465U, UK Labour Force Survey, 1975.

1977 data: Unpublished Table D 4667, UK Labour Force Survey, 1977.

Census of Population of Ireland, Preliminary Report 1979, CSO, Dublin.

Secondly, the implied gross level of immigration to Ireland has been calculated for years other than 1971 as follows: the Irish Central Statistics Office (CSO) estimates of annual net migration have been taken as datum. The addition to these figures of the British LFS estimates of gross Irish immigration to Britain yields the implied gross migrant inflow to Ireland. The resulting estimates are biased downwards as no information is available on Irish emigration to countries other than the UK during the period. Hughes and Walsh (1975 Table 1) suggest that over 86 per cent of Irish emigrants during the year 1970/71 were bound for the UK. As a rule of thumb it could be assumed that the estimates of gross inflows are biased downwards by a

5. Figures for the period 31/12/69-10/4/71 differ marginally from those in Hughes and Walsh (1975 Table 5). The data presented here refer to Irish-born migrants, while those of Hughes and Walsh refer to migrants whose previous place of residence was Ireland. It is implicitly assumed here that all Irish-born immigrants to Britain come directly from Ireland.

similar margin. While the stagnation of the UK economy during the 'seventies would act to encourage Irish emigrants to head elsewhere, this effect may have been offset to some extent by the increasingly strict immigration laws of major English speaking nations.

Table 1 suggests that Irish emigration does, in fact, appear to have remained quantitatively significant during the period when Ireland was experiencing net immigration. The exceptional year appears to be 1974/75 which marked the trough of the 1973/76 cycle in the UK economy. Interestingly enough, it would appear that during this period the long standing real wage differential in favour of the UK (expressed as a percentage of the real wage in Irish manufacturing) was almost halved (Keenan (1981)), while the UK unemployment rate recorded the most rapid rate of increase of the entire post-war period. The non-agricultural unemployment rate in Ireland also increased significantly during 1974/75, from an average level of 7.9 per cent in 1974 to one of 12.2 per cent a year later. In terms of simple push/pull models, an upsurge in "push" forces coincided with, or was associated with, a significant decline in traditional "pull" factors.

The emergence of net immigration to Ireland during the 'seventies reflects several interesting changes in the gross flows. Further light can be shed on these by considering some additional data from the British census of 1971 in conjunction with some results presented by Hughes (1977).

Table 2 presents a classification of Irish-born residents of Britain in 1971 by their year of entry into that country, and also includes annual estimates of net migration from Ireland. If the procedure employed in Table 1 to derive estimates of the gross inflow of migrants to Ireland is also applied to the data in Table 2 for the years 1966-70,<sup>6</sup> the following gross immigration flows to Ireland are implied:

1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
+725	-4,275	-3,470	+2,695	+13,200

The negative figures for 1967 and 1968 do not mean that there were no gross inflows during those years, rather they indicate that the outflows to places other than Britain exceeded the inflows from such places. The phenomenon of net immigration to Ireland during the 1970s appears, therefore, to have been due to a considerable extent to an increase in the scale of gross inflows to Ireland, rather than to a dramatic decline in the size of gross outflows from Ireland.

6. It is assumed that figures for these years closest to 1971 would not have been significantly affected by mortality.

Table 2: *Irish-born persons resident in Britain 1971*

Year of entry	Male		Female		Total	Net migration from Ireland (see Hughes 1977 Table 3)
	number	(per cent)	number	(per cent)		
Pre-1940	71,695	(23.6)	90,340	(27.3)		
1940 - 44	28,150	( 9.3)	20,915	( 6.3)		
1945 - 49	37,285	(12.3)	45,695	(13.8)		
1950 - 54	44,260	(14.6)	42,520	(12.8)	86,780	178,800
1955	10,745	( 3.6)	10,530	( 3.2)	21,275	47,900
1956	11,860	( 3.9)	11,830	( 3.6)	23,690	41,800
1957	11,985	( 3.9)	12,215	( 3.7)	24,200	53,900
1958	11,245	( 3.7)	12,145	( 3.7)	23,390	39,300
1959	11,815	( 3.9)	12,315	( 3.7)	24,130	37,900
1960	12,955	( 4.3)	13,060	( 3.9)	26,015	42,100
1961	8,935	( 2.9)	9,620	( 2.9)	18,555	20,100
1962	6,160	( 2.0)	6,935	( 2.1)	13,095	10,900
1963	5,875	( 1.9)	6,860	( 2.1)	12,735	13,400
1964	6,170	( 2.0)	7,085	( 2.1)	13,255	19,400
1965	6,525	( 2.2)	7,420	( 2.2)	13,945	20,500
1966	6,830	( 2.2)	7,995	( 2.4)	14,825	14,100
1967	5,160	( 1.1)	6,465	( 1.9)	11,625	15,900
1968	5,085	( 1.7)	6,245	( 1.9)	11,330	14,800
1969	4,920	( 1.6)	5,975	( 1.8)	10,895	8,200
1970	8,235	( 2.1)	8,165	( 2.5)	16,400	3,200

Source: Census 1971 Great Britain Country of Birth Volume, Table 4.

Note: Table 2 excludes persons whose year of entry was unknown.

### III CHARACTERISTICS OF IRISH EMIGRANTS TO BRITAIN DURING THE SEVENTIES

The LFS provides no information on the age structure of Irish immigrants to Britain, nor is it possible to assemble a consistent matrix of characteristics from the separate survey observations. None the less, some interesting characteristics do emerge from the survey results. Table 3 sets out details of Irish-born persons who entered Britain in the year to May 1977.

Males outnumbered females in that year's inflow by a somewhat larger proportion than in Hughes and Walsh's (1975) study of the 1970/71 inflow. Other significant differences also emerge: the proportion of the inflow who were economically active was somewhat higher in the later year. Approximately 94 per cent of the males and 86 per cent of the females described themselves as "economically active", compared to figures of 84 per cent and 57 per cent respectively in the 1970/71 cohort. Over 12 per cent of the male Irish-born emigrants in the period 1976/77 described themselves as "economically active but out of employment" at the survey date. The male

unemployment rate in the UK was just over 7 per cent in the following month. It would appear, therefore, that the unemployment experience of the recent Irish male emigrant to Britain was significantly worse at his destination than that of his indigenous counterpart in the latter part of the 'seventies.

Table 3: *Irish-born persons with addresses outside UK one year prior to May 1977*

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Economically active</i>		<i>Economically inactive</i>
		<i>In employment</i>	<i>Out of employment</i>	
Males	4,229	3,479	515	235
per cent		(82.3)	(12.2)	(5.5)
Females	3,535	3,045	—	490
per cent		(86.1)		(13.9)

Source: Unpublished Table D 4667. UK Labour Force Survey 1977.

The industrial and occupational characteristics of Irish emigrants to the UK have been reviewed elsewhere (Kirwan (1981), Hughes and Walsh (1975)), and the continued dependence of the male emigrant on the construction sector, and of the female emigrant on the miscellaneous services sector, has been noted. However, as the LFS is a sample survey, the amount of disaggregated data which can be extracted about the Irish migrating in a particular year is relatively limited. Considerably more detailed data can be abstracted about all Irish-born persons in Britain at the Survey date, and in the remainder of this paper attention will be focused on this group. However, before doing so, it is interesting to contrast the pattern of Irish migration recorded by the Central Statistics Office (1980) in the 1979 Census of Population of Ireland with that implied by the British Labour Force Survey of 1977 and Census of Population of 1971. In carrying out such an exercise several caveats must be noted. First, the CSO data show that emigrants from Ireland are primarily in the 20-24 age group, while immigrants to Ireland fall predominantly into two age bands, 5-14 and 30-44 years of age. Hughes and Walsh (1975) have shown that the first group consists primarily of foreign-born children of Irish-born parents. As such, these children are not included in the LFS returns of the Irish-born population resident in Britain.

Secondly, in order to carry out such a comparative exercise it is necessary to make some adjustments to the 1977 Labour Force estimates. In their published form they refer only to persons in private households, and exclude those resident in institutional accommodation. The latter are of particular importance given the large numbers of Irish-born persons employed in medical

and nursing services in Britain. Many of these, particularly the nurses, are housed within the institution which employs them. Table 4 gives an indication of the size of the Irish-born institutional population in Britain in 1975. On the assumption that the proportions in this table remained stable over the period 1975-77, it is possible to derive an estimate of the number of Irish-born persons in institutional accommodation at the latter date.

Table 4: *Persons by country of birth and type of household GB 1975*

<i>Country of birth</i>	<i>Type of household</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
United Kingdom	% Private	98.6	98.0
	% Institution	1.4	2.0
Ireland	% Private	96.5	91.6
	% Institution	3.5	8.4

Source: Unpublished Table DT 4520 UK Labour Force Survey 1975.

However, all this procedure yields is an estimate of the Irish-born population excluded from the original LFS estimate – approximately 9,000 males and 27,000 females. If it is desired to calculate net migration figures by age and sex for the Irish-born population of Britain, it is necessary to disaggregate these totals. The only apparent way of doing so is to apply to them the age distribution of the male and female institutional populations recorded in the 1971 British Census of Population.<sup>7</sup> Given the discrepancy between the relative sizes of the institutional sector for UK-born and Irish-born persons, this technique may be inappropriate, especially in the case of females. However, no alternative appears feasible at present. Modifying the original LFS estimate in this way yields the revised LFS<sub>77</sub> vectors in Table 5.

In order to derive the implied volume of net migration it is necessary to compare this revised LFS vector with an estimate of what the Irish-born population recorded in the British 1971 census would have become by 1977 in the absence of net migration. Since the population in question consists of Irish-born persons, mortality is the only factor of interest in deriving such a hypothetical population. The 1971 Irish-born population of Britain has, therefore, been subjected to the British age-specific death rates prevailing during this period in order to yield the Pop<sub>77</sub> vectors of Table 5. The difference between LFS<sub>77</sub> and Pop<sub>77</sub> vectors yields an estimate of the net migration of Irish-born persons to (or from) Britain during the period 1971-77.

7. See United Kingdom Census 1971: *Non Private Households Volume*, Table 6. The published results do not include an age and sex disaggregation of the Irish-born institutional population, providing this only for the total institutional population.

Table 5: *Implied net migration by age and sex of Irish-born from GB 5/71 - 5/77*

Age	Male			Female			Total
	Pop* <sub>77</sub>	LFS** <sub>77</sub>	Mig.	Pop* <sub>77</sub>	LFS** <sub>77</sub>	Mig.	Mig.
0-4		1,927	+ 1,927		1,631	1,631	3,558
5-9	1,503	1,909	+ 406	1,362	3,533	2,171	2,577
10-14	3,202	3,124	- 78	3,125	4,892	1,767	1,689
15-19	5,800	5,047	- 753	5,452	7,128	1,676	923
20-24	11,294	14,494	+ 3,200	12,185	21,967	9,782	12,982
25-29	23,756	26,114	+ 2,358	29,905	29,832	- 73	2,285
30-34	33,907	27,310	- 6,597	39,667	33,158	- 6,509	-13,106
35-39	36,347	29,279	- 7,068	38,051	33,979	- 4,072	-11,140
40-44	36,425	28,714	- 7,711	38,068	31,722	- 6,346	-14,057
45-49	35,301	30,710	- 4,591	37,853	32,518	- 5,335	- 9,926
50-54	34,449	27,650	- 6,799	35,613	26,077	- 9,536	-16,335
55-59	31,665	24,862	- 6,803	33,167	25,956	- 7,211	-14,014
60-64	27,333	23,649	- 3,684	28,263	28,599	363	- 3,321
65+	36,201	28,968	- 7,233	50,516	44,724	- 5,792	-13,025
All ages	317,183	273,757	-43,426	353,227	325,716	-27,484	-70,910

Notes: Pop\*<sub>77</sub> is derived by applying British age specific death rates to the Irish-born population recorded in Britain in the 1971 UK census.

LFS\*\*<sub>77</sub> is a revised estimate of the Irish-born resident in Britain in May-June 77. It includes an estimate of those resident in non-private households (for details see text).

Before comparing the pattern of migration implied by this process with that recorded by the Central Statistics Office in the Census of Population of Ireland 1979, the final conceptual differences between the two sets of results must be stressed. The most obvious of all is that the CSO data refer to a longer period. This is particularly important as CSO (1979) population estimates for inter-censal years suggest heavy net immigration to Ireland during the period April 1977 to April 1979. Furthermore, the CSO data reflect net migration between Ireland and all other destinations, whereas the LFS data analysed here capture only net migration of Irish-born persons between Britain and Ireland. Thus this data set focuses only on a particular component of the total migrant flow into Ireland.

Table 5 suggests net emigration from Britain of 71,000 Irish-born persons over the period 1971-77. In all probability most of these returned to Ireland. The data exclude British- (or foreign) born children of Irish-born parents returning with them. The number thus excluded is not insignificant. Hughes and Walsh (1975), analysing data for the 1970-71 cohort of immigrants to Ireland found approximately 9 foreign-born children aged 0-4 for each Irish-born child of the same age in the immigrant stream. For children aged 5-14,



the comparable ratio was 6 to 1. If these ratios have remained stable over the decade of the 'seventies, then up to 7,500 dependent foreign-born children of Irish-born parents need to be added to the implied level of net migration from Britain to Ireland. The "hybrid" estimate thus produced lies in the range 71-79,000 and compares with the Irish CSO estimate of net immigration to Ireland of 82,300 from all sources during the same period. This would suggest that Britain was the major source of immigrants to Ireland during the 'seventies.

The results presented here accord reasonably well with CSO estimates. The 1979 Irish Census of Population recorded net emigration in the age group 20-29 and zero or net immigration to Ireland in all other age groups. The results of the reconciliation exercise presented here suggest net emigration up to age 29 and net immigration to Ireland thereafter. However, as noted above, the results of the exercise carried out in this paper will be inaccurate for age groups 0-15 owing to the exclusion of foreign-born children of Irish-born migrants. The reconciliation exercise suggests that net emigration from Ireland to Britain is most significant amongst those aged 20-24, though the net outflow of 13,000 is considerably less for 1971-77 than the CSO estimate of 20,500 for 1971-79. The discrepancy between the two estimates may reflect emigration from Ireland to destinations other than Britain. Furthermore, whereas the Central Statistics Office estimates almost equal numbers of males and females, the LFS suggest a significant excess of females in the outflow from Ireland amongst this age group.

The results of the reconciliation exercise yield an age structure of net migration somewhat different from that recorded by the Central Statistics Office, perhaps reflecting the difference in coverage between the two data sets. The CSO data reveal that net immigration to Ireland is greatest amongst those aged 30-44. The LFS data set concurs, but also suggests heavy net immigration from Britain amongst those aged 50-59, and those aged 65+. This is a trifle surprising as the Central Statistics Office records net emigration from Ireland, albeit at a low level, amongst 55-64 year olds. The contrasting conclusions may, in part, reflect an inappropriate distribution of the LFS institutional population, or less plausibly, emigration of elderly Irish-born persons to join sons and daughters now resident in countries other than Britain.

#### IV WHY THE EXODUS?

The significant contraction of the Irish-born population in Britain which occurred over the period 1971-77 reverses the trend of the last fifty years. It is interesting to speculate on the reasons underlying the exodus. In particular, it is worth investigating whether the pattern or the structure of

employment of Irish-born people in Britain was such as to cause them to suffer disproportionately from the recession which affected Britain from 1973 onwards. For example, Hughes and Walsh (1975) found that migrants from Ireland who were working in Britain in 1966 and in 1971 were, in general, less well represented than the total labour force in high status occupations and over represented in low status occupations. However, they found that the difference between the occupational composition of the Irish migrant groups and the total labour force diminished as the migrants' duration of stay in Britain increased. As Table 2 shows, more than three-quarters of the Irish-born population<sup>8</sup> of Britain in 1971 had entered the country at least ten years previously.

The impact of the recession on the employment of the Irish in Britain can be analysed more clearly by conducting a partial shift-share analysis. The employment of Irish-born people in Britain as recorded in the British Census of Population of 1971 is the starting point for such an exercise. This exercise has been conducted at SIC order level, and the results are presented in Table 6. The percentage change in male and female employment in each industry over the period March 1971 to June 1977 in Britain was applied to the figures of Irish-born persons in employment in each industry in 1971. Thus, if the Irish-born had experienced the recession in exactly the same way as the labour force at large, the results of Table 6 would show the consequent changes in employment.

This table reveals that the structure of employment of Irish-born persons in Britain was such that, on balance males would have experienced a marginally smaller percentage decline in employment than the British male labour force as a whole, while Irish-born females would have experienced a considerably greater percentage increase than that of the female labour force as a whole. Thus the effect of the recession on the employment of the Irish in Britain should not have been disproportionately more severe than on the British population as a whole. However, this overall conclusion presumes that there is perfect mobility of labour. It assumes that those displaced in the manufacturing sector, which experienced the greatest contraction, could readily move and find employment in the services sector. The actual changes in employment of the Irish-born, as revealed by the 1977 LFS, do not provide much information on the degree of inter-sectoral mobility given the exclusion of the institutional population. As noted above, the effect of this exclusion falls predominantly on orders XXV and XXVI – precisely the orders where rapid employment growth was required to offset shortfalls elsewhere.

The Irish-born population of Britain in 1971 was somewhat older than the

8. Excluding those who did not state year of entry on the census return in 1971.

Table 6: *Impact of recession on employment of Irish-born in Britain March 1971 – June 1977*

	Industry	Hypothetical* change in employment		Actual change in employment	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
I	Agriculture, fishing, forestry	+67	+236	-1123	+314
II	Mining and quarrying	-350	-10	-1581	-80
III	Food, drink, tobacco	-1172	-1038	-1660	-374
IV	Coal and petroleum products	-114	-44	-71	+168
V	Chemicals and allied industries	-311	-204	-568	-774
VI	Metal manufacturing	-950	-20	-2414	+346
VII	Mechanical engineering	-2769	-1003	-2868	+303
VIII	Instrument engineering	-55	-122	-208	+486
IX	Electrical engineering	-1394	-1803	-4157	-2957
X	Shipbuilding and marine engineering	-95	-15	-867	-100
XI	Vehicles	-4319	-581	-5412	-642
XII	Metal goods nes	-882	-813	-2922	-1997
XIII	Textiles	-627	-684	-1494	-729
XIV	Leather, leather goods and fur	-74	-69	-63	-107
XV	Clothing and footwear	-395	-680	-583	-1452
XVI	Bricks, pottery, glass, cement, etc.,	-790	-101	-729	-610
XVII	Timber, furniture, etc.,	-521	-109	-2424	-350
XVIII	Paper, printing and publishing	-584	-599	-377	-1590
XIX	Other manufacturing industries	-167	-322	-144	-1211
XX	Construction	-1790	+250	-12419	-28
XXI	Gas, electricity and water	-491	+32	-1430	+76
XXII	Transport & communication	-1702	-453	-7525	+120
XXIII	Distributive trades	+1003	+629	-4212	-3599
XXIV	Insurance, banking, finance and business services	+1123	+1192	+1600	-358
XXV	Professional & scientific services	+3064	+11870	-6588	-7564
XXVI	Miscellaneous services	+3965	+10966	-2177	-2870
XXVII	Public administration and defence inadequately described or not stated**	+393	+1662	-6091	-2337
	All industries	-9937	-18167	-68507	-27916
	change 3/71 – 6/77	-3.7	+10.6	-25.4	-16.3
	change total employment GB 3/71 - 6/77			-3.8	+7.8

\* Hypothetical employment levels of Irish-born in Britain in June 1977 calculated by applying sex specific rates of employment change at SIC order level to the 1971 pattern of Irish-born employment in GB.

\*\* "Inadequately described", "not stated" and "workplace outside UK" assumed unchanged.

Sources:

- i) GB Census of Population, Country of Birth Supplementary Tables, Table 17(b) 1971
- ii) Census of Employment GB 1977, Dept. of Employment Gazette, May 1980
- iii) British Labour Statistics Yearbook 1971 Tables 61-63
- iv) Labour Force Survey UK 1977, Unpublished. Table DT 4675

population at large. In interpreting Table 6 allowance must, therefore, be made for the effects of mortality and retirement on levels of employment. If the Irish-born had experienced British age-specific death rates over the period 1971-77 some 22,000 male and 17,000 female deaths would have occurred. Not all of these would have been economically active, however, particularly in the case of females, for whom the overall activity rate in 1977 was 53 per cent. Retirements from the labour force on attaining the age of 65 for males and 60 for females would account for some 6,000 males and 3,500 females. The effects of mortality and retirement may, therefore, not have been insignificant, but cannot account for even half of the contraction of either male or female Irish-born employment over the period 1971-77.

After allowing for the contraction of the Irish-born population of working age and the industry specific effects of the recession identified in Table 6, significant reductions of Irish-born male employment over the period 1971-77 still remain unexplained in, e.g., mining and quarrying, metal manufacturing, electrical engineering, shipbuilding and marine engineering, metal goods n.e.s., textiles, timber and furniture, construction, gas, electricity and water, transport and communication and distributive trades. By far the most significant reductions were in construction, where a fall in Irish-born male employment of 10,000 cannot be attributed to demographic or sectoral influences. It may be noted in passing that Nairn (1982) suggests that the employment of New Commonwealth immigrants in this sector rose significantly during this period, which would suggest that discrimination on racial or ethnic grounds cannot account for the contraction of Irish employment in this sector. A fall of 5,600 in transport and communication remains similarly unexplained. In the case of females, as well, significant contractions in employment remain unexplained after demographic and sectoral influences have been accounted for. Indeed, in metal manufacturing and in mechanical and instrument engineering, where demographic and sectoral factors suggest significant falls in Irish-born female employment, the LFS results suggest exactly the opposite. The tentative conclusion can, therefore, be advanced that labour market pressures within Britain were not the prime factor in triggering return migration of the Irish-born population.

## V CONCLUSIONS

This paper has used data from the 1971 British Census of Population and the 1973, 1975 and 1977 Labour Force Surveys of Great Britain. It revises the estimates of net migration of Irish-born people from Britain contained in an earlier paper (Kirwan, 1981). It is concluded that approximately 71,000 such persons left Britain over the period 1971 to 1977. It would appear that the vast majority of these emigrants were in the age range 30-44. with

significant numbers aged 55-59, and 60-69. Net emigration of Irish-born people from Britain should not obscure the fact that significant numbers of Irish-born people still enter Britain. The majority of those entering appear to be aged 20-24.

The evidence of the Labour Force Surveys suggests that net immigration to Ireland during the 1970s reflects both a reduction in the gross outflow from Ireland and a proportionally larger increase in the gross inflow. None the less, emigration from Ireland to Britain remained significant during the decade. The British Labour Force Survey results present a broadly similar picture of migration to that which has been implied from comparison of the 1971 and 1979 Irish Censuses of Population. Persons tend to leave Ireland in relatively large numbers during their early twenties and to return, at least during the last decade, in their mid- to late-thirties. The hypothesis that recession in the British economy was the most important influence on the emigration of Irish-born persons from Britain is difficult to substantiate unambiguously with the data available. The structure of Irish-born employment in Britain prior to the recession was such that they should have been marginally better insulated than the British labour force as a whole, yet the contraction in their employment was most marked. On balance, the evidence would seem to suggest that they were primarily attracted to a relatively buoyant Irish economy, rather than pushed out of a contracting British one.

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