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Cherry-picking the diaspora

Katy Hayward and Kevin Howard

Large-scale immigration and emigration constitute two of the most visible and dramatic forms of social change. Whether through the arrival of significant numbers of the ‘visibly different’ or the abandonment of once populated areas, migration presents great challenges to the societies affected and their respective political elites. In the 1980s after the hiatus of the 1970s, Irish migration once again resumed its familiar pattern - heading outwards from Ireland. Despite over six decades of independence and over a decade of membership of the European Economic Community (EEC), Irish politicians re-packaged the resumption of emigration not as evidence of national failure but as a consequence of utility-maximising individuals seeking the best return on the sale of their labour in the global marketplace. Older, highly emotive constructions of emigration as exile and concomitant images of the diaspora longing to return to the homeland were discounted. As MacLaughlin has shown, Irish elites sanitised emigration in the 1980s, reconstructing it as economic voluntarism. The aim of this chapter is to show how this notion of voluntarism is undermined and contradicted by the way the state mobilised the emotive discourses of blood and soil to persuade people to return to the homeland.

As the economy began to grow rapidly from the mid-1990s it became apparent that, left to their own rationally-made choices, the Irish abroad might not return in sufficient numbers to meet the demands of the Irish labour market. While it is to be expected that
employment agencies will seek people abroad to fill internal labour shortages, this chapter uncovers the vigour with which the state itself got behind labour recruitment. Figure 1 shows the relative resurgence of the Irish component of the immigrant population in the period mid-1998 to mid-2001. It is this period that makes-up the central focus of this chapter. Our aim is to explore a correlation between the relative resurgence of Irish returnees and the Irish state’s pro-active recruitment policy amongst the Irish diaspora. We show the elasticity and instrumentality in the deployment of notions of ethnic consanguinity to cherry-pick suitable labour from amongst the wider Irish diaspora. We present an analysis of how, through the National Training and Employment Agency (FÁS), the Irish government ran a global, multimillion-pound campaign to persuade people with skills to sell to relocate to Ireland. In particular we focus on efforts at proactive recruitment, namely the ‘Jobs Ireland’ campaign (1998-2002) of FÁS and its presentation in the ethnic Irish media. The Irish government aimed to manage the types of people that were needed to fill the gaps in the labour market. This particular ‘type’ was sought in places as far afield as Newfoundland, Sydney, Britain and South Africa on the principle grounds of enticing ‘our’ people to ‘come home’.

Turning to Ireland’s ‘strategic reserve of Irish professionals abroad’

Fig.1 Irish citizens as a percentage of immigrants, 1991-2004 (source: Central Statistics Office)
A small token of the Irish government’s regret at not being able to provide full employment opportunities for its graduates in the 1980s was the establishment of the International Network for Ireland in 1989. This Network was funded by FÁS and established the High Skills Pool with liaison officers in the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, Denmark, Holland, and Japan. Given the outlook for the Irish economy at the time, the function of the Network – to ‘link up graduates with jobs and business opportunities in Ireland’ – originally had far more symbolic than practical significance. Within a decade, the Irish government was responding to its own myth of the ‘Ryanair generation’ as emigrants through ambition and opportunism (rather than simple necessity) by turning to its expatriates as a potential resource. In 1996, Forbairt (later merged into Enterprise Ireland) developed a programme targeting ‘Irish emigrant communities abroad’ to entice potential entrepeneurs back to Ireland to establish businesses. However, economic growth was so rapid in Ireland that, within two years, the obstacle to further expansion was not lack of enterprise but of labour. FÁS was requested by the Government to formulate a strategy to meet this demand and, as its domestic training programmes were simply unable to satisfy the skills deficit, it sought to target skilled workers abroad and facilitate their relocation to Ireland. Although the target and rationale of the International Network for Ireland (to draw on qualified Irish emigrants as a labour resource) still appealed, a much larger and better-resourced scheme was required given that job vacancies were now plentiful and urgent. The solution proffered was ‘Jobs Ireland’ – FÁS’ flagship programme as it ‘repositioned itself as a proactive player in the recruitment sector’ on the international stage.

The Jobs Ireland programme had strong support from the highest levels, as seen in the fact that it was financially supported by the Government with a grant of IR£4million for 2000-2002. With this backing FÁS was able to develop three core instruments for attracting ‘job ready, skilled and experienced workers to Ireland’ under the Jobs Ireland Programme. First, it launched ‘www.jobsireland.com’, an interactive website for potential employees to view job vacancies in Ireland and to submit their CVs. This website built on the successful model of the ‘Opportunity Ireland’ website (sponsored by Enterprise Ireland in association with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and aimed at ‘attracting IT emigrants back to Ireland’) and broadened it to cover a range of sectors. Linked to this was the creation of a database for the use of Irish employers with job vacancies which included the resumés of those who registered an interest in working in Ireland, either through the website or at a Jobs Ireland
exhibition. Such exhibitions formed the other crucial dimension of Jobs Ireland, namely its ‘overseas awareness and recruitment campaign’ involving roadshows in targeted international cities. Supported by the Jobs Ireland promotional strategy, this campaign worked from the assumption that: ‘There is a major pool of Irish and other people working abroad who might be interested in working in Ireland if they were given more information on Ireland and assistance from bodies such as FÁS.’

The Jobs Ireland campaign

FÁS conceived the Jobs Ireland campaign to attract ‘the overseas labour which our burgeoning economy requires’ as a follow-on to the success of the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) in attracting inward investment from overseas. The campaign was viewed as a crucial competitive advantage for Ireland, giving it ‘the edge’ in competing for ‘that increasingly scarce economic resource: labour’. The campaign began with a focus on recruitment for information technology and construction in 1999. It soon expanded to include such sectors as engineering, financial services, teleservices and tourism and by 2001 it was recruiting for vacancies in retail and healthcare. The Jobs Ireland exhibitions included seminars, information-distribution (booklets, slideshows, and posters) and a variety of promotional stands hosted by different companies. This format replicated that of similar events hosted by different agencies in the late 1990s, such as the ‘Expo Ireland’, ‘High Skills Pool’ and ‘Opportunity 1999/2000’ exhibitions. The Jobs Ireland roadshows began in 1999 with exhibitions in London, Brussels, Cologne and Hamburg. In 2000, the campaign extended in Britain (to include Manchester and Birmingham) and in Europe (to include Hanover and Prague), as well as Newfoundland, the United States and South Africa. In 2001, Australia, New Zealand, Moscow, Bombay, and North America were targeted, as well as additional locations within Britain and the EU. The active Jobs Ireland campaign lasted until early 2002, by which time signals from the Irish economy weakened confidence in the sustainability of its growth and the campaign was deemed to have ‘successfully achieved its objectives’.

[Jobs Ireland aims] to inform Irish people or people of Irish descent of the employment opportunities in Ireland with a view to encouraging them to return to this country.
The publicity strategy for Jobs Ireland centred on targeting media organisations, advertising in the local print and broadcast media, and inviting interested journalists to accompany the roadshows. The targeting of the Irish diaspora is reflected in the particular use of the *Irish Voice* in the United States and *Irish Post* in Britain, where articles regularly appeared (and in some cases repeatedly) both directly and implicitly supporting the Jobs Ireland campaign. The *Irish Post* also did a good job in advertising jobs fairs for Jobs Ireland occurring around the world, as well as across Britain, encouraging a positive response from its readers, and writing warm reviews of the events. Indeed, the *Irish Post* itself (the major media outlet for Irish emigrants in Britain, with weekly circulation figures of around 26,800) took a proactive step to recruit Irish emigrants for jobs in Ireland through a reader service begun in January 2000:

> Interested in returning to live and work in Ireland? Take advantage of our great new service! Fill in the following information and mail it back to us and we will keep you up to date with job opportunities in Ireland.

The focus on the Irish diaspora was also reflected in the choice of advertising locations and methods for Jobs Ireland. For example, the roadshows were publicised in ‘Irish pubs, cultural centres and Irish Associations’, the New York exhibition was held on St. Patrick’s Day in order to take advantage of the media interest, and FÁS booked advertising during broadcasts of the All-Ireland championships in Britain, Europe and the United States. The *Jobs Ireland* magazine, the first issue being published in January 2001, was distributed through all Irish Embassies and Consulates, as well as at the recruitment fairs. The core focus on Irish expatriates is particularly evident in marketing strategies for Jobs Ireland concentrated in Ireland itself. For example, the use, particularly around the time of the Christmas holidays, of poster campaigns at airports and ferry ports and a series of radio and television campaigns ‘aimed at educating both skilled and interested emigrants about the increasing number of job opportunities’. As a recruitment specialist commented on the jobs fair in Dublin in January 2001: ‘The ideal thing is to get people who are back in Ireland visiting and have an emotional attachment to the country’. Publicity for Jobs Ireland in the Irish national media was maintained throughout the year in an effort to rouse ‘home-based family members of such job-seekers’ to encourage them to return. The generation of ‘a huge public awareness in Ireland of the campaign’ also served to encourage potential employers to direct enquiries to FÁS.
Targeting Irish expatriates: ‘Young, gifted and gone!’

The implicit hierarchy in the type of immigrants sought to join the Irish labour force at this time (1998-2002) is reflected in the course taken by the Jobs Ireland campaign. What began as a clear focus on skilled Irish expatriates soon moved to include members of the Irish diaspora (particularly in Britain, but also in Europe and North America), then spread to welcome qualified non-nationals from Britain, EU member-states, east European states (including Russia), and then English-speaking states (including India). The original (although certainly not exclusive) focus on skilled Irish-born workers who emigrated in the 1980s and 1990s is reflected in the way in which job opportunities are presented. For example, a supplement in the *Irish Post* (14 November 1998) on ‘Jobs in Ireland’ is subtitled ‘A Returner’s Guide’. The Jobs Ireland campaign was explicitly described by FÁS in an advertisement in 1999 as a ‘world wide campaign to attract emigrants home’. Nonetheless, it is evident that the Irish blood alone was not qualification enough to be welcomed with open arms. What made the Irish people who had left in the 1980s and 1990s (the so-called ‘Ryanair generation’) so attractive was their ‘skills and experience gained while living abroad’. The target was ‘the maximum number of qualified Irish workers abroad’ and much store was placed on the qualifications of the workers recruited. A spokesperson for Hewlett-Packard, for instance, acknowledged, ‘We know that a lot of people want to come back’ but added that they were, ‘looking for the cream of Irish graduates, preferably with a lot of experience’. There is undoubtedly a degree to which the egos of both parties are being massaged in such messages – ‘Ireland, Europe’s fastest growing economy is looking for bright energetic people like you to fill positions in a wide range of areas’ – but there is a certain element of exclusivity in the target audience of this discourse. Going on these assumptions, government Ministers were unequivocal in their identification of the target audience for Jobs Ireland, whom they were ‘particularly trying to encourage’ to ‘come home’. Minister Noel Dempsey said explicitly that the purpose of the jobs fairs was to ‘attract back many of those who left’. Tánaiste Mary Harney was even more firm in her exhortation to readers of the *Irish Post* (the main newspaper for the Irish diaspora in Britain): ‘There will never be a better time to return to Ireland…I say to people who are thinking about it: Stop thinking about it and make the decision to come home.’
This direct emotional appeal is echoed in the language used in advertisements aimed at potential employees. The following advertisements were displayed in the *Irish Post*, which has an active readership of Irish-born and second- and third-generation Irish men and women. They indicate an assumption that the potential employees for all types of jobs in Ireland – financial control, HGV drivers, healthcare, Information Technology, manufacturing, warehouse staff, etc. – are those who would be returning to their homeland: ‘Your country needs you’, ‘Interested in returning to work in Ireland?’, ‘Returning to Ireland in 1999?’, ‘Returning home?’, ‘Coming Home?’, ‘Ag teacht abhaile?’, ‘Time to go home!!’, ‘Wild Geese, Come Home!’ By early 2000, it was believed that ‘the pool of potential returning emigrants in Britain and America is becoming exhausted’; there was consequently a shift in the emphasis of the Jobs Ireland campaign, moving from Irish expatriates to the wider Irish community abroad.

**Targeting the wider Irish diaspora: ‘ Bringing them all back home’**

Although the reach of the Jobs Ireland roadshows widened internationally in the years 2000 and 2001, the choice of locations to host the events (such as Liverpool, Boston and Sydney) reflect a continuing emphasis on the Irish diaspora as the target audience. As reported in the *Irish Post* in 2000:

> Thousands of first-, second- and third-generation Irish attended [the Jobs Ireland fair in Manchester], eager to grasp the opportunity of returning to live and work in the booming Celtic Tiger economy.

Even in European cities, such as Munich and Berlin, the Jobs Ireland campaign was explicitly ‘focused on the Irish Community living and working there’ and was intended to ‘encourage them to look at the opportunities now available to them in Ireland’. The decision to initiate the Jobs Ireland campaign across the Atlantic (beginning in Newfoundland) encapsulates the instrumentality of appeals to primordial attachments. The rationale is clear: ‘with over 44,000 unfilled vacancies, Ireland must look to its expatriates and suitably qualified EU and Newfoundland citizens’. The symbolic importance of beginning the Northern American campaign in St. Johns was that it was ‘closer to Ireland, both geographically and culturally’ than any other city. It was thus anticipated that ‘Irish employers will find a genuine welcome in this, the home of the “forgotten Irish” who have lived here since the seventeenth century’. The
Newfoundland campaign exemplifies the extent to which certain assumptions about primordial Irishness infused this recruitment drive based on economic and business needs. As Ireland’s visiting Minister for Science and Technology Noel Treacy put it: ‘basically we are talking about our own people here…These are the children whose forefathers [no mothers it seems] left Ireland many, many years ago’. In the publicity of the Jobs Ireland event, for example, Newfoundland was described as ‘the fourth Aran Island’ and it was asserted: ‘Many places claim a cultural affinity with Ireland, but few can do with as much authenticity as Newfoundland’.

The concentration on Irish communities abroad as a resource pool reflects a fundamental belief that members of the Irish diaspora, no matter how far removed in terms of distance and time, will fit in better to life in Ireland than those with no connection to the country. To illustrate this point, there are three indicators of this thinking in the representative biographies in the Jobs Ireland magazine (January 2001): an emphasis on accent, cultural affinity, and a romantic image of Ireland. First, one of the most obvious markers of being a member of the Irish diaspora is an Irish accent. Jobs Ireland features a twenty-seven year old German management team leader who ‘speaks with a thick Irish accent, and looks and sounds like he never left Ireland – whereas in fact he has been here for just under three years’. Presumably, a major reason for the strength of his Irish accent is that his mother is from Dublin. Together these qualify him to be described as ‘more Irish than the Irish themselves’. Secondly, to follow on from the Newfoundland case, a programmer who moved from St Johns to work for the Bank of Ireland says that she has found it easy to settle in Dublin because, ‘The culture is very similar to that in Newfoundland and I never once heard a bad thing about it [Ireland]’. A third way in which members of the Irish diaspora are seen as fitting easily into Ireland is their ‘passion for Ireland’, whether built on personal experience of the place or not. For example, an Australian doctor ‘whose grandfather hails from Ireland’ is quoted as saying that he always wanted to visit Ireland because of ‘the whole myth of the place’. Picture-postcard Ireland, it seems, becomes a reality to these happy immigrants who love their jobs, have settled in well, have no regrets, and would recommend the move to others. Media reports aimed that the Irish in Britain proclaimed the ‘Reality of old dream of returning.’

Appealing to the target audience
There were two dimensions to the Jobs Ireland campaign. The first dimension addressed the personal aspects of such a move (why you are right for Ireland) and the second dealt with the attractiveness of Ireland as a destination (why Ireland is right for you). This section of the chapter considers both of these in turn. First, the personal appeal to potential employees (which again were primarily assumed to have a strong affinity to Ireland) concentrated on emphasising that they would ‘fit in’ to Ireland for both romantic and rational reasons. Romantic notions of ‘coming home’ are constantly reinforced in the publicity surrounding the Jobs Ireland events. For instance, the Chief Executive of Smurfit Media UK attending such an event in London took the opportunity to emphasise the emotional dimension of return migration; ‘We should not lose sight of the fact that these job fairs are not just a commercial enterprise but the fulfilling of a dream for many. It is a wonderful feeling to be going back.’

Barely explicable but powerful emotive reasons for ‘coming home’ were highlighted repeatedly in material aimed at potential employees because this was clearly viewed as a ‘clincher’ for the Jobs Ireland campaign in comparison to other recruitment drives. An example of this was a story in the Jobs Ireland magazine about an Irish-born business analyst who recently moved from Boston to Dublin:

Since his quiet childhood days in the rural parish, he has lived in some of the biggest and densely populated cities in the world’s busiest economic centres. He goes back to Limerick regularly and it would be hard to find a nicer environment in the world, he says, ‘There are not many places like the Galtee mountains’.

A second dimension within the promotional literature emphasised returning to one’s roots to be among family and childhood friends. For instance a 24 year old from Longford in Ireland was described as having ‘spent two years in London…before she got the very inviting opportunity to return to Ireland, where her mum, dad, three brothers, two sisters and a host of friends lived’.

‘Back for good’

The sense of ‘belonging’ and the assurance that the change in Ireland’s economic fortunes is non-reversible are two principles in the Jobs Ireland campaign that were confirmed in the frequently reiterated notion that the return to Ireland should be a
permanent move. Nowhere was this more clearly illustrated than in the slogan of the recruitment drive run by the Construction Industry Federation (‘an industry that is transient by its very nature’) between 1997 and 1999: ‘Back for good’. This is supported by testimonies in *Irish Post* articles aimed at Irish expatriates (Irish men are twice as likely as the rest of the population to work in the construction industry in Britain). For example, a building contractor who had himself come back to Ireland after working in the English midlands is quoted as saying he would be ‘delighted to welcome home’ builders for good: ‘All my ground-workers came back from England and have stayed’. The presentation of a move back to Ireland as a decision to settle contrasts with the image of Irish expatriates’ experiences abroad (no matter how long for) being essentially career-building/educational ventures. Most of the biographies of the Irish diaspora in the *Jobs Ireland* (January 2001) magazine affirmed Ireland as the ideal final destination: ‘I will be here for good now, Ireland is a great place to live’; ‘the home bird has come back to roost for the foreseeable future and is very content with her lot’.

**‘Your chance of a new life in Ireland’**

It is definitely worth coming over. …Ireland has one of the fastest growing economies in Europe, so there are lots of opportunities here and its [sic] great fun.

The presentation of Ireland as a land of opportunity is encapsulated in advertisements in the *Irish Post*. Catchphrases for the umbrella campaigns such as Jobs Ireland (‘Your chance of a new life in Ireland’; ‘Ireland: the right place to build your career’, ‘Your future in Ireland’) were echoed in the slogans of advertisements from individual companies, such as ‘Opportunities in Ireland!!!’ and ‘Yes Ireland is booming and we need you!’ The images used in correspondence with this discourse are clear and powerful. For example, the *Irish Post* supplement on the Expo Ireland exhibition contained two different advertisements featuring a stylised map of Ireland with slogans stamped across it; one read ‘Employers waiting’ and the other ‘Jobs in Ireland’. The opening speeches made by Government ministers at Jobs Ireland exhibitions promoted the theme of a Celtic Tiger Ireland, barely recognisable from just a few years before. This new Ireland was ‘one of Europe’s most dynamic countries’ which is ‘pushing out the boundaries on e-business’, ‘a tourist magnet’ with ‘the best job-creation record of
any OECD country’. Ireland, readers were assured, has now become ‘an attractive place to which to come to live and work’ where they would be offered ‘serious earning potential and a quality of life that has made Ireland famous the world over’.

Most of the publicity for the Jobs Ireland campaign would not have looked out of place in a Bord Fáilte publication. Quality of life in Ireland, according to the publicity in the Jobs Ireland programme, centres on unquantifiable factors that make Ireland a tourist attraction in the first place. For example, the stereotype of a laid-back lifestyle was reinforced through testimonies that ‘there is zero stress. The work is important, but the main thing about Ireland is the social side. There are less stress levels here, whereas in Britain, the job dictates life’. One of the clearest discrepancies between the image of Ireland being presented and the actual environment people were being recruited to work in lay in the fact that the vast majority of the exhibition stands at the Jobs Ireland roadshows were taken by large corporations based in Dublin and there was little representation of companies or agencies based outside Dublin. Yet idealised images of rural Ireland were routinely used by Jobs Ireland to tug on the heartstrings of Irish graduates abroad. Three excellent examples of this were to be found in the first issue of the Jobs Ireland magazine alone. On the first page, there was a FÁS advertisement headed ‘Your next opportunity is in Ireland’, beside which were photographs of Government Buildings in Dublin, a dolmen presumably in the west of Ireland, and a nondescript dilapidated farm house at the foot of a hill. Further on in the magazine (page 7) was a quotation from the chairman of the Industrial Development Authority proclaiming that; ‘Ireland is experiencing the Golden Age. Changes in both the Irish Economy and Society have wholly changed from insular to dynamic’. This quotation was placed over a full-page photograph of a rugged Irish coastline bathed in golden sunlight, the only signs of life being a few desolate farmsteads and a scattering of sheep. Romantic imagery is common in publications aimed at diasporic groups. Nonetheless, the fact that no attempt is made to match the message with more apt contemporary images of Ireland indicates that the Jobs Ireland campaign not only used the myth of the Emerald Isle to sell the Celtic Tiger but actively disregarded the discrepancy between myth and reality.

‘Your country needs you’
A final core tactic employed in the Jobs Ireland campaign was to present the recruitment drive as an urgent and vital attempt to sustain the Irish economic boom. In this way, the Jobs Ireland campaign was not merely putting attractive opportunities to the qualified Irish workers abroad, it was simultaneously putting the onus on them to ensure the future wellbeing of their homeland. The keenness of this message escalated in the year early 1999 to early 2000. For example, the Opportunity Ireland campaign in Spring 1999 concentrated on the Information Technology sector, which was presented as the lynchpin of the Celtic Tiger: ‘The Skills shortage in high-tech industries in Ireland has become so acute that the Government fears that it may be a serious threat to the Celtic Tiger’. The Jobs Ireland campaign expanded the recruitment focus, and with it the weight of responsibility: ‘The Irish economy could be a victim of its own success unless enough skilled workers are found to cope with the labour shortages’. By early 2000, the editorial in the Irish Post sounded a warning that if people did not go home to fill the Tiger’s vacancies then the Tiger may be threatened thereby possibly removing any future chance of return. The editorial also suggested that not only did future economic growth in Ireland depend a positive response to this ‘great opportunity for second and third-generation Irish people to live and work in Ireland’, so it also offered ‘the best chance yet’ for these generations to enable their parents as well as their own children to ‘return home’.

Conclusions

The style and tone deployed in attempts to attract workers to feed the Celtic Tiger economy depended very much on the potential respondents. Recruitment amongst the non-Irish focussed on economic rationality: Ireland was an arena of opportunity for people with the right kind of labour to sell. In this way, non-national immigration into Ireland was constructed in precisely the same way as Irish emigration out of Ireland had been in the 1980s. On the other hand, recruitment amongst the Irish diaspora, particularly amongst the very people who had left in the 1980s, was a qualitative appeal to ethnic consanguinity. Put simply, the time of exile was over and dream of returning home could at last be realised. At times this went even further: the exhortation to ‘think with the blood’ and return to Ireland was a patriotic duty. The appeal to ethnic belonging contrasts sharply with the construction of migration as a rational choice, thus highlighting the flexibility and indeed instrumentality of this kind of emotive discourse.
The recruitment campaign for Jobs Ireland centred on the selective targeting of a particular type of immigrants and used particular images of Ireland to attract them. Although it was clear that they were being invited to contribute to the Irish economy, it was their Irish identity rather than their skills that made certain workers targets for the campaign. This was borne out in the use of traditional, idealised, and patriotic propaganda about Ireland as part of efforts to project a new vibrant and dynamic country. The fact that Ireland’s economic success was seized upon as an opportunity to invite emigrants to return is one thing. The targeting of members of the Irish diaspora—however far removed—to fill gaps in the jobs market is quite another. The campaign to recruit skilled Irish professionals abroad indicates a desire to control immigration and thus to control the extent and nature of social change that it would engender. This desire to preserve certain cultural ideals whilst cultivating economic growth is not only a key to the Irish government’s approach to return migration. The government’s response to the challenge of immigration as a whole may be said to centre on a similar endeavour to juggle national ideals and economic pragmatism.

1 The authors wish to acknowledge the assistance (particularly in the provision of sources) of individual members of FÁS who were directly involved in the Jobs Ireland programme, especially Dermot O’Byrne. However, the interpretation of those sources contained in this chapter is entirely and solely that of the authors.


4 Ibid.


6 This so-called ‘myth of voluntarism’ is encapsulated in the interview given by Brian Lenihan, as Ireland’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, given to Newsweek magazine (13 October 1987) while visiting the USA: ‘I don't look on the type of emigration we have today as being of the same category as the terrible emigration of the last century… [Emigration] is not a defeat because the Irish hone their skills and talents in another environment; the more they develop a work ethic in a country like Germany or the US, the better it can be applied in Ireland when they return. After all, we can't all live on a small island.’

7 Government appeals for investment from Irish business people abroad were high-profile and continued after the start of the Celtic Tiger, helping to feed the image of a new, economically dynamic Ireland. For example, the Tánaiste Mary Harney launched the IDA-sponsored Business Influence magazine in London, which celebrated the ‘growing number of successful Irish people’ and publicised ‘the numerous investment opportunities in Ireland’ (‘Tánaiste to praise influential Irish’, Irish Post, 27 February 1999).


The fact that this is more than twice that given to the Dion fund to support Irish community groups in Britain itself shows the preference given to one particular type of expatriate in Government policy towards the Irish diaspora. Extract source: ‘Short history of the Jobs Ireland Programme 2000-2002’ (FÁS).

Press release on Jobs Ireland programme, 1999 (Source: FÁS).

The ‘Opportunity Ireland’ campaign of 1999 sought to ‘bring back 2,000 highly qualified graduates to Ireland’ and was specifically: ‘aimed at the ‘brain drain’ generation of 1980s graduates who left Ireland because of lack of opportunity and who are now thinking of returning home for either personal or professional reasons’. (‘Young, gifted and gone!’, Irish Post, 20 March 1999)

These exhibitions were modelled on the High Skills Pool jobs fairs which were held by the International Network for Ireland in Dublin at Christmas time. Quotation from press release on Jobs Ireland campaign in Newfoundland (Source: FÁS).


Extract from correspondence with D. O’Byrne, FÁS (July 2005).


For instance, the articles anticipating the job fairs in Birmingham (‘Jobs fair set for Birmingham’, 14 October 2000) and Liverpool 60,000 jobs on offer’ (3 February 2001) and the supplements on Expo Ireland, September 1999 (Irish Post, 12 June 1999) and, in January 2000, the seven-page feature on the forthcoming Opportunity 2000 event in Dublin.

Visitors to Expo who are interesting in working and living in the Republic are encouraged to bring their CVs with them as there will be many vacancies (‘Where to get help’, Irish Post, 24 April 1999); ‘Smurfit Media, the publishers of the Irish Post, is joining forces with FAS to encourage Irish people here [in Britain] to return home’ (Editorial, Irish Post, 12 February 2000).


Advertisement, Irish Post, 8 January 2000.


‘Calling emigrants home’, Irish Post, 14 November 1998.


Extract from correspondence with D. O’Byrne, FÁS (July 2005).

Headline of article on Opportunity Ireland, Irish Post, 20 March 1999.

This preference-weighting is reflected in choice of fourteen employees carefully-selected for inclusion in the first issue of the Jobs Ireland magazine (January 2001). Of these five were Irish-born recent returnees, three were members of the Irish diaspora (two second-generation and one third-generation), three were European, two were Indian, and one was Canadian (Newfoundland).


Ibid.

Home offers to graduates’, Irish Post, 24 April 1999.


Quoted in ‘Come home: we need you’, Irish Post, 16 December 2000.


Advertisement for St. James’ Hospital, Irish Post, 29 August 1998.
51 Jobs Ireland German campaign begins’ press release, June 1999 (Source: FÁS).
52 Statement by the Public Affairs Manager of FÁS, quoted in press release on Jobs Ireland campaign in Newfoundland (Source: FÁS).
53 Extract from press release on Jobs Ireland campaign in Newfoundland (Source: FÁS).
54 Extract from press release on Jobs Ireland campaign in Newfoundland (Source: FÁS).
55 Noel Treacy *Irish Post* i29 April 2000
57 An article in the *Irish Post* (‘Irish accent is good for business’, 28 September 1998) captures the discourse of a complete about-turn in the experience of Irish people in Britain, from the 1980s when an Irish accent was seen as a liability to the 1990s to it being seen as ‘good for business’.
59 Ibid.
60 ‘MM, Banking in Ireland’, *Jobs Ireland* (2001:6)
62 ‘TM, Nursing and medical healthcare’, *Jobs Ireland* (2001:15)
63 ‘I love the job. If someone offered me a job with a higher salary, I wouldn’t leave here” he smiles.’ (‘PK, Teleservices’, *Jobs Ireland* [2001:4])
64 ‘I like this job very much, it is perfect. Ireland is so beautiful’” (‘MD, Tourism, hotels and catering’, *Jobs Ireland* [2001:22]).
65 ‘She found it very easy to settle in Ireland and felt more than welcome when she arrived into her new work and social environment.’ (‘BS, Teleservices’, *Jobs Ireland* [2001:5])
66 ‘He has absolutely no regrets and would encourage others thinking to do likewise [sic]’” (‘PK, Teleservices’. *Jobs Ireland* [2001:4])
67 ‘There is lots to do here and I would highly recommend moving to Ireland, especially people from Canada [sic].’” (‘MM, Financial Services’, *Jobs Ireland* [2001:6]).
68 ‘Now content with having packed and left Boston to start a new life in Ireland, H has been boasting of Ireland’s and his company’s charms, to former colleagues in Boston, and is trying to poach them to work in Ireland too.’ (‘HB, Information Technology’, *Jobs Ireland* [2001:9])
70 ‘Fair is just the job’, *Irish Post*, 16 December 2000.
71 ‘HB, Information Technology’, *Jobs Ireland* (2001:9)
73 Quotation from ‘HB, Information Technology’, *Jobs Ireland* (2001:9)
78 Headline in *Irish Post* for report on Jobs Ireland fairs in Britain, 2 December 2000.
84 Extracts from the Official opening speech by Noel Dempsey, the Minister for the Environment and Local Government, FÁS Jobs Ireland London exhibition, 9 December 2000.
84 *Jobs Ireland* magazine, January 2001:2.
86 *Jobs Ireland* magazine, January 2001:2.
87 For example, in October 1998, the *Irish Post* produced a supplement on buying property in Ireland. Titled ‘Home from home’, the supplement was advertised over a photograph of a woman in simple traditional costume (black dress, white apron) sitting sewing outside the stable door of a white thatched cottage.
89 ‘Young, gifted and gone’, *Irish Post*, 20 March 1999.