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MIGRATION NATION: IMMIGRATION AND
SHIFTING RULES OF BELONGING IN THE
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND**

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ABSTRACT

FROM DEVELOPMENTAL IRELAND TO MIGRATION NATION: IMMIGRATION AND SHIFTING RULES OF BELONGING IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

This paper emphasises how post-1950s Irish developmentalism fostered the economic, social and political acceptance of large-scale immigration following EU enlargement in 2004. It argues that economic imperatives alone cannot account for the national interest case for large-scale immigration that prevailed in 2004. It examines the “rules of belonging” deemed to pertain to citizens and immigrants within the key policy documents of Irish developmental modernisation and recent key policy documents which address immigration and integration. Similar developmental expectations have been presented as applying to Irish and immigrants alike. Irish human capital expanded in a context where ongoing emigration became presented in terms of agency, choice and individual reflexivity. It again expanded considerably due to immigration. It is suggested that in the context of current economic downturn that Ireland has become radically open to migration in both directions.

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Bryan Fanning is a Professor-designate in the School of Applied Social Science at UCD. He is the author of *New Guests of the Irish Nation* (Irish Academic Press, 2009), *The Quest for Modern Ireland: the battle of ideas 1912-1986* (Irish Academic Press, 2008) and editor of *Immigration and Social Change in the Republic of Ireland* (Manchester University Press, 2007).

FROM DEVELOPMENTAL IRELAND TO MIGRATION NATION: IMMIGRATION AND SHIFTING RULES OF BELONGING IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

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In 2004 the Republic of Ireland (hereafter Ireland) became one of just three European Union member states (along with the UK and Sweden) that agreed to allow unrestricted immigration from the 10 new EU-Accession states. Also in 2004 the Irish government had introduced a referendum on citizenship. This was accompanied by a populist politics that emphasised distinctions between “nationals” and “non-nationals”. Some eighty percent of voters supported the removal of the constitutional birthright to Irish citizenship from the Irish-born children of migrants. But political populism in support of the referendum was mostly directed against formerly-asylum seeker African migrants and their children, not against immigration per se (Fanning and Mutwarasibo, 2007). The contemporaneous government decision in 2004 to engineer rapid large-scale immigration from within the EU barely caused a political ripple.

The change in policy in 2004 that allowed unfettered immigration from EU-accession countries had a dramatic demographic impact; between 1 May 2004 and 30 April 2005 some 85,114 workers from the new EU-10 were issued with PPS (national insurance) numbers, more than 10 times the number of new work permits admitted to migrants from those countries in the preceding 12 months. By 2005 Ireland's proportion of 10.4 percent foreign-born (as estimated by the OECD) exceeded that of the United Kingdom (8.3 percent) and was similar to countries with a longer history of immigration (NESC, 2006: 25-26). The 2006 census identified some 610,000 or 14.7 per cent of the total population (4,239,848) as born outside the State and approximately 10 percent of the total population as “non-Irish nationals”(www.cso.ie).

My 2002 book, *Racism and Social Change in the Republic of Ireland*, posited that Ireland's history of antipathy towards indigenous Protestant, Jewish and Traveller communities would considerably inform Irish responses to immigration (Fanning, 2002: 30). Why in the main this has not proven to be the case is one starting place of this paper. Whilst the experiences of each differed, both Irish Protestants and Jews were marginalized by the dominant Catholic ethno-nationalism. Studies of the former emphasise the role of sectarianism in a context where being Irish was defined in terms of Catholicism. Studies of the latter have emphasised sectarianism along with a tendency, in common with other European anti-Semitism, to present the Jews as enemies of the nation state. Prejudice towards Travellers, which deepened as Ireland developed, might be best explained in terms of the social and economic modernisation of Irish society (Bhreatnach, 2007).

The very modernisation of belonging that threatened to displace Travellers and other Irish low on human capital is seen to have subsequently contributed to the

acceptance of large-scale immigration. A 2006 National Economic and Social Council (NESC) report, *Managing Migration: A Social and Economic Analysis*, advocated large-scale and ongoing immigration as a means of sustaining economic growth (NESC, 2006: xxi). In 2008 the Office of the Minister of State for Integration Policy published its first major report. *Migration Nation: Statement on Integration Strategy and Diversity Management* located the case for large-scale immigration explicitly within a developmental nation-building narrative:

The important point for all Irish citizens to understand is that immigration is happening in Ireland because of enormous recent societal and economic improvement, beginning in the 1990s, but built on an opening to the world created by the late Sean Lemass as Taoiseach (Prime Minister) in the 1960s (Office of Minister of Integration, 2008: 8).

The institutional narrative of Irish developmental modernisation has tended to focus on influential state-of-the-nation reports seen to exemplify emerging new political and economic orthodoxies. In positing the emergence of developmental rules of belonging the focus of this paper is upon shifting ideological, psychological and ontological *mentalités* identifiable within such reports and influential academic accounts of Irish modernisation¹ *Economic Development* (1958) became venerated as the foundation text even if most of the ideas it presented as a new national project had been percolating for the best part of two decades within Irish academic circles.² The OECD-Irish Government 1965 report *Investment in Education* has been credited with jolting the focus of Irish education from character development and religious formation to one on economic development and the human capital needed for industrial development. The salience of developmental rules of belonging was exemplified by the 2005 NESC *Developmental Welfare State* (DWS) report. In *DWS* the developmental emphasis was upon choice, individual autonomy, enhanced individual opportunities, social conditions that would nurture and sustain individual adaptability, flexibility and risk-taking; a “sustainable balance between dynamism and security (NESC, 2005: 36)”. In this context it was unsurprising that the major statements since about immigration and integration policy examined here have de-emphasised ethno-cultural cultural rules of belonging.

FROM BLOCKING COALITIONS TO COMPETITIVE CORPORATISM

In answering the title question of his 2004 book *Preventing the Future: why was Ireland so poor for so long?* Tom Garvin emphasised the politics of overcoming protectionism and blocking coalitions. Garvin drew on Mancur Olson’s thesis about the detrimental effects on economic growth of established interest groups (Olson,

¹ The term ontology is used here to denote beliefs about the nature of reality that constitute social facts about the world.

² For example, in 1943, James Meenan’s survey of Irish economic performance since independence prefigured *Economic Development* as a sector-by-sector economic stocktaking exercise. In 1951 Roy Geary set out an extensive survey of Irish economic development since the Treaty. Geary, like Whitaker later addressed the economic and social consequences of emigration (Meenan: 1943; Geary, 1951).

1967). Garvin emphasised the antipathy of “free rider” members of Irish blocking interest groups to “high riders”, those deemed by their peers to be “working too hard, too effectively or in ways that compete ‘unfairly’ with conventional work practices”. Amongst the disparate possible “high riders” listed by Garvin in an illustration of Olson’s argument were class swots, scab workers, street traders, academics who publish far more than their colleagues, innovators and immigrant ethnic minorities seen to take “our jobs” (Garvin, 2004: 241).

Garvin’s reference to immigrants is incidental but aptly recalls some experiences of migrants and ethnic minorities prior to the end of the 1950s when the dismantling of tariff barriers began. In 1956 a cohort of Hungarian refugees was actively encouraged to settle in Ireland to mark Irish membership of the United Nations (Ward, 1996: 131). Although Article 17 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Refugees (1951), which Ireland had just ratified, conferred upon these a right to work, considerable efforts were made by the state to prevent the Hungarians seeking employment. The Department of Industry and Commerce proposed that in each case where refugees might be employed the relevant trade union should be consulted. In the face of difficulties in facing such issues on a case-by-case basis the Hungarians were confined to a former army barracks in Co Limerick for quarantine periods. Attempts were made to use the Gardai to restrict their movements illegally (Fanning, 2002: 94). In an earlier example the Department of Industry and Commerce in 1937 opposed the entry of Jewish refugees because of the numbers of persons unemployed in the country (Keogh, 1999: 117). Earlier again the 1904 Limerick “pogrom” succeeded because of an economic boycott against Jewish traders; the climate of the time was exemplified by an advertisement in the *Leader* by the Dublin Tailor’s Co-Partnership urging customers to buy Irish and “help stamp out Sweated, Jewish Labour, in the Tailoring Trade in Dublin”.(Keogh, 1999: 54).

Garvin argued that Olsonian sclerosis Irish-style was partly caused by the ability of Irish industry and trade unions to preserve monopoly conditions (2004: 54). Many of the losers became emigrants. Employment security and high wages for some without the necessity of economic growth became possible through an acceptance of emigration (Rottman and O’Connell, 2003). As claimed from an underdevelopment perspective in by Raymond Crotty:

People made unemployed by trade unions forcing wage rates above the level at which people would be willing to work rather than remain unemployed, have not remained in Ireland. Neither have those made unemployed by the substitution of livestock for people. Emigration has given to Ireland, for over a century, conditions approximating to ‘full employment’ with no large pool of unemployed labour to form a source of competing non-unionised labour, working either as self-employed persons or for non-union firms. These virtually ‘full employment’ conditions bought about by mass emigration, have been fundamentally different from the normal conditions of massive, growing labour surpluses in the former capitalist colonies (Crotty, 1986: 84).

As argued no less trenchantly from a developmental perspective by JJ Lee, “Few people anywhere have been as prepared to scatter their children around the world in order to preserve their own living standard” (Lee, 1989: 552). The invocation of Olson in the Irish case has been criticised for foregrounding just one factor (vested

interests) out of many that might have impeded Irish economic development (Kirby, 2006: 55-67). But taken as a description of *mentalité* it depicts a sense of the deep-rooted exclusionary pressures that Garvin, Lee and Crotty variously represented as pathologies of Irish society.

Ultimately Olsonian protectionism proved weak in the Irish case. When import substitution proved unable to sustain employment during the 1950s “the resistance offered by Olson-type lobbies proved surprisingly weak”. In the face of an economic crisis hard lessons to some extent trumped vested interests; compensatory packages (grants for threatened firms from 1962-67) were part of the price paid for the acquiescence of business and trade unions (O’Grada and O’Rourke, 1996: 141). The significance of *Economic Development* was that it institutionalised the perspective that protectionism did not work. Key landmarks in the liberalisation of trade included the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement in 1965 and EEC membership in 1973 (Fitzgerald, 2000: 3). In an example of developmental *realpolitik* a 1976 NESC report argued that if the foreign investment needed to provide new jobs were discouraged Irish people would still have to work for foreign capital, but would be doing so outside of Ireland rather than at home (NESC, 1976:20). The Irish developmental settlement occurred partly due to the co-option of erstwhile blocking coalitions within a competitive corporatist system of social partnership. Trade unions and employers repeatedly signed up for the pursuit of economic growth as a national project (O’Riain, 2006: 313). In this context large-scale immigration later became justified within “a national interest discourse” of economic growth (Boucher, 2008: 6).

DEVELOPMENTAL VERSUS CULTURAL REPRODUCTION

After independence the dominant sense of what it was to be Irish drew heavily on a nineteenth century cultural “revival” that had itself constituted a modernisation of belonging. Ernest Gellner’s prerequisites for nationalism as a basis of social cohesion include mass literacy and school-inculcated culture along with a codification of the past into a national history (Gellner, 1987: 15-16). What is referred to as the “Irish-Ireland” phase of political nation-building persisted for several decades after independence. The Irish Free State became increasingly isolationist. Its education system was preoccupied with cultural (Irish language) and religious (Catholicism) reproduction. Cultural nationalism generated essentialist claims about Irish identity. The post-colonial Ireland it influenced was protectionist and isolationist. From the 1930s onwards, revisionist historians contested many of the claims of essentialist nationalism (George Boyce and O’Day, 1996: 3-4). To some extent, historical revisionism itself was a trace variable for a wider modernisation of belonging. It formed part of a broader intellectual politics within which both “Irish-Ireland” cultural nationalism and Catholicism were challenged by modernisation theories and presumptions (McCarthy, 2000: 17).

Parallel conflicts about the future of the Irish language were again predicated on conflicting readings of the Irish past. For example, Daniel Corkery in *The Hidden Ireland* (1925) influentially idealised the Gaelic past as a template for the twentieth

century (Corkery, 1970). Against this, Sean O'Faolain championed the utilitarian liberalism of Daniel O'Connell that had been de-emphasised by cultural nationalists (O'Faolain, 1980). The nation state, Michael Tierney observed, in a 1938 debate on O'Connell's legacy, was a nineteenth century invention that "coincided with the decay and gradual disappearance of the native ways of thought, life, and expression". O'Connell's contribution to the modern Irish nation was, Tierney argued, a philosophically utilitarian one that readily discarded Gaelic culture legacy (Tierney, 1938: 354). The English language and the ideas it communicated became integral to the Irish nation. Lee suggests that that linguistic utilitarianism flourished in the wake of the Famine because it was necessary for effective emigration:

A certain paradox was involved here. English was allegedly embraced as the reputed language of economic growth. When adequate growth failed to materialise, emigration became the alternative. Once again English was embraced as the reputed language of effective emigration. Thus both economic growth, and lack of economic growth, apparently encouraged the drift to English (Lee, 1989: 665).

From the 1950s the "Irish-Ireland" nation-building project became contested by a developmental modernising one, which came to emphasise economic and human capital reproduction as utilitarian nation-building goals. Political conflicts centred on the education system as a mechanism for cultural reproduction. *Investment in Education* (1965) amounted to a paradigm shift whereby a combined mercantile and human capital paradigm broke with an earlier dominant theocentric one. Within education policy religious expertise, epitomised by papal encyclicals and episcopal pronouncements, was displaced from the 1960s onwards by World Bank and OECD reports (O'Sullivan, 2005: 105-115). A pre-developmental 1954 Council for Education report depicted the role of schools in the following terms:

The school exists to assist and supplement the work of parents in the rearing of children. Their first duty is to train their children to love and fear God. That duty becomes the first purpose of the primary school. It is fulfilled by the school through the religious and moral training of the child, through the teaching of good habits, through his instruction in the duties of citizenship and in his obligations to his parents and community—in short, through all that tends to the formation of a person of character, strong in his desire to fulfil the end of his creation (cited by O'Sullivan, 2005: 109).

The political battles of Irish nation-building were partly struggles over the means of control of social reproduction. Garvin emphasised how education expansion from the 1960s, in a context of weakening clerical control, reshaped culture and values. He cited 1981 attitudinal data that strongly correlated a decline in traditional religious beliefs (the percentage who disagreed with the statement, "There is only one true religion") with levels of educational attainment, by professional status and negatively correlated this decline by age. The younger the person, the better educated, the higher their socio-economic status the less likely these were to cleave to traditional formulations of religious identity (Garvin, 2004: 215). *Investment in Education* had replaced the theocratic expertise that dominated education policy with what Denis O'Sullivan referred to as a new "mercantile" cultural trajectory. It emphasised that economic planning was incomplete without educational planning. Human capital itself became understood as a key requirement for economic growth.

Investment in Education made the case for educational reform to support the economic development objectives. It also argued that improved and extended educational facilities would “help to equalise opportunities by enabling an increasing proportion of the community to develop their potentialities and raise their personal standards of living” (Government of Ireland, 1965: 350). Similarly the *Second Programme for Economic Expansion* had described education as “an investment in the fuller use of the country’s primary resource—its people—which can be expected to yield increasing returns in terms of economic progress” (Government of Ireland, 1964:193).

Forty years later NESC recast the case for developmental education as one for developmental welfare. Effectively, it attributed to welfare goods and services a nation-building role that was previously the province of education. To a considerable extent The *Developmental Welfare State* (DWS) echoed the late-1990s “Third Way” critique of the welfare state advocated by Anthony Giddens and promoted politically by Tony Blair. In particular *DWS* echoed the conception of an individualised risk society developed by Giddens from Ulrich Beck’s account of “reflexive modernity” (Beck, 1992). For Giddens the role of the welfare state—to be redefined as a social investment state—was to support individual reflexivity in managing risks and hazards across the human lifecycle (Giddens, 1998: 99). As outlined in *DWS*:

A fundamental standpoint from which to judge the adequacy and effectiveness of overall social protection is to assess the risks and hazards which the individual person in Irish society faces and the supports available to them at different stages of the lifecycle.

DWS portrayed a new individualist Ireland that had broken with traditional understandings of security. There was, *DWS* argued, “a stronger appreciation of the individual and of her/his life as something to be personally shaped” (NESC, 2005: xxiv).

THE MODERNISING OF BELONGING

Arguably developmentalism undermined the political salience of essentialist representations of Irish identity. As put by Bertie Ahern at the 2006 launch of *Managing Migration*:

While it is no easy task to state clearly what it means to be Irish today, there are certain aspects of our community and Republic which, I believe, deserve respect and understandings from those who have come amongst us. That extends clearly, to the rule of law and the institutions and practices of constitutional democracy. It includes the characteristic features of community life in Ireland, including the unique place of the Irish language, Irish literature, music and folklore, and our religious and spiritual sense (www.taoiseach.ie).

A lightly-held sense of tradition aside—*Riverdance* rather than blood and soil nationalism—Irishness was to be equated with generic liberal democratic values; Ahern’s account of Irish identity was broadly similar to one of Britishness invoked by Gordon Brown that same year:

Ideas that are not unique to British culture—indeed all cultures value liberty, responsibility and fairness—but when taken together, charted through our history, are at the heart of Modern Britishness, central elements of a modern and profoundly practical patriotism: the surest way in which our nation can succeed economically and socially in the twenty-first century will be by building a society in which there is liberty for all, responsibility by all and fairness to all (Chatham House, 13 December 2005).

Irish developmentalists emphasised the need for individuals to internalise new rules of belonging. A 1962 pro-EEC article by the iconoclastic Bishop William Philbin, who was cited by TK Whitaker in *Economic Development* as an influence, argued somewhat presciently that membership of the Common Market would jolt the Irish out of their complacency. In “The Irish and the New Europe” he enjoined the Irish to work as if their salvation depended on it, to understand that time was money, to strive for economic growth in a spirit of national corporatist cooperation and to respond competitively to the European Community as if jolted by national crises. The New Europe, as perceived somewhat presciently by Philbin, was a vehicle for economic competition (Philbin, 1962: 31). In 1964 Garret FitzGerald maintained that *Economic Development* and subsequent attempts at planning “more than anything” provided a psychological basis for economic recovery insofar as it helped to radically alter the unconscious attitude of many influential people and to make Ireland a growth-orientated community (Fitzgerald, 1964: 250). As claimed by Whitaker in 1961:

...the psychological factor which, in my view is, and for long will remain, the most important factor of production in Ireland. This means that it is vital to sustain an atmosphere of enterprise and progress. In such an atmosphere we shall not allow ourselves to be over-awed by future difficulties or to fall into despondency by reason of temporary reverses and setbacks. If enterprise is welled to realism we can advance (Whitaker, 1961: 84).

Influenced by Whitaker, Lee argued (in the midst of the 1980s economic crisis) that post-Famine Ireland became dominated by a “zero sum” mindset whereby people saw the advancement of others as only possible at their own expense. This was akin to the calculus of interests that Garvin defined in Olsonian terms. Lee’s antidote to what he saw as “prosperity-blocking fatalism” was a liberal mindset adept at enterprise (1989: 682).

In the influential academic accounts, exemplified by *Preventing the Future*, modernizers came to triumph over a history of economic failure, emigration and cultural stagnation (Garvin, 2004: 170). For critics of these, developmentalism proposed a simplistic and uncritical narrative of progress towards social liberalism, secularism, meritocracy and economic growth. Meritocracy was a taken-for-granted objective in the expansion of education but what transpired within the new machinery of developmental social reproduction was often anything but (O’Sullivan, 2005: 272).

The *Report of the Commission on Itinerancy* (1963) warrants inclusion in the canon of Irish developmental texts. In starkly advocating the coercive assimilation of Travellers it suggested new modern rules of belonging for all. Educational expansion and rising standards of living amongst the “ordinary population” were deemed likely

to increase social distance with Travellers and, by implication, between the former and other socio-economically marginal groups (Government of Ireland, 1963: 70). The Commission was set up at a time when Travellers had become displaced from the rural economy and were identified as an urban (and suburban) problem by the majority community. Its remit was to assimilate Travellers into the “ordinary population”. The report emphasised that the rules of belonging of Irish society were being changed by “the ever-rising standards of living of settled people” and the “static, if not deteriorating, standards of itinerants”. It argued that “the ever-growing disparity in relative social standards must render more difficult the mental adjustment which will be required of the settled people” (1963: 106). This anticipated rise in intolerance towards Travellers would be worsened by their exclusion from education.

The Commission noted that high levels of illiteracy kept Travellers from entering vocational education but also from internalising the rules of belonging of a modernising society (Government of Ireland, 1963: 106). Within *Investment in Education* much of the developmental emphasis fell upon relatively advantaged groups. In *DWS* emphasis on raising skill levels also tended to focus on the already employed and on those with higher levels of educational attainment (NESC, 2005: 23). These were seen to play a key role in securing the “workforce quality that underpins a competitive, knowledge-based economy” (NESC, 2005: 139). All three reports traced an ontological modernisation of belonging that, that in policy documents and debates remaindered various Irish citizen losers in the human capital, knowledge and reflexivity sweepstakes.

Investment in Education noted that some 82 percent of Irish-born UK residents had left school aged 15 or earlier. Those who emigrated during the 1950s and early 1960s were predominantly young, from agricultural backgrounds and from unskilled or semi-skilled labouring families. Even in the mid-1960s over two thirds of recent male emigrants became manual workers. During the 1970s return migrants were predominantly aged between 30-44 years of age. Available evidence suggests that just 28% of male returnees were unskilled manual workers. For those unable to improve their skills abroad emigration was most likely a one-way ticket:

Like their counterparts who had remained in Ireland throughout, those with minimal levels of skill or educational credential were able to improve their life chances and those who were not were consequently severely restricted (Rottman and O’Connell, 2003: 53).

Emigration itself came to be presented as developmental. The presumed flexibility of educated and skilled Irish migrants was valorised in 1980s debates about emigration. In a 1987 statement the Minister of Foreign Affairs Brian Lenihan offered two archetypical perspectives on Irish emigration, the first being an opinion that “we could not all live on such a small island”. This recalled the 1958 Irish Banking Review (December, 1958: 8) commendation of emigration as “a useful safety valve”. The second was explicitly developmental:

We regard emigrants as part of our global generation of Irish people. We should be proud of them. The more they hone their skills and talents in another environment,

the more they develop a work ethic in countries like Germany or the U.S, the better it can be applied to Ireland when they return (cited in McLaughlin, 2000: 332).

Such accounts, Jim McLaughlin argued, presented migration as an expression of agency and enterprise, “conceptualising the ‘new wave’ emigrant as a geographically mobile *homo economicus* logically moving between one labour market and the other, the embodiment of an Irish enterprise culture”. What McLaughlin called the radical openness of Irish society became a two way street whereby both large-scale emigration and large-scale immigration could be presented as in the national economic interest (McLaughlin, 2000: 324). The roots of this “migration nation” Lee suggested could be traced through a long history of utilitarian education for immigration. Lee observed that no other emigrant European people chose to abandon their language before immigrating (1989: 665). In 2008 *Migration Nation* stated that English language competence would be, in the future, a requirement for the admission of non-EU migrants.

DEVELOPMENTAL IMMIGRATION

In 2006 NESC published a cost-benefit analysis of immigration prepared on its behalf by the International Organisation on Migration (IOM). *Managing Migration in Ireland: A Social and Economic Analysis* was primarily focused on labour market policy. It strongly advocated ongoing immigration as a means of sustaining economic growth. The foreword of the report stated that “immigration did not create the Irish economic miracle but, properly managed, migration can sustain Ireland’s economic growth and generate many other benefits”. (NESC, 2006: xxi). *Managing Migration* argued that from the 1960s and 1970s government policies concerning trade liberalisation and foreign direct investment began to improve the domestic economic situation and hence, eventually, reversed the net loss of population due to migration. Weak economic performance during the 1980s was accompanied by a net outflow of migrants, a trend that was reversed in the mid-to-late 1990s. Economic growth during the 1990s saw the rapid expansion of the labour force from about 1.4 million in 1994 to just over 2 million in 2005. This increased labour demand was met initially by Irish nationals who had been previously unemployed or outside the labour market, then by returning Irish migrants and as these reduced as a proportion of in-migration by non-Irish migrants; by 2004 Irish returnees constituted less than 25 percent of total immigrants (NESC, 2006: 74). *Managing Migration* claimed that ongoing immigration was likely to make Irish society more resilient and adaptive:

With Irish growth rates and employment projected in the near future to follow the impressive trend set during the last decade, migration will certainly remain a key feature allowing the labour market to react to changes in demand and further boosting Irish competitiveness. As such, Irish unemployment is expected to remain low, especially compared to other EU countries. This will be a significant advantage to Ireland in the expanded European Union (NESC, 2006: 93).

In effect the report endorsed large-scale immigration whilst inferring that “in the unlikely event of economic downturn” immigration levels could be controlled. However

the kind of measures suggested (limiting work visas to areas of labour market shortage) only applied to non-EU migrants (NESC, 2006: xx). With respect to these *Managing Migration* endorsed selection criteria based on education-levels and skills. It noted that, "in Ireland as elsewhere", migrants were under-employed because of the failure of employers to recognize the educational and professional credentials of immigrants (NESC, 2006: 155).

NESC argued that following the example of Canada and Australia in setting language and educational criteria for admission this would result in significantly improved integration outcomes. Immigrants would be expected to "invest" in these factors prior to applying to entry. This would "shift the burdens of settlement (i.e. the cost of public and private integration programmes) from the host country back to the would-be-immigrants, and shifts the locus of adjustment from the country of destination back to the country of origin" (NESC, 2005: 14). In essence it was proposed to accept where possible only those migrants with the capabilities to adhere to developmental criteria.

But government policy, as stated at the launch of *Managing Migration* by Bertie Ahern, was to source low skilled workers from within the EU 25 and to limit low-skilled migrants from outside the EU (www.taoiseach.ie). DWS stated in 2005 that low-skilled immigration was needed to fill large proportions of vacancies occurring in hotels, catering, factory production, childcare and other areas (NESC, 2005: 198). It claimed that because many immigrants did not face the same constraints as Ireland's jobless; for example, that more of them were single or without dependents, they would be more flexible than indigenous jobless. DWS acknowledged that immigrant competition for such jobs would benefit consumers (users of services provided by immigrants) but not longstanding Irish losers in the human capital sweepstakes (NESC, 2005: 198). Such acknowledgements tacitly accepted the limits of a purely developmental welfare approach. The overall argument was that pushing the employment rate higher implied a focus on "hitherto relatively neglected groups in the working-age population, the obstacles they face and the supports they need" (NESC, 2005: 77). However, it was admitted that from a utilitarian perspective the impetus to address the developmental needs of this residual rump was undermined by access to immigrant labour. *Migration Nation* noted a labour market participation rate of 90 percent for immigrants compared with 65 percent for the indigenous population (NESC, 2006: 8).

Comparative OECD data from 2001 (when most immigrants needed work visas) revealed that only one other developed country (Canada) had a higher proportion of its foreign-born population with third-level educational qualifications. The percentage of foreign-born in Ireland with tertiary education was 1.8 times that of natives with tertiary education, a wider gap than in all but two other OECD countries (OECD, 2007).

Post-EU Accession migrants also exceeded Irish levels of human capital. Census data from 2006 identified that over half of non-Irish/UK born living in Dublin (52.5 percent) have third level qualifications, compared with 34.6 percent among natives, and less than 15 per cent had low education (primary or lower secondary level

only), compared with 37 per cent among natives (Fanning and Fahey, 2009). Part of this disparity was accounted for by the age profile of migrants. A large majority were aged between 20-39 years. Comparing like for like migrants were still found to have a degree of human capital advantage; 55.6 percent were found to have third level qualifications compared with 50.6 percent for native Dubliners (Fanning and Fahey, 2009).

Both *Managing Migration* and the *DWS* articulated a developmental national interest case for migration even if both underestimated the extent of immigrant human capital. Post-2004 high levels of immigrant “quality” were not attributable to managed migration but arguably a somewhat unanticipated benefit and from a developmental perspective all the more welcome as a result.

Yet, during late 2005 and into 2006 the possibility that trades unions might advocate anti-immigrant Olsonian barriers seemed considerable. On 9th December 2005 more than 100,000 union members demonstrated against *Irish Ferries’* plan to dismiss their 550 Irish employees and replace them with employees from Eastern Europe who would be paid a below-minimum wage hourly rate of €3.60 (*Irish Times* 16 November 2005). This dispute was resolved when the company agreed to pay no less than the Irish minimum wage to its all new Eastern European workforce. The issue of employment standards became one of the most contentious topics in the *Towards 2016* social partnership negotiations (Erne, 2006: 65).

The agreed solution was one that protected employment standards overall rather than an Olsonian protection of Irish jobs for Irish workers. In 2005 and 2006 grass-roots claims that Irish workers were being displaced by migrants tended not to be endorsed by trade union leaders and were rejected, for the most part, within the political mainstream. In an account of these debates David Begg, General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), argued against the use of the emotive term “displacement” (“it implies some fault on the part of immigrants”) whilst emphasising pressures to erode employment standards that could and should be addressed through regulation. These included direct replacement by lower cost workers, outsourcing, off-shoring, use of temporary employment agency workers, bogus self employment (mainly in construction) and bogus educational establishments which were really employment agencies. In Begg’s 2008 analysis a degree of displacement had indeed occurred:

The numbers of people who came to Ireland and their low expectations in terms of pay and their concentration, despite being highly qualified, in low paid sectors suggested potential for displacement. Yet, at an aggregate level there is no evidence for this. In the three years following enlargement 143,000 Irish people and 129,000 from the EU10 secured employment.

However, when you drill down into separate economic sectors and sub-sectors a more complex position is indicated. In the hotels and restaurants sector 18,000 new jobs were occupied by people from the EU10 countries Irish employment remained static. If this is not displacement it does suggest that some degree of crowding out of Irish workers from the sector....The position in the manufacturing sector is more clear-cut. In the period under review people from the EU10 countries filled 23,000

new jobs while 34,000 Irish people left the sector. In the food processing sub-sector the figures were 5000 and 9000 respectively (Begg, 2008).

ICTU advocated securing employment standards for all workers which insulated the lower skilled from the effects of an open labour market. Begg argued that part of the solution was to address blockages to immigrants getting jobs commensurate with their qualifications “which, on average, are higher than for the indigenous population”. In September 2006 *Managing Migration* had cited estimates that if immigrants were in jobs that fully utilized their abilities, immigration would have increased Irish by 3.3 per cent in the five years to 2003, rather than the actual 2.3 per cent (NESC, 2006: xvi).

The Labour Party leader Pat Rabbitte on the other hand advocated out-and-out protectionism. On 3 January 2006 Rabbitte called for a debate on the re-introduction of a work permit regime for migrant workers from the new-EU states. His intervention was widely portrayed as “political opportunism”, “appealing to the basest instincts” and as shifting the debate from one on exploitation of immigrant workers to one about protectionism. An *Irish Times* opinion poll (cited by Rabbitte) suggested that almost 80 percent of voters wanted a system of work permits to be reintroduced for citizens from the new EU10 coming to Ireland.³ The findings were that immigration restrictions on workers from the accession states appealed to some members of all the main political parties except the Progressive Democrats.

Arguably, the reintroduction of work permits advocated by Rabbitte was improbable from the onset. The main opposition parties no less than those in government were pro-Europe and had never opposed opening the Irish labour market to the new EU10. Irish “competitive corporatism” had bound the state, business and the trade unions to one another in the pursuit of economic growth even if there were cleavages between neo-liberal and regulatory developmentalists (Rhodes, 1997; Erne, 2008). The unions no less than the other social partners had repeatedly signed up for a “competitive corporatist” national project; rooted in a half century of developmental mentalité and policy formation.

CONCLUSION

Writing during a period of high emigration during the 1980s Lee emphasised “the psychic impact of emigration on those who stayed, the price paid by a society for the subterfuges to which it had to resort to preserve its self-respect while scattering its children” (Lee, 1989: 375). Lee’s recurring depiction of Irish developmental modernity as an emotional experience as well as being about economics bears thinking about when seeking to explain current “migration nation” rules of belonging. The protectionisms depicted as Olsonian blockages by Garvin had underlying cultural

³ A third of those surveyed had a firm opposition to immigration and immigrants. Roughly 20 percent had a very positive position. 53 percent believed that migrant labour was making it harder to for Irish people to get jobs. 63 percent believed that immigration was pushing down wages but 59 percent and 52 percent considered that migrants were good for the economy and society respectively (*Irish Times*, 22 January 2006).

explanations. A hostile review of *Preventing the Future* argued that in its specific focus on blockages within the Irish polity between 1940 and 1960 it addressed just some of the factors that influenced Irish development. However it rightly commended Garvin's detailed account of the *mentalités* of the period (Kirby, 2006: 67). Developmental shifts in *mentalité* contributed to new implicit rules of belonging and assumptions that modern immigrants can be slotted easily into a modernised Ireland. In this context a developmental nation interest case for growth translated in large-scale-immigration without-politics. Here a competitive corporatist national interest case for immigration prevailed. In this context any discussion of the need for protectionism, or even use of the term, was anathema. Arguably the reasons for this had more to do with prevailing developmental *mentalité* than with disapproval of ethnocentrism. But again a case could be made that developmental modernity had also undermined ethno-nationalist rules of belonging.

To a considerable extent same developmental rules of belonging came to be applied immigrants as to post-1980s emigrants. In 1987 Brian Lenihan had depicted migration as temporary proving ground where, like Spartans, the young Irish might hone their skills and work ethics before being accepted back into the developmental fold. Twenty-one years later his son Conor Lenihan, as Minister of State for Integration, in *Migration Nation* endorsed similar developmental criteria for the acceptance of immigrants. Within months of the launch of *Migration Nation*, now in the throes of a new economic crisis, Ireland had arguably become radically open to migration in both directions. Popular expectations that many immigrants will return home coincide with expectations that a new generation of migrant Irish will find one elsewhere.

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