The Council for Research & Development

A Commission of the Irish Bishops' Conference

A report on the Preliminary Results of Census 2006.

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Introduction

A Census of population was conducted in the Republic of Ireland in April of 2006, enumerating all of the people present in the State[i] on April 23rd. The preliminary results of this Census enumeration were published by the Central Statistics Office in mid-July. This enumeration relates to the *de facto* population, i.e. the population recorded for each area represents the total of all persons present within its boundaries on the night of Sunday, 23 April 2006, together with all persons who arrived in that area on the morning of Monday, 24 April 2006, not having been enumerated elsewhere.

This report outlines the main results from this preliminary report and tracks a number of emerging trends. The main features of population growth are examined and an analysis of the changes in both rural and urban Ireland is presented. This report has been written by Eoin O'Mahony of the Council for Research & Development. All data is copyright of The Government of Ireland. The statistics and other information provided on this site are accessible free of charge. Reproduction of short extracts of this copyrighted material for such purposes as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship and research for non-commercial purposes is also free of charge and may be undertaken without further request, provided that the statistics are reproduced accurately and the CSO is credited as the source.

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Maynooth, August 24th 2006.

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[i] This document conforms to the conventions used by the Central Statistics Office, i.e. the State denotes the Republic of Ireland. A census was carried out in Northern Ireland in 2001 and the next census to be administered there will be in 2011. Results for the Northern Ireland census of population are available from www.nicensus2001.gov.uk/nica/public/index.html.
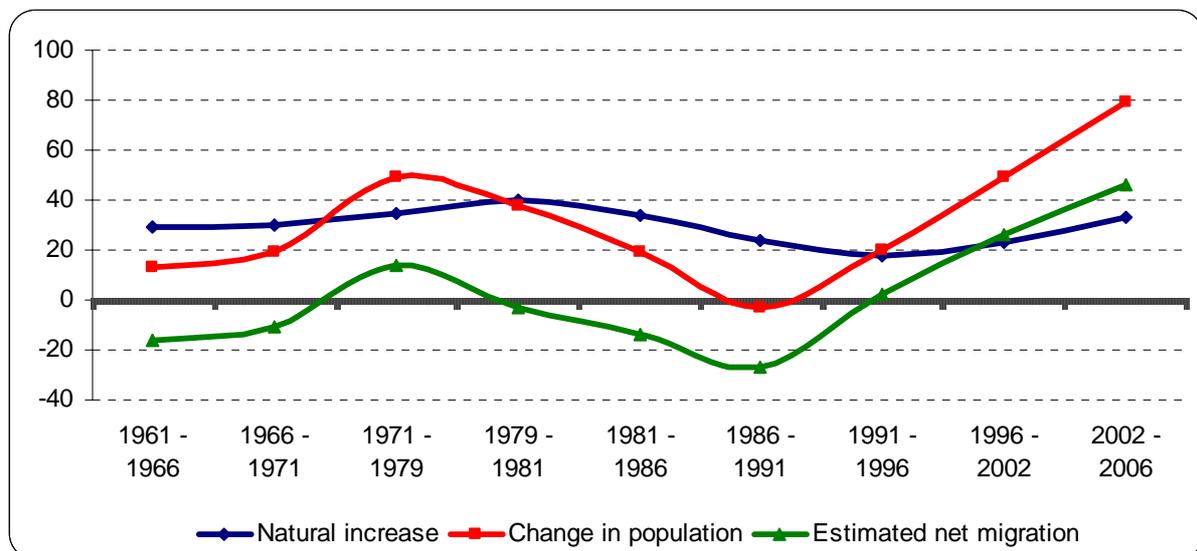
A: Population Growth to 2006

The Republic of Ireland's population has grown by 8.1% in the period from 2002 to 2006. The total number of people enumerated on Census night was 4,234,925, an increase of 317,722 people since 2002. The average annual percentage increase over the period was 2%, and this is the highest annual average increase recorded. The population in 2006 is the highest for the areas now within the Republic since 1861.

Population growth can be accounted for by two main factors: natural increase- or an excess of births over deaths – and the movement of persons into and out of the State over a defined period. While the Census of 2006 for the first time enumerated people's cultural background, this detail will not be made available until April 2007. Therefore, all information on migration presented here can take no account of the ethnic composition of people living in the State. (Other sources, e.g. PPSN enumeration are not an accurate guide to migration nor are they available on a sub-State basis.)

There was a natural increase of 131,000 people in the State over the period 2002 to 2006, there being registered 245,000 births and 114,000 registered deaths. Deducting this net increase figure from the almost 318,000 population increase gives what is called a derived net immigration figure of 186,000 people for the 2002 – 2006 period. This is the highest number of people migrating to Ireland since the foundation of the State and marks a fundamental shift in the ways in which we think about population in Ireland.

Graph one below summarises the changes in population over the last forty years in terms of these components of population change. Natural increase is the excess of births over deaths during a particular period. It can be seen how migration, both inward and outward, has been a much more central component of Irish population change than natural increases occurring.

Graph 1: Natural increase, change in population and estimated net migration in Ireland, 1961 - 2006. Source: CSO

Where the green line goes below the zero line, it means that there are more people leaving the country than entering it over the period under examination. And so, from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, the State had a net outflow of people. Migration from Ireland still occurs, merely at a much reduced level. The direction of net migration has been inward since the early to mid-1990s with increases in inward flows reaching its peak to an average of 46,000 per year over the period 2002 – 2006.

As will be seen later on, the make up of this inward flow since the 1990s varies considerably between men and women and across regions. Population growth itself is not uniform across the country and it is this regional disparity which is now examined.

B: Regional differences in population growth 2002 - 2006

There has been considerable growth in and around the major urban centres of Ireland in the last fifteen years. While more and more people are moving away from the older urban cores to the surrounding land, the pattern that emerges is that of increasing suburbanisation and diffuse commuting patterns. The preliminary Census 2006 results are notable not for the record population enumerated but for the decrease in city centre population allied with a sprawling and disconnected network of commuter areas.

Leinster's share of the total population has continued to increase indicating more and more living in the eastern region of the country. All counties in Leinster increased their populations over the 4 year period. The State's fastest growing counties are Fingal, Meath and Kildare. All but three of Leinster's counties grew by more than the national average rate of increase of 8.1%. These three counties in particular have accounted for almost one third of the growth in Leinster in a ten year period indicating greater concentrations of population sustained in this region.

Cork city and Limerick city were the State's only two areas to experience population decline between 2002 and 2006. In this context, both Limerick and Cork counties were among the three fastest growing areas in Munster, the other being Waterford. It is clear that in both Leinster and Munster that developments in the suburban areas proximate to the cities in Dublin, Limerick, Cork and Waterford are major contributors to the growth of county population totals.

Tables one and two below condense some of these commuter belt trends for counties in the State in the period 2002 – 2006.

Table 1: Number of persons 2006, actual and percentage change 2002 - 2006 in Ireland and for selected areas. Source: CSO

	Persons 2006	*Actual change 2002-2006*	*Percentage change 2002-2006*
Fingal	239,813	43,400	22.1
Cork County	361,766	36,999	11.4
Galway County	159,052	15,807	11
Galway City	71,983	6,151	9.3
Waterford County	62,167	5,215	9.2
Limerick County	131,303	10,022	8.3
State	4,234,925	317,722	8.1
Waterford City	45,775	1,181	2.6
Dublin City	505,739	9,958	2
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	193,688	1,896	1
Limerick City	52,560	(1,463)	-2.7
Cork City	119,143	(3,919)	-3.2

While table 1 above shows the below average and in some cases a decline in the numbers enumerated in core urban areas, table 2 below shows the continuing trend in populations enumerated in the Dublin area commuting belt. Extending from Fingal through Meath and Kildare and around to north Wexford, this belt now shows all the signs of population growth that are inconsistent with the industrial and

economic base of those areas. Undoubtedly we are seeing settlement patterns associated with the continued growth of Dublin as an economic area.

Table 2: Number of persons 2006, actual and percentage change 2002 - 2006 for 5 Leinster counties. Source: CSO

	Persons 2006	Actual change 2002-2006	Percentage change 2002-2006
Meath	162,621	28,616	21.4
Laois	67,012	8,238	14
Kildare	186,075	22,131	13.5
Wexford	131,615	15,019	12.9
Wicklow	126,330	11,654	10.2
State	4,234,925	317,722	8.1

While the State's population growth has been 8.1% over the period 2002 – 2006, the counties in and around the Dublin region have seen growth rates far in excess of this. However, Dublin and Leinster are not the only periurban areas where high levels of population growth are noted.

While both Cork and Limerick cities have both seen population declines in the period between Censuses, the surrounding counties, as well as that of Galway, are expanding rapidly. Cork county is the fastest growing are in Munster (+11.4%), followed by Waterford and Limerick Counties at 9.2% and 8.3% respectively. To demonstrate this continuing growth in and around the periurban areas, the CSO compiled a list of the top twenty Electoral Divisions (the smallest unit of publicly-available information) in the State. Table 3 below tabulates these fastest growing areas.

Table 3: Top 20 Electoral Divisions in Ireland by actual change in population since 2002. Source: CSO

Electoral Division	County	2006 population	Change in population since 2002	Percentage change in population since 2002
Blanchardstown-Blakestown	Fingal	32,305	7,901	32.4
Navan rural	Meath	23,196	5,176	28.7
Balbriggan rural	Fingal	9,651	5,150	114.4
Lucan-Esker	South Dublin	25,778	4,971	23.9
Ballybaan	Galway city	9,878	4,356	78.9
Glencullen	Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	13,939	3,673	35.8
St Mary's (suburb of Drogheda)	Meath	8,707	3,250	59.6
The Ward	Fingal	4,464	3,156	241.3
Ratoath	Meath	8,629	3,048	54.6
Swords-Lissenhall	Fingal	9,099	3,018	49.6
Lusk	Fingal	7,015	2,884	69.8
Dubber (near Dublin airport)	Fingal	3,721	2,883	344.0
Ballycummin	Limerick	16,279	2,844	21.2
Kilcoole	Wicklow	6,856	2,790	68.6
Tallaght-Jobstown	South Dublin	12,586	2,748	27.9
Swords-Forrest	Fingal	12,461	2,664	27.2
Mullingar rural	Westmeath	9,575	2,563	36.6
Julianstown	Meath	8,281	2,475	42.6
Castleknock-Knockmaroon	Fingal	17,110	2,251	15.1
Douglas	Cork	18,192	2,193	13.7

In Munster, the Ballycummin ED in the outskirts of Limerick City increased its population by 2,844 or 21.2 per cent between 2002 and 2006 while the population of the Douglas suburb of Cork City increased by 2,193 or 13.7 per cent over the same period. Ballybaan in Galway City had a population increase of 4,356 (78.9%) during the 2002-2006 period while in the same city Barna's population grew by 1,973 (18.2%).

It appears therefore that the distribution of Irish population over a long time frame indicates that the city cores are depopulating with increasing numbers of people living in the sub- and periurban areas to the east and around the cities. When the more detailed data becomes available, a consolidating trend of longer commuting times and more geographically dispersed populations will become evident. The population of the State has risen rapidly and is likely to continue rising in the medium term. It is the distribution of this population that is changing most drastically. One of the factors in this rising population figure is now examined: net migration.

C: Net migration for the period 2002 – 2006

No indication of the ethnic or nationality background is as yet available from the Census 2006. As we have seen from previous analyses (cf. Immigration Council of Ireland) the bulk of inward migration to Ireland over the period 1995 to 2005 was of returning Irish, e.g. 55% of migrants in 1999 were Irish. However, since the accession of 10 countries to the European Union and the Governmental decision to have few restrictions on residents of these countries for a defined period, the composition of inward migrating populations has been changing. Figures ranging from 200,000 to 400,000 people have been used to give an approximation of the numbers coming from these accession countries, mostly from the eastern European countries. However, as this section will demonstrate the very short term nature of this form of migration points up some challenges to those concerned with these diverse populations.

In the period 2002 to 2006, the population of the State rose by 317,722 people. This is an increase of 8.1% over the 2002 figure and one of the largest increases in the population recorded since the mid-nineteenth century. About 40% of this total figure is accounted for by natural increase – an excess of births over deaths. The remainder is accounted for by high levels of immigration. Net migration is the total number migrating into the State minus the total number migrating out of the State. Estimated net migration for the period 2002 – 2006 is 186,408 people or about 46,500 per annum. Of these the majority are men making up 56% of the total. For the State as a whole there are 1.28 men to every one woman in terms of net migration although this varies considerably across the regions. In Ulster (part of) and in Connacht the ratios of men to women are 1.1:1 and 1.2:1 respectively. However in Leinster and Munster the ratios are 1.3:1 in both regions. This might indicate that the bulk of those migrating to the more urbanised parts of the country are men in search of short-term work. Further confirmation of this will be available from the middle of next year.

Across the State there is a wide variety of figures for the numbers of migrants. The CSO provides an average annual rate per 1,000 population for each of the counties. Comparing the rates per 1,000 for both natural increase and estimated net migration we get some sense of which counties are attracting new residents from outside. For the State as a whole the annual average natural increase is 8.1 per 1,000 and 11.4 per 1,000 in terms of net migration. In other words, the numbers coming into the country from outside account for a greater share of total population growth than does natural increase. This is the case for 28 of the 34 county and city areas in the State. It is only in the areas with declining populations, city cores for example, that we see natural increase greater than estimated net migration per 1,000 people. Table 4 below summarises the estimated net migration data from the preliminary report.

Table 4: Top 10 counties for estimated net migration 2006. Source: CSO

Area	Average annual estimated net migration per 1,000	Equivalent 1996 – 2002 data
Meath	35.7	24.6
Fingal	34.0	N/A
Leitrim	25.9	6.9
Cavan	25.6	7.2
Laois	23.6	11.7
Wexford	21.6	12.2
Galway County	19.4	N/A
Roscommon	19.0	6.7
Longford	18.9	1.6
Offaly	18.3	6.6

N/A – not available as Fingal and Galway County were published as Dublin city and County and Galway city and County respectively.

The estimates for average annual net migration are remarkable for two reasons. Firstly, many of these counties have had similar negative figures (indicating high levels of emigration) for much of the latter half of the 20th century. For example, between 1956 and 1961 Meath had an estimated met migration figure of -14.7 per 1,000 and as recently as 1991, Cavan had -9.2 per 1,000 people and Roscommon with a figure of -11.4 per 1,000.

Secondly, as the table above clearly shows, many of these counties are in Leinster indicating a defined concentration of population due to the expansion of the Dublin area. While it might be hard to think of Leitrim as part of this catchment area, Meath, Fingal and Laois have certainly consolidated their position as parts of this area. These areas have experienced high levels of inward migration in the early part of this century. The availability of more affordable housing farther from Dublin and the proximity to employment opportunities have been major factors in drawing greater numbers toward these counties.

The Central Statistics Office makes a number of other datasets available which can assist in the enumeration of migrant groups. Its estimated population migration series for 2005 shows a slightly more detailed breakdown in terms of inflows of people from other countries. It has been seen elsewhere that the bulk of migration since the middle 1990s has been of returning Irish. In the first few years of the new century, the balance changed slightly to reflect an expanding European Union. The table below shows the data available for 2005, the closest time period available for this data set.

Table 5: Numbers of people entering and leaving the State by region of origin, 2005. Source: CSO

	UK	USA	Rest of the World	Rest of European Union 15	European Union 10
Outward Migration	4,100	1,700	7,400	2,900	500
Inward Migration	13,800	4,300	16,800	8,900	26,200
Net migration	9,700	2,600	9,400	6,000	25,700

Note: While there is a disparity between the total net migration figure for 2005 above and the Census average of 46,000 per annum in the period 2002- 2006, comparing the two figures means comparing an average with an estimate. We still know very little about migration micros-trends across individual years.

From these data, it can be seen that almost 20% of the total net migration is made up of people coming from the UK, about 18% from the rest of the world and almost half in 2005 coming from the 10 recently-acceded European Union States. Thus we can see a shift in the composition of the people entering Ireland in larger and larger numbers since mid-2004. Research produced by other agencies has indicated that much of this labour migration is short term in nature and is as yet too soon to define how rooted to particular communities people may become.