

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE STATISTICAL AND SOCIAL INQUIRY SOCIETY OF
IRELAND**

One hundred and Fifty Ninth Session: 2005/2006

First Meeting

The Society met at the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), 4 Burlington Road, Dublin 4, on Thursday, 20th October 2005, at 6.30 p.m. The President, Aidan Punch, was in the Chair.

Professor Jim Walsh and Dr. Adrian Kavanagh presented a paper, *Mapping Journey to Work Patterns in Ireland*, prepared by them with Dr. Ronan Foley and Ms. Aisling McElwain.

This paper examined data compiled by the CSO from the 2002 Census of Population on journeys to work and presented it visually. They began by mapping the proportions of the workforce in some 3,500 districts, by both journey length in time and distance, identifying congestion zones. Additionally, using the Place of Work Sample of Anonymized Records compiled by the CSO, they calculated and mapped the travel to work hinterlands of the principal towns in Ireland, including the Gateways and Hubs identified in the National Spatial Strategy. The output identified those parts of the country that are beyond the commuting hinterlands of the Gateways and Hubs and cast some doubt on the appropriateness of all of the hubs. They concluded by identifying some policy implications arising from their research.

The Vote of thanks was proposed by Dr. Edgar Morgenroth (ESRI) and seconded by Mr. Bruce McCormack. Contributions from the floor were made by Mr. Robert Watt, Dr. Louis Smith, Dr. Sean Barrett, Professor Brendan Walsh, and Mr. Sean Lyons. The President closed the meeting by thanking the speakers and all who had contributed.

Second Meeting

The Society met at the ESRI on Thursday, 24th November 2005, at 6.30 p.m. The President, Aidan Punch, was in the Chair.

Dr. Tom Healy presented a paper, *The Level and Distribution of Social Capital in Ireland*.

The paper explored the meaning of the term 'social capital', popular in recent years. Using data on Irish adults' participation in community pursuits of different kinds, his analysis found that informal social capital – broad sociability – has only one key dependency: whether the adult has an urban or rural address. However, for measures of 'formal' social capital, meaning, volunteering and other more organised social engagements, there was a clear link with age, level of education, marital status, and length of residence.

The Vote of Thanks was proposed by Dr. Tony Fahey (ESRI), and seconded by Professor Morgan Kelly (UCD). Contributions from the floor were made by Finbar Breedon, (UCD), Professor Paul Walsh (TCD), Dr. James Steward (TCD), Professor Frances Ruane (TCD), Professor Brendan Whelan (ESRI), Liam Scally, Chris Morris, and Toby Wolf. The President closed the meeting by thanking the speakers and all who had contributed.

Third Meeting

The third meeting of the Society was held at the ESRI on Thursday, 26th January 2006, at 6.30 p.m. The President, Aidan Punch, was in the Chair.

After the minutes of the previous meeting were agreed, the President announced that he had recently received a letter from Prof. Bob Black. Prof. Black indicated that he was resigning from the Society, as ill-health prevented him from attending meeting for a number of years now. The President, reminded us of some of Prof. Black contributions to the Society - as a long-time member of the Society, presenter of several papers, former President, and author of a history of the Society – and asked, under Rule 5 and with the recommendation of Council, that the Society elect Prof. Black as an Honorary Member. The Society enthusiastically adopted the recommendation.

Seán Lyons (TCD) presented a paper: *Testing which proposed regulations need “competition-proofing”*. The paper outlined how some proposed regulations are selected for an in-depth assessment of their overall effect on competition within the regulated markets. The well-documented UK “competition filter” was treated as a case study. Mr. Lyons showed it to have serious shortcomings by applying the filter to four controversial measures that are currently, or were recently, on the statute books in Ireland. He outlined an alternative test that, he suggested, would improve the procedure by reducing “false negatives” while remaining practical to apply.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Dr. Paul Gorecki (The Competition Authority) and seconded by Mr. Cathal Guiomard. Contributions from the floor were made by Dr Sean Barrett (TCD), Mr. Moore McDowell (UCD), Dr. Miram Hederman O’Brien, Ms. Carol Boate (Competition Authority – Advocacy Division), Dr. Roy Johnston, Mr. Robert Watt, Ms. Mary Doyle, Ms. Sue Scott, and Mr. Joe Durkan (UCD). The President invited Mr. Lyons to reply to the discussion and brought the session to a close.

Fourth Meeting

The last meeting of the Society was held in at the ESRI, on Thursday, 23rd February 2006, at 6.30 p.m. Bill Keating, Vice President, was in the Chair, with apologies from the President, Aidan Punch.

Professor Frances Ruane (TCD) presented a paper, *Public Policy, Sectoral Specialisation and Spatial Concentration: Irish Manufacturing 1985-2002*, prepared with A.M. Gleeson, and J. Sutherland.

The paper examined the progress made between 1985 and 2002 in achieving greater sectoral specialisation and spatial dispersion in Irish manufacturing, the latter aim being central to Irish industrial policy over the last 50 years. The analysis focused separately on multinational enterprises and local enterprises and was further decomposed into two time periods – 1985-1993 and 1993-2002. They reported increasing sectoral and spatial concentration of employment in multinational enterprises, but more spatially dispersed and less sectoral concentration of employment in local enterprises over the period. Evidence was presented of some degree of spatial separation between multinational and local manufacturers.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Pat O’Hara and seconded by Dr. Eoin O’Leary (UCC). Contributions from the floor were made by Dr Edgar Morgenroth (ESRI), Dr Miram Hederman O’Brien, Dr. Chris van Egeraat (NUI Maynooth), Dr. Simona Iammarino, and Mr. Joe Tracy (CSO). Professor Frances Ruane replied to the discussion and Vice President brought the session to a close by thanking the speaker, her co-authors and those who had contributed from the floor.

Fifth Meeting

The fifth meeting of the Society was held at the ESRI on Thursday, 23rd March 2006, at 6.30 p.m. The President, Aidan Punch, was in the Chair.

Gerry Donnelly of the Competition & Consumer Policy Unit, Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment presented a paper entitled, *The Impact of the Restrictive Practices (Groceries) Order on Competition in the Irish Grocery Trade*.

Putting them in a historical context, the paper analysed key provisions of the Restrictive Practices (Groceries Order), 1987 and concludes that they were self-defeating and contradictory, and, because they introduced a form of resale price maintenance into the grocery trade, served only to encourage rather than prevent anti-competitive pricing. He argued that the Order reduced price competition from the trade and encouraged vertical integration between suppliers and retailers that resulted in increased market concentration. The paper concluded that the Order was incapable of achieving either of its two stated objectives - protecting suppliers from the buying power of large multiple retailers and guaranteeing the continued existence of small independent grocers.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Mr. Moore McDowell (UCD) and seconded by Ms Carol Boate (The Competition Authority). Contributions from the floor were made by Dr. Donal de Buitleur, Professor Frances Ruane, Dr. Laura Malaguzzi-Valeri (ESRI), Dr. Paul Gorecki (The Competition Authority), Ms. Ann Fitzgerald (Association of Investment Managers/Consumer Strategy Group). Mr. Gerry Donnelly replied to the discussion and the President closed the session thanking Mr Donnelly and all who contributed.

Sixth Meeting

The Society met at the Economic and Social Research Institute on Thursday, 6th April 2006, at 6.30 p.m for a seminar addressing the theme, *Ireland's Policy to Africa: Trade & Aid*. The President, Aidan Punch, was in the Chair. Three papers were presented at the seminar.

Professor Alan Matthews (TCD) began, presenting a paper entitled, *Improving coherence between Irish trade and development policy from an African perspective*. He presented evidence that, counter-intuitively, many of the least developed African countries are likely to lose from freer agricultural markets, although there could be a positive impact on farmers' incomes.

John Morahan (Department of Foreign Affairs) followed addressing, *Trade and development: the challenges of the WTO Doha Development Round*. He outlined the rationale for Irish Government policy - that trade can play an important role in promoting growth, economic development and enabling developing countries to reach the Millennium Development Goals – and outlined the manner this policy is pursued.

Finally, Dr. Arjan Verschoor (University of East Anglia) gave an international perspective with his paper entitled *Strategic aid allocation in the 21st century: lessons from the 1980s and 1990s*. He argued against the trend in the last decade or so away from hard core conditionality in favour of aid granted with softer conditions attached. He provided survey evidence suggesting that hard conditionality has a role to play when operating in weak institutional environments.

Contributions from the floor were made by Dr. Roy Johnston, Mr William Scally, Mr. Kevin Smith (Department of Agriculture), and Mr. Noel O'Gorman (Department of Finance). Each of

the presenters responded to the issues raised and the President drew the meeting to a close, thanking the participants.

Seventh Meeting

The Society met in the Geography Department, The Queen's University of Belfast, on Thursday, 27th April 2006, at 4:00 pm. The President, Aidan Punch, was in the chair.

The President thanked the Geography Department for kindly hosting the meeting. Dr. Dermot O'Reilly (Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, QUB) presented a paper entitled, *Trends in mortality statistics in Northern Ireland*

The compulsory registration of births and deaths was established throughout most European countries during the 19th century. Enabling legislation was introduced for Ireland in 1863 with the first registration report produced in 1864. Mortality data are derived from the medical certification of cause of death issued by the medical practitioner together with information given to the registrar by the informant. These data fulfil the primary role of legal documentation and secondly provide a source of vital statistics on the population. For the last century such data have formed the cornerstone of our understanding of the health status of the population and of the health needs of society, but now at the start of the 21st century it is perhaps opportune to look at their current utility and possible value in future years. The legal requirement for registration remains unchanged but the question that this paper addresses is 'in an aging society, where the exact cause of death is more difficult to discern - what is the future for mortality statistics?'

The vote of thanks was proposed by Mr. Chris Shaw (National Population Projections Branch at the Office for National Statistics, London) and seconded by Dr. Shane Whelan (UCD). Contributions from the floor were received by Dr. Norman Caven (Registrar General), and Mr. Robert Beatty.