

# Immigration to Ireland: opportunities and challenges

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# Outline of presentation

- Introduction & Background
- Ireland: emigration and immigration
- The development of immigration policy
- Integration – opportunities and challenges
- Concluding comments

# From a country of emigration....



## ... To a country of immigration

- 1997-2007 - the “Celtic Tiger.”
- Increasing immigration from the mid 1990s to early 2000s, driven by returning Irish nationals. Dramatic increases in the number of asylum applicants



# Trends in immigration

- 2002-2004 - New peaks reached in non-EEA immigration flows and numbers of asylum applications during 2002. Asylum applications fell quickly from 2002 peak and stabilised at much lower level from 2004
- 2004-2007 - Substantial part of non-EEA immigration flows converted to EU flow after accession in 2004. New highs reached in overall immigration, driven by nationals of the enlarged EU
- 2008-2012 New phase of net emigration driven by Irish nationals , dramatic drop of immigration flows after a peak in 2007. Recent rise in asylum applications (mostly from Pakistan)

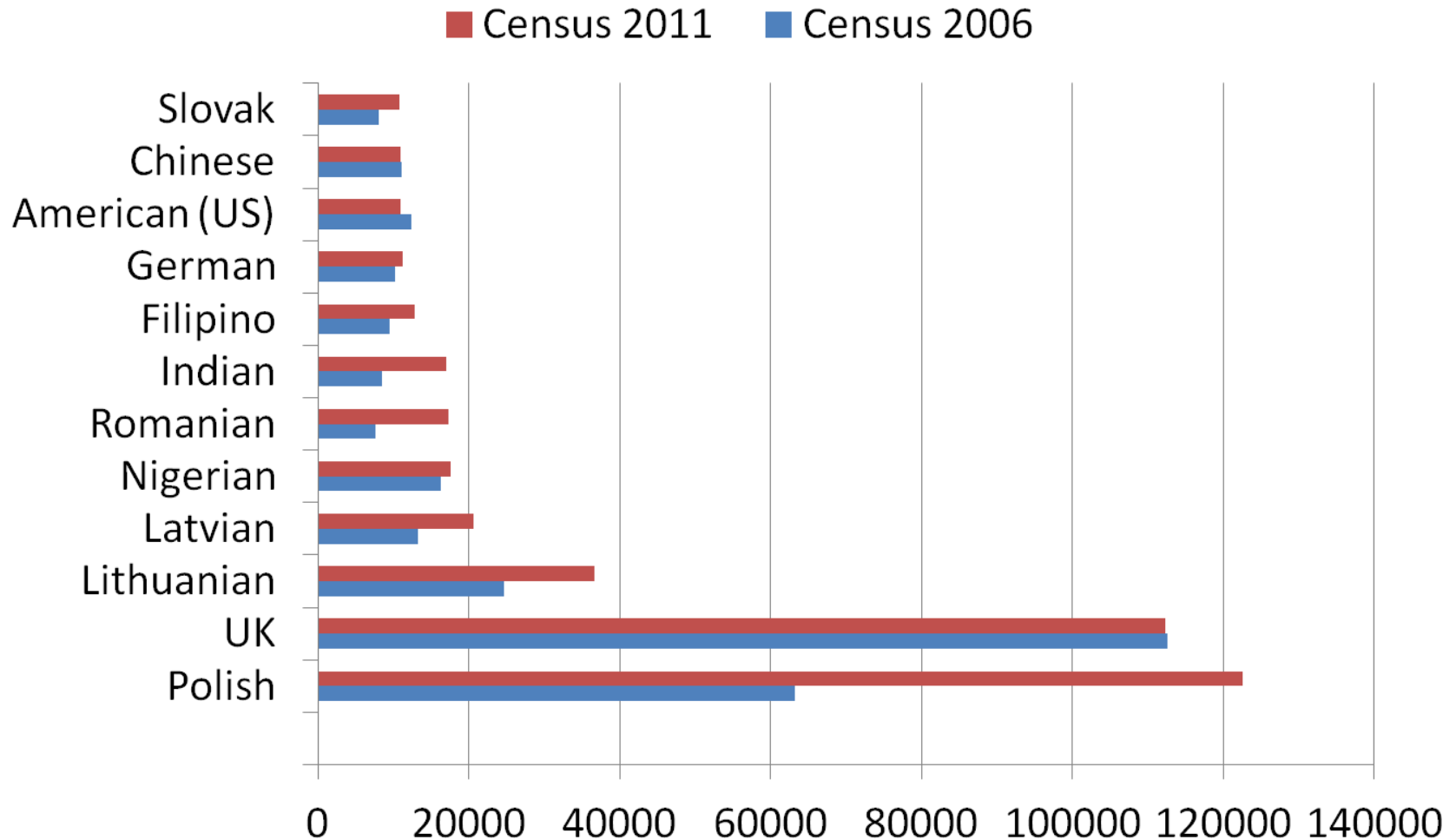
# Current situation

20% of Irish  
population foreign  
born (incl. NI)

17% of Irish  
born live  
overseas



# Persons usually resident by nationality for selected countries 2006-2011



# Profile of migrants

- Arrivals from a number of countries – April 2011 non-Irish nationals from 196 nationalities
- Speaking a number of different languages – the number of separate languages coded in the 2011 census: 182
- Concentrated in cities (availability of jobs; areas of low rental prices)
- First arrivals lacked established support/information networks
- Mostly well educated



# The development of immigration policy



- Migration policy developed in the last 2 decades
- Expectations of temporary immigration
- Ad hoc policies; reactionary rather than proactive
- Policies driven by workers moving here to fill gaps in the labour market; - policy focus mostly on labour migration
- Before 2003 – work permit system (employer lead) – little government intervention
- Work permit system before 2004 – attract high skilled; restrict low skilled immigrants (remains)

# Positive impact of immigration

- Contribute to the growth of Irish economy
- New ideas, new skills (many highly educated)
- More likely to contribute in income taxes than to claim in benefits
- Bring cultural richness
- Countries with aging population need more, not less, imported workers
- Immigrants fill gaps in the labour market

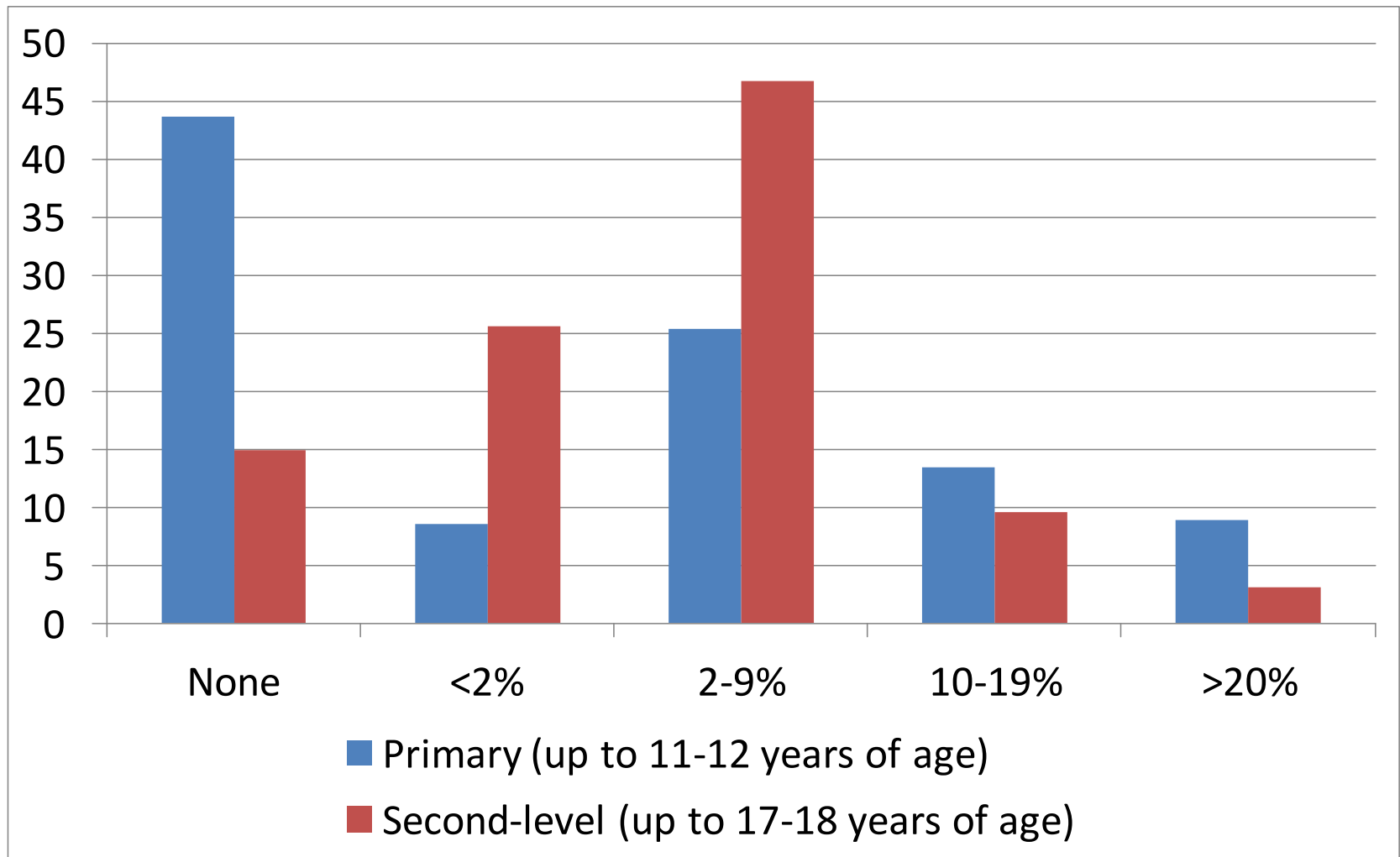
# Challenges

- Fare less well than Irish nationals in the labour market - access to privileged jobs, experiences of discrimination at work and levels of unemployment (O'Connell&McGinnity, 2008)
- Incidents of racism in work places and wider community; occasional exploitation of immigrants
- Occupational gap – does not necessarily get smaller over time (Barrett&Kelly, 2011)
- Irish labour migration policy is to issue work permits to high skilled workers only, mostly to fill positions in sectors like ICT, engineering and medicine.
- Some improvement in addressing the continuing demand for essential skills within the labour market.

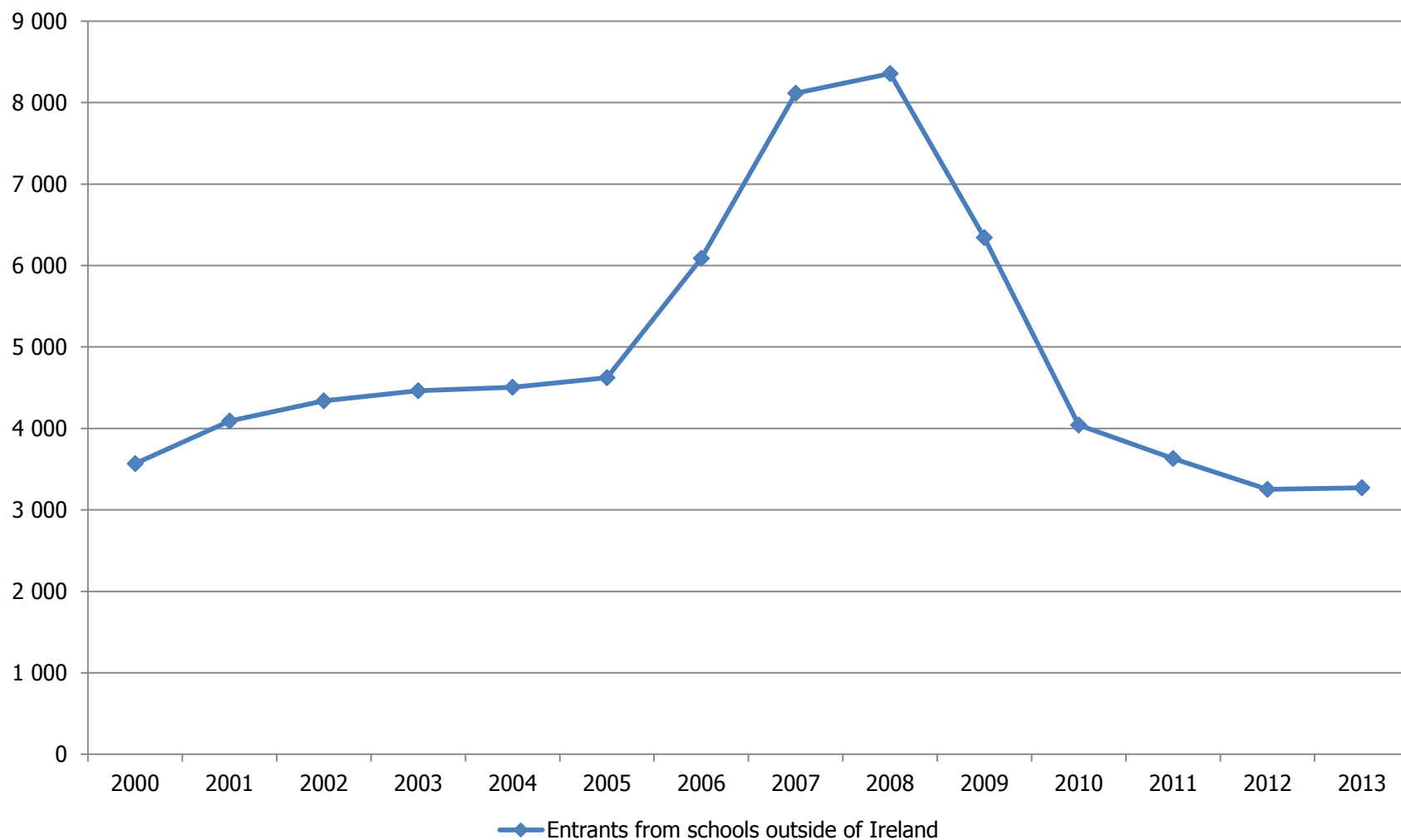
## ....continued

- Language difficulties
- Disadvantaged in accessing services e.g. schools (Darmody et al., 2012)

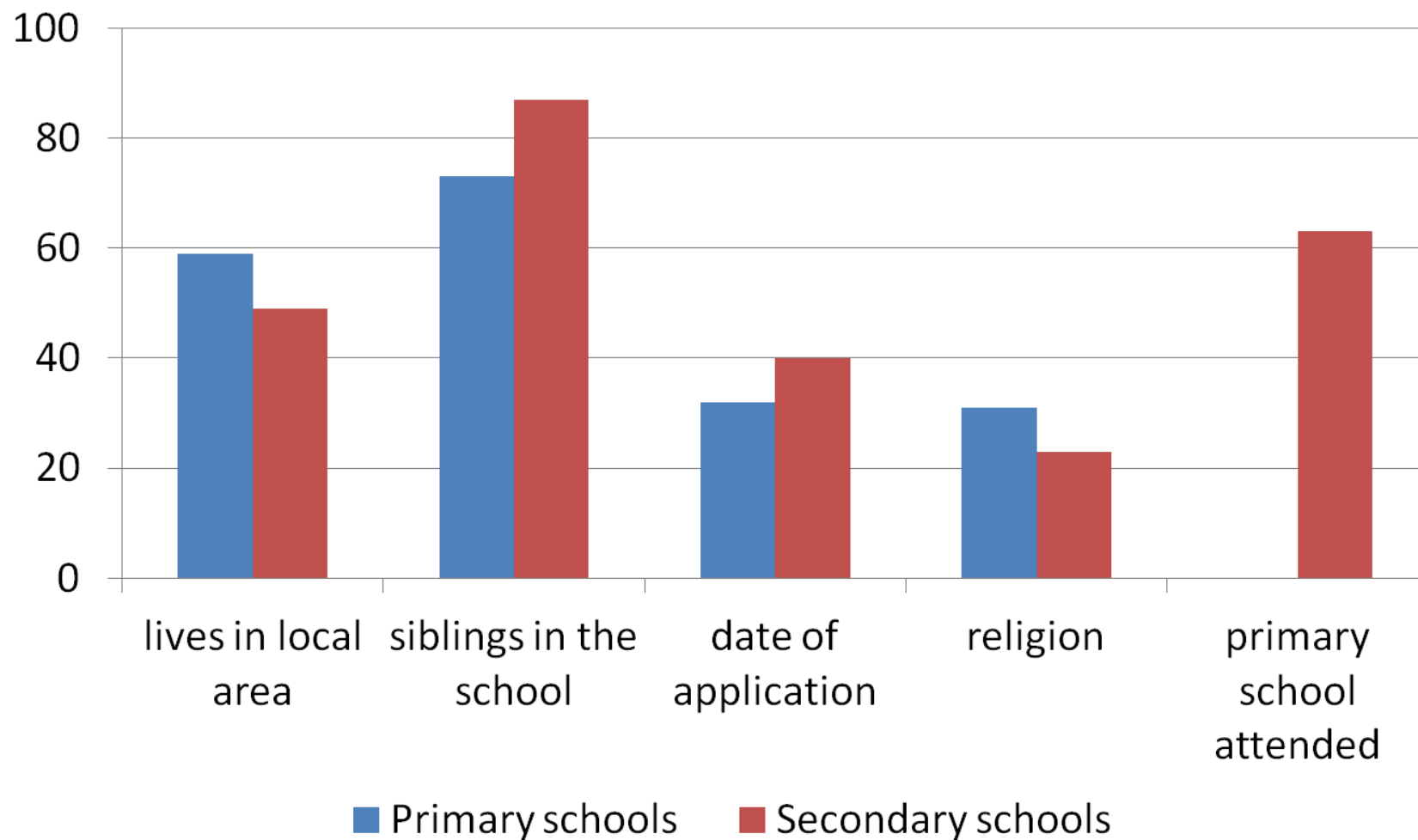
# Proportion of migrant students in Irish schools in 2007



# Entrants from schools outside Ireland over time (primary schools, DES)



# School enrolment policies in Irish primary and secondary schools

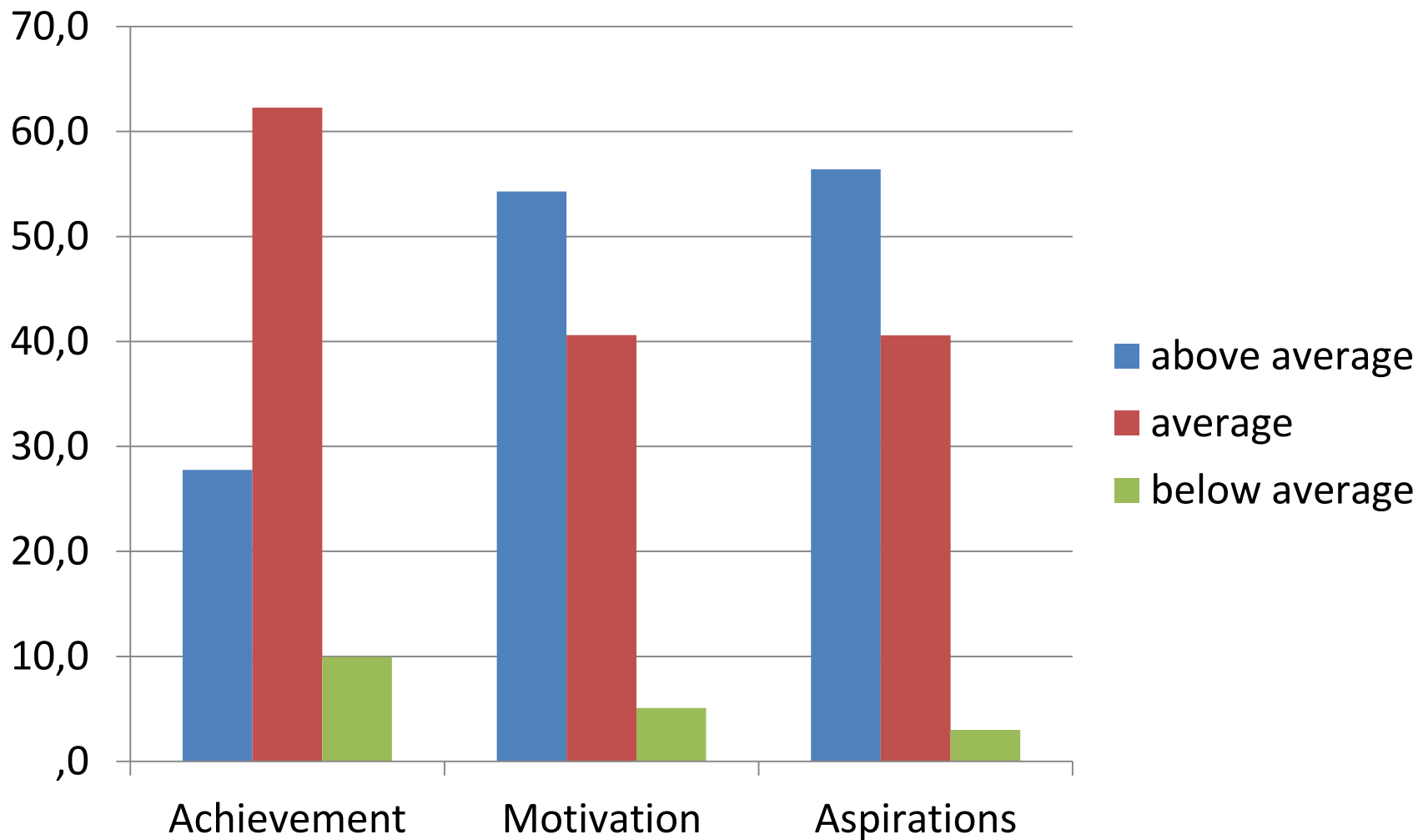


## Recent debates .....

- New laws on school admissions, 2013
- a new parent-friendly, equitable and consistent framework to regulate school admissions policy for all schools
- School patronage
- Multidenominational schools grow in popularity
- Revised curriculum about religions and beliefs



# Principal's perceptions of migrant students



# Progression to 3<sup>rd</sup> level – recent changes



- Previously little clarity about post-school pathways
- Those without Irish or EU citizenship pay non-EU fees (up to 10,000 a year)
- Third level fees abolished for migrants with Irish citizenship
- The change is expected to benefit about 600 migrant students over the next four years
- Restrictions in place to ensure that students cannot arrive from non-European countries, claim Irish citizenship and qualify for free fees immediately.

# From 'boom' to 'bust'

- Economic crisis
- Somewhat more negative view of immigrants
- Empathy towards immigrants



# Flight of the Tiger Cubs

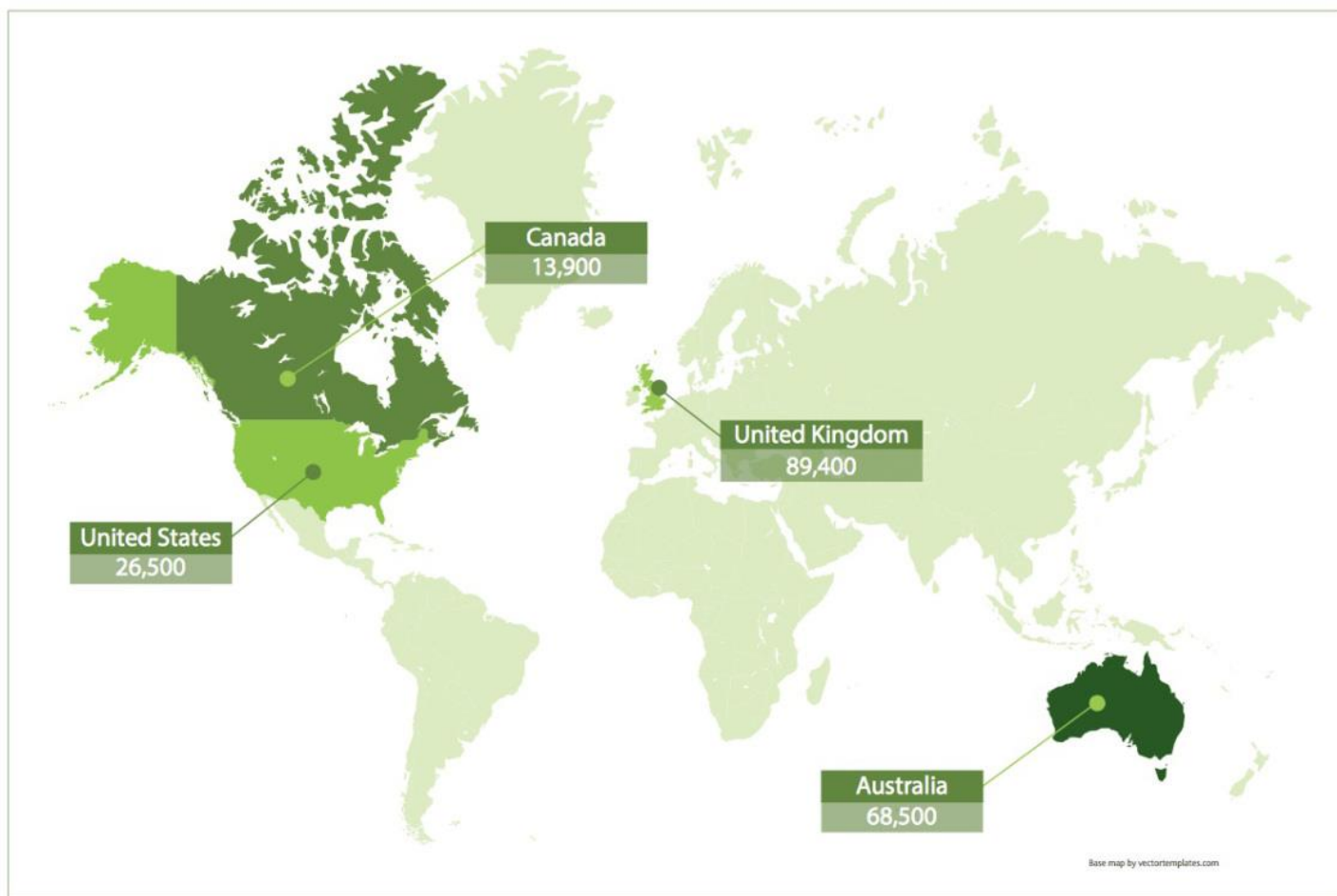


Fig 1: Numbers of Irish Migrants, 2008–13  
Source: Central Statistics Office of Ireland.

NOELINE BLACKWELL Business+Innovation

Very often you are in unknown territory in these public interest cases

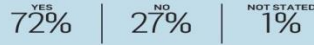


HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

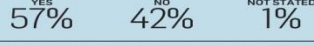
Would your social circle be mainly other Irish or is your social circle mostly non-Irish you have gotten to know?



Have you been home to Ireland since you emigrated?



Have you any immediate family members such as parents, children, brothers or sisters been to visit since you emigrated?



Would you like to return home to live in Ireland again at some stage or would you prefer to stay in the country you now live in?



How many more years do you think it will take before you return home to live in Ireland again?



We must guarantee a genuine Irish welcome for our returning diaspora



MARC SCULLY ANALYSIS

There is justification for the view that emigrants will return when the economy improves

THERE IS a contemporary narrative, particularly popular in official circles, that seeks to minimise the impact of the current wave of emigration...

support (70 per cent overall) for a form of communication with the homeland currently unavailable to Irish emigrants...

The barriers to reintegration for returning emigrants can be psychological as well as material

Ireland (It is a feature of research on Irish emigrants that the realisation that their children will not speak with an Irish accent regularly described as a pivotal moment.)

material. My own research, as well as that of Caitríona Ní Laoire and Deirdre Condon, has illustrated the scope for many returned emigrants of feeling like outsiders...

AN EMIGRANT WRITES AUSTRALIA IS HOME FOR NOW... BUT I WANT MY KIDS TO GROW UP IN IRELAND



Clarán Turbitt with his girlfriend

I PROPOSED to my girlfriend last year on Bournemouth Beach. I was turning 30 and her parents were about to arrive out from Ireland so it felt to me like everything was lining up for me to ask her to marry me...

...and to be discussing our plans so far into the future. I have worked mainly in IT and my fiancée is a qualified nurse...

employment and saying goodbye to wonderful weather and beaches. I think a few years down the line I will be the same...

YOUR COMMENTS

Have your say on this survey and the articles within it on irishtimes.com and on The Irish Times emigration blog, irishtimes.com/generationemigration

I must confess to being a little dubious about the sampling! The results of the telephone interviews are interesting, and any empirical data about the experience of the Irish abroad is welcome...

of a lower class, a French city appearing as a survey group in a long way towards integration. The writer can be challenging, but the fantastic summer more than compensates. Bonne fête St Patrick!

'Migration and diaspora policy is difficult to foster' One of the difficulties in migration policy or care is the establishment of a link to established networks.

'Not sure that gets into the heart of the hook' One thing jumps out: percentage of Irish people with a level of qualification in 2008 was 26 per cent according to CSO. Percentage among respondents in this poll is 35 per cent.



Want to succeed? Emigrate, rely on other countries to provide you with ready-made opportunities, get a sun tan and be admired by peers



'Remainder drink themselves into oblivion as well as abuse the case' It sure is all grand, those who can escape and are grateful, the remainder will be going back into oblivion as was always the case.

land? In the meantime let's keep paying our way in the expectation Naoise's Celtic rocket will take off any day now.

Epiperon Dignam 'This endless complaining has to stop, it's insufferable!' The simple fact of the matter is that most emigration abroad, outside of the construction industry, is by choice. There are jobs in Ireland, especially for those with university degrees, many, however, prefer to go discover the world, get some experience etc.

'The loss of an entire generation is not okay' What does choice mean, really? It's about choosing a life rather than stick around in a country that appears to be on the road to nowhere.

'They integrate well, not interested in an Irish ghetto' The new Irish emigrants I meet here in Montreal are here by choice and are integrating well, not interested in an 'Irish ghetto' mentality, much to the puzzlement of the 'Irish', many of whom make the point that their families came before the Famine (some were considered to

'This is the new property supplement' This is beyond a mere advertisement. This is the new property supplement - get ahead in life ahead of the Joneses, by emigrating. Can it succeed? Emigrate, rely on other countries to provide you with ready-made opportunities, get a sun tan and be admired by your peers. Dream of Australia when you're in Ireland. Dream of Ireland when you're in Australia. Robert Dowling

Blamaín 'Remainder drink themselves into oblivion as well as abuse the case' It sure is all grand, those who can escape and are grateful, the remainder will be going back into oblivion as was always the case. Where would be without responsible Irish just trying to outline acceptable interpretations of current events to the bewildered

# Steps taken to support new arrivals

- Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration in the Department of Justice and Equality
- Cross Departmental Group on Integration
- Various support organisations: Migrants Rights Centre, Ireland; Migrant Power in Politics
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions: immigrant workers welcome to join unions
- Anti racism guidelines:  
<http://www.ictu.ie/publications/fulllist/congress-antiracism-guidelines/>
- UnionMigrantNet portal

## ... continued

- Existing employment standards for low paid workers
- Free access to primary and secondary schooling to all children in Ireland

## Concluding comments (1)

- Rapid social transformation in Ireland
- Slow development of public policy
- Immigrants from a number of countries; generally well-educated
- Asylum seekers; particularly disadvantaged
- Positive contribution: contribution to economic growth; new skills and ideas; contribute to cultural richness



## Concluding comments (2)

- Public opinion of immigrants worsened during recession but the Irish still feel empathy
- Recession: emigration among immigrants as well as the Irish
- Racism and discrimination; access to services
- Improved policies and legislation to support immigrants, but change has been very slow
- No tensions yet; this can change if inequalities become more established (high education but low paid job)
- Integration is a two-way process; necessary for social cohesion.