

MIGRATION AND THE HUMANITIES

Critical Challenges

Workshop Proceedings
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IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL
An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn





FOREWORD

Migration raises fundamental questions, not just about who we are and where we come from, but also what it means to belong to a nation state and to be recognised by the state as a citizen or a potential citizen or a transitory citizen. When a recognition of the 'transitory' or 'transitioning' citizen takes place there is an obligation to acknowledge basic human rights: the rights to education and the right to work. The demand to be recognised/acknowledged within the nation state as a citizen or transitory citizen is one of the major challenges of contemporary Europe and is perhaps, more broadly, a challenge to the EU project itself. The positive intercultural and interlinguistic experience offered by the movement of people is often overlooked by more populist discourses in relation to the fear of the other.

In June 2017 the Irish Humanities Alliance (IHA) put in place a forum to raise these questions as part of our annual conference in 2017 and the results of these interventions and discussions are presented here. We have also provided some recommendations arising from this in relation to the Humanities and Migration in the hope that these recommendations can be acted upon in the very near future. Moreover, as we go to print, we welcome the fact that four of our member HEIs – DCU, UCC, UCD and UL – are recognised as designated 'Universities of Sanctuary' for asylum seekers and refugees while other member HEIs are currently aiming for that status by fostering a culture of inclusion for all.



Prof Noel Fitzpatrick
Chair of the Irish Humanities Alliance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Migration – and its social, cultural, political, and economic consequences – represents one of the most significant challenges facing Europe today. This Workshop drew together researchers and activists from a range of humanities disciplines: art-history; geography; history; literature; modern languages and cultural studies, as well as social scientists, to exchange perspectives and research findings on migration.

During two days of productive deliberation, the workshop indicated both the vibrancy and variety – disciplinary and methodological – of humanities research in migration studies. Among the central concerns identified by contributors were: ethical practice, especially around respect for migrants' rights to speak for themselves; exploring why humanities research is not currently informing public policy; the key role of creativity, arts and engagement in migrant identity formation; and the need for long term historical perspectives to understand contemporary challenges related to migration. Contributors also raised human rights and humanitarian concerns surrounding direct provision and the link between demagoguery and crime perpetrated against migrants. Contributors offered insights into historical parallels and the challenges that have confronted, and continue to confront displaced peoples. Participants explored the social, economic and cultural contribution of migrants in host societies and examined the gendered effect of migration; labour migration; processes of 'othering' in discourses of migration; and the challenge of language acquisition for migrants.

KEY WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Humanities research is central to understanding migration in historical context, as both an integral part of human experience and as a dynamic cultural force.
2. Ethical engagement with migrants themselves is fundamental to good research practice. This requires more debate around, for example, appropriation of migrant cultural production in academic papers, how to respond when overwhelming research evidence is ignored by policymakers and the complex relationship between research and activism in this field.
3. The need for more thorough integration of considerations of gender and sexuality in research frameworks studying the migrant experience, past and present, from and to Ireland was identified.
4. The workshop also identified the need for public engagement by academics to challenge 'presentist' popular discourse which portrays current migrant flows as unprecedented or unassimilable and distorts the history of European outward migration.

INTRODUCTION

This Workshop was co-organised by Professor Daniel Carey (Moore Institute, NUI Galway) and the Irish Humanities Alliance (IHA) with support from the Irish Research Council. The organising committee consisted of four NUIG representatives – Dr Sorcha Gunne, Dr John Morrissey, Dr Charlotte McIvor, and Dr Kevin O’Sullivan – and, from Dr Mel Farrell, interim Director of the IHA.

The two-day event explored a range of humanities perspectives on migration and its associated concerns. It took the form of five consecutive panel discussions dealing, respectively, with:

1	Ireland (I): Experience of migrants in Ireland
2	Ireland (II): Experience of Irish migrants
3	Migration and the Arts
4	Gender/Politics/Race
5	Ways forward for research and collaboration

Professor Cathal O’Donoghue, Dean of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies, NUIG, and IHA Board member, opened proceedings by welcoming everyone to Galway. He spoke of the transdisciplinary nature of the question before the Workshop and reflected on Ireland’s history of migration. It was fitting, he suggested, that the event was taking place in Galway given that the west of Ireland has been witness to the various dimensions of Ireland’s history of migration. There had been dramatic population decline in the region during the nineteenth- and twentieth- centuries before its more recent emergence as a destination for inward migration.

Professor Daniel Carey, Director of the Moore Institute, NUIG, and IHA Board member, provided an overview of the programme for the event and welcomed the panel chairs, contributors and participants to Galway. He stated that the conference programme demonstrates the contribution that the humanities, activists and the social sciences are making to discussion of issues related to migration. The range and significance of Irish research in these areas indicates the imperative of making the case for enfranchising humanities perspectives on migration at both national and European level.



Prof Cathal O'Donoghue
NUI Galway



Prof Daniel Carey
NUI Galway

SESSION ONE

IRELAND (I): EXPERIENCE OF MIGRANTS IN IRELAND

CHAIR



Dr John Morrissey
NUI Galway

PANELLISTS

Dr Mary Gilmartin [NUI Maynooth](#)
T.J. Hughes [NUI Galway](#)
Dr Valerie Ledwith [NUI Galway](#)
Dr Piaras Mac Éinri [UCC](#)
Dr Orla McGarry [UCC](#)
Dr Anne O'Connor and Dr Andrea Ciribuco [NUI Galway](#)



Dr Mary Gilmartin
[NUI Maynooth](#)

Dr Mary Gilmartin (Maynooth) described her research in the areas of contemporary migration, to and from Ireland, and mobility. These were the subject of her recent book *Ireland and migration in the twenty-first century* (Manchester, 2015). She is currently engaged on two funded research projects that focus on the process of migrant integration and warned against the adoption of migration narratives that present Ireland as an exceptional case.

Dr Gilmartin's research focusses on migrants and their experiences. In relation to inward migration to Ireland, she considers what it means to be a migrant in Ireland. She explained that much discourse on these issues can lead us to lose sight of what it is that connects people as residents of Ireland. Dr Gilmartin pointed to the tendency in Ireland to focus excessively on migrant flows to the neglect of the experience of migrant stock (those who remain in a host society and choose to make it their home). Dr Gilmartin explained that Ireland's experience of the financial crisis, and the subsequent impact of austerity, led to outward migration re-emerging as the central narrative. As a consequence, there was insufficient engagement with those who had made Ireland their permanent home with little or no acknowledgement of the challenges these migrants faced in the era of recession and austerity.

Dr Gilmartin moved on to discuss the ways in which migrant experiences in Ireland remain invisible. Her goal is to draw attention to the experience of migrants in Ireland. She has collaborated on projects that seek to address this issue of visibility. However, this brings its own challenges as migrants are sometimes reluctant to become more visible. Dr Gilmartin asks how migrant experience in the state can be made more visible and if the Irish experience of outward and inward migration can be linked. She also raised the issue of understanding the processes of exclusion. Concluding, she asked how we, as researchers, can collaborate effectively so that progress can be made in this field of study? It is vitally important that humanities research in this field begins to influence and shape both policy and public opinion at a time when migration is a major focus at national and EU level.



Dr Piaras Mac Éinri
[UCC](#)

Dr Piaras Mac Éinri (UCC) began with a personal account of his own background in the Department of Foreign Affairs, between 1976 and 1981, with postings in Brussels, Beirut and Paris. In Paris he became familiar with the Irish community in the city and how they related to the wider Irish Diaspora. He identified a dichotomy between the portrayal of migrants: as oppressed, powerless and victims of forces outside their control, and his first-hand perception of them as tough, resilient and exhibiting agency.

Dr Mac Éinri then moved on to explore migration as one of the principal challenges of the twenty-first century. He discussed his current research as part of the ambitious project YMOBILITY, funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 programme and involving ten universities in nine EU member-states. This project examines intra-EU migration by young (16-34) EU citizens and the impact of such migration on individuals and on the economy and society of both receiving and sending regions. It also examines what is meant by 'integration'.

Dr Mac Éinrí cited the relatively recent nature of large-scale migration to Ireland, remarking that 17% of the current population was born outside Ireland. This figure represents a significant change within Irish society, where as recently as a little over 20 years ago the percentage of immigrants was not much more than 3%. In that context, Dr Mac Éinrí also discussed the troublesome concept of the 'New Irish' which he saw as a deeply patronising label. In its own way, the very term 'New' Irish, even when well-intentioned, could be taken as denoting an unbridgeable distance between migrants and the rest of society or at least as marking them out as 'different' from 'ordinary' members of Irish society.

Dr Mac Éinrí then moved on to discuss the shifting policy framework of recent decades. He outlined how issues surrounding integration, assimilation and multiculturalism had already been debated at length in Great Britain, France, Germany and the Netherlands. He distinguished between the Canadian-influenced multicultural model, which stresses the recognition of a diversity of cultures, on one hand, and the French-style traditional assimilationist approach, whereby migrants are expected to be assimilated into the host society and culture and leave their own behind.

He then examined the history of Ireland's integration policy and structures. Ireland had nominally opted for something resembling the multicultural approach, but that policy had been largely aspirational and under-resourced. Moreover, in broad terms, serious efforts were largely abandoned in the recession. While the state had been putting in place the 'superficial appearance' of having adequate integration structures, in reality, these were wholly inadequate.

In the specific context of 'direct provision', asylum seekers were excluded from integration measures as they are not considered to be in need of, or entitled to, integration until their status is decided. Nevertheless, even given their indeterminate status there needs to be an urgent discussion about the issue of human rights, notably in the case of children, some of whom have been born in Ireland and have never known a life elsewhere. In a sense the direct provision system can be regarded as yet another example of a long-standing Irish practice, or biopolitics even, of dealing with marginal people in Irish society by physically isolating them. Such a 'politics of containment' is likely to be accompanied by discourses of contamination aimed at the residents of such isolated accommodation centres.

There is a further danger that the new settlement centres (EROCs, or Emergency Reception and Orientation Centres) for relocated refugees from places such as Syria will merely reproduce the same processes of isolation unless active measures are taken to encourage inter-action and integration. More also needs to be done in schools to achieve integration. In this regard there is a practical issue which will take a generation to resolve insofar as qualified teachers from minority backgrounds will not be able to enter the system for some time yet as they will need to have competence in Irish to fulfil the normal requirements.

Looking to the future, Dr Mac Éinrí believed researchers should look at more concrete measures on integration and equality and at measures recognising ethnic and racial discrimination as a central issue in society. He described the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989 as an abject failure – very few successful cases have been taken. He also referenced the relative failure of An Garda Síochána to build on a number of specific initiatives concerning ethnic diversity – again, these initiatives were less well-resourced after the crisis.

Finally, what defines 'belonging'? In many respects the nature of migration has itself changed in modern times. Distances have shrunk, travel is cheaper and migration is often now characterised in life-course terms or as a series of moves including circular migration and step migration. In that sense it is less a 'one-off' and irrevocable decision than it was in the past. Moreover, movement within a globalised world is itself more readily classified as transnational, with people inhabiting multiple locations and identities, instead of the older model of home, exile and diaspora. Such mobility, 'in-between-ness' and indeterminacy may be easier to capture through the arts and literature than via the conventional methods of social science research.

Dr Valerie Ledwith (NUIG) began by discussing her own, personal experience as a migrant in Los Angeles. This experience, she explained, was easier for a 'white European' than it was for other migrant groups. During her time in Los Angeles Dr Ledwith began to notice clear disparities in access to education and other opportunities. This subsequently became the focus of her PhD research. After moving back to Ireland, Dr Ledwith continued research on the geographies of education, focussing on the educational opportunities before young migrants.



Dr Valerie Ledwith
NUI Galway

Her more recent work has identified clear educational achievement disparities between young migrants and their non-migrant peers in Ireland. Dr Ledwith found that migrant youths are more likely to take ordinary level examinations in the Junior Certificate than their Irish-born peers, despite there being no evidence to suggest disparity in academic ability. These decisions at Junior Certificate place a barrier in front of migrant students ahead of their Leaving Certificate. As a knock-on effect, there is a glass ceiling on the total points that can be achieved in the Leaving Certificate therefore negatively impacting migrant student progress to third level education. Children of non-migrant parents therefore have a significant advantage over children of migrant parents when it comes to third level admittance.

Dr Ledwith's work also highlights how school admission policies have a disproportionate effect on migrant families who do not have historical connections to schools in their new communities. At primary and secondary level, these inequalities manifest themselves in enrolment practices that take family attendance into account, with preference given to students whose parents attended the school. These parental ties can effectively lead to a situation whereby migrant families, living close to a school, are "leap-frogged" by individuals not living in the immediate area. This highlights the negative influence of inter-generational access to school networks on current patterns of access to education.



Dr Orla McGarry
UCC

Dr Orla McGarry (UCC) discussed her current research on youth migration and mobility within the European Union. She is currently involved in the YMOBILITY project, a Horizon 2020 research project that examines youth migration and mobility within the EU. This project is an ambitious collaboration involving ten universities in nine different European states. It connects European researchers who are engaged in research relating to migrants, in the hope that policy can be positively impacted. While Dr McGarry's research has a social-science focus, she can see opportunities for cross-fertilisation with the humanities.

Dr McGarry drew attention to the tendency to distinguish between those individuals who 'migrate' and those who are considered 'mobile'. While the term migrant has acquired some negative rhetorical baggage in its usage by politicians and members of the mainstream media, the term mobility, in contrast, is increasingly used to denote the experiences highly skilled cosmopolitan citizens generally perceived as more 'desirable' and beneficial to the host society. In her own PhD research, Dr McGarry engaged directly with migrant communities in Ireland. Her doctoral study concerned second generation Muslims living in Ballyhaunis, County Mayo. In undertaking this study, Dr McGarry was keen to understand how identities were formed within this cohort and gain an insight into young Muslim experience of living in Ireland. For instance, did the younger generation of Muslims define themselves as 'new Irish', the problematic label commonly used in public discourse? Dr McGarry also discussed the necessity of ensuring that we do not make invidious assumptions in our research.

Researchers should never assume that any cohort is 'voiceless' or, moreover, that by engaging in migration-studies we are automatically 'giving a voice to the "voiceless"'. We should not assume that migrants are voiceless or powerless. Instead we should take into account the complex social manifestations of power, viewing research engagement as a social encounter where power dynamics and positionalities are constantly defined and redefined. Dr McGarry stated that her research is the study of 'living life' and that we can learn how to channel academic resources in a way that has enormous benefits. She also discussed the challenges of translating research data into lived experience and how to measure the environment/landscape of the migrant experience.



T.J. Hughes
NUI Galway

Mr T.J. Hughes (NUIG), a PhD candidate in Geography, discussed his research on the current position of Asylum Seekers in Ireland, and in particular, their marginalisation. He explained that his research examines this process of marginalisation in the wider context of the 'Migrant Crisis'. Mr Hughes focussed on the issue of direct provision and the way in which the current system denies asylum seekers their basic rights. Mr Hughes described the current system in Ireland as one that undermines both agency and integration as it forces asylum seekers to the margins of Irish society. He queried whether this, and wider European responses to the current crises, are fit for purpose? Mr. Hughes described direct provision as a 'securitising regime'. In essence, processes of control are disguised as processes of care. It is a system evocative of colonialist framings and the old binaries of orientalism and reductive framings that miss the true human need, of asylum seekers and refugees, on the ground here in Ireland. He described his approach as participatory action research methodology.

Dr Anne O'Connor (NUIG) and Dr Andrea Ciribuco (NUIG) gave a joint presentation outlining their expertise regarding cultural mediation, community-based learning, translation and translation studies. While the link between migration, travel and translation has received greater scholarly attention in recent years, there remains a lack of public attention devoted to the linguistic challenges that migrants face on an everyday basis. Of particular relevance are daily migrant experiences of language barriers and the ways in which migrants themselves become translated persons. Dr O'Connor and Dr Ciribuco examined the themes of language, translation, migration and the fundamental role of language to an individual's identity.

Central to the migrant experience are the processes of being translated by native speakers and of then becoming a translator or interpreter, for themselves and others. Irish people have tended to migrate to other anglophone countries and therefore fail to appreciate the linguistic burdens that many migrants are forced to confront when they come to Ireland. According to data from the 2016 Irish census, 612,018 respondents speak a language that is neither Irish nor English in their homes, a very remarkable number for a country of just over 4.7 million people. The patterns of identity and mobility that this number reflects are the key to understanding the evolution of Irish culture and society.

Dr O'Connor pointed out that multi-lingual societies are a fact of history and are neither new nor an exception, and remarked on how translation is critical in the building of society. The work of Professor Michael Cronin (TCD), was referenced in this context and demonstrated the importance of long term, historically informed understanding of this issue. Dr Ciribuco explored the theme of how Ireland and its state institutions interact with people who are not native speakers of English. His research analyses how people make use of different linguistic resources to gain agency in a new linguistic context. He also discussed literature, and autobiographical narratives as instruments enabling migrants to gain representation and visibility in the cultural sphere.

Dr O'Connor (Principal Investigator) and Dr Ciribuco are, with IRC support, currently developing the "My Story – My Words: Language and Migration", project. Developed in collaboration with the Immigrant Council of Ireland, the project looks at the ways in which migrants experience languages in Ireland, how they learn English and how they maintain links with their native languages. "My Story" establishes contact with migrants through interviews and focus groups and involves artists, playwrights, directors and writers of migrant origin to expand discussion into the field of cultural production. It focusses on how migrants have used their linguistic resources to establish their role in Ireland, and what they can bring to public debate.



Dr Anne O'Connor
NUI Galway



Dr Andrea Ciribuco
NUI Galway

PANEL DISCUSSION

The session concluded with a vibrant discussion of the issues raised. These included the environment and sense of self, with numerous contributors discussing the ethics of migrant research. Contributors questioned whether our research meant we are creating an 'other' by definition? Contributors also asked attendees to reflect on why we are migration researchers and whether this was something we should be comfortable with. Access to education and the question of direct provision also received further attention.

Contributors also discussed Brexit and its implications for Irish migration policy in the context of the emerging consensus surrounding the need for a 'soft border' on the island of Ireland. Dr Mac Éinrí pointed out that Irish policy on borders and security has always followed the parameters laid down by the United Kingdom. He believes Brexit will pose a major problem for the Irish state. The common travel policy has always required compatible migration regimes in the UK and Ireland. Brexit may exacerbate the discourse of exclusion. This will be most difficult of all for immigrants from outside the EU. In that context, there was an extended discussion about the imperative, arising from Brexit, of Ireland developing an autonomous policy. Contributors also noted that there was a naïve assumption that Ireland is somehow pro-immigrant and the UK is anti-immigrant. The evidence would appear to challenge this analysis.

SESSION TWO

IRELAND (II): EXPERIENCE OF IRISH MIGRANTS

CHAIR



Dr Kevin O'Sullivan
NUI Galway

PANELLISTS

Margaret Brehony [NUI Galway](#)
Regina Donlon [Maynooth](#)
Sara Goek [Illinois Mathematics & Science Academy](#)
Brian Hughes [Maynooth](#)
Niamh Kirk [DCU](#)



Niamh Kirk
DCU

Niamh Kirk (DCU), a final-year PhD candidate, began by providing an overview of her doctoral research. Addressing the issue of reflexivity raised during the previous session, she stated that she had spent two years living in Australia between 2008 and 2010. This had given her a unique viewpoint on events in Ireland during the turbulence of the financial crisis and subsequent EU-IMF Bailout. During this time, she began to engage with Irish commentary in the diaspora media and this subsequently became the subject of her PhD research.

Ms Kirk began by discussing developments in the literature with particular emphasis on the work of Stephen Castles and Arjun Appadurai. Her research is framed by the presence of a worldwide Irish diaspora in which over 70million individuals claim Irish heritage. She is examining how the diaspora media represent 'Irishness' and Irish affairs and who it is they claim to represent. Ms Kirk also explores how news from Ireland is sourced by these diaspora outlets and compares treatment of issues in the Irish media with that in the diaspora media. Another prominent theme in her research is the treatment of the Irish diaspora by both the Government of Ireland and Irish citizens.

Ms Kirk has compared and contrasted Irish and diaspora coverage of the 2016 centenary events, the depiction of Irish football fans attending Euro 2016, and the issue of Irish migration itself with particular emphasis on the question of Irish transnational identity. One difficulty is the tendency to treat the Irish diaspora as a single entity despite the fact that it is made up of different geographic and cultural groups, that represent 'multiple diasporas from one homeland'. Her research shows that approximately 53 per cent of the material covered in the diaspora media relates to Ireland and that there are differences in the weighting afforded these different categories in different locations. For instance, Irish politics features much more prominently in the US diaspora press than it does in either Australia or Britain, whereas Irish sport and culture feature most prominently in the diaspora media in Britain. Her research shows that diaspora journalism can overcome quite reductionist views and that, being detached from the 'homeland', topics that are sensitive in Ireland can be addressed in a different way by the diaspora media.



Dr Margaret Brehony
NUI Galway

Dr Margaret Brehony (NUIG), an expert in colonialism and migration in Irish and Latin American contexts, discussed her research on migrant flows from Ireland to Cuba in the nineteenth century. While Cuba is not usually identified as a destination for Irish migrants, the Spanish colony was a destination for economic migrants in the early nineteenth-century. In her work, Dr Brehony examines hierarchies of race and gender while positioning this specific migratory experience within a context of race and class politics, at a time of nationalist struggles, in two colonial islands, on either side of the Atlantic.

Dr Brehony then discussed her career in the community voluntary sector where she worked with Travellers and migrants. She is currently a postdoctoral researcher in the Geography Department at NUI Galway working on an Irish Research Council project on Homelessness in Ireland. Dr Brehony also worked with the Irish Refugee Council for a period which had given her an insight into the way that Ireland was happy to sign up to international declarations on human rights while maintaining an ambiguous conceptualisation of entitlements for non-citizens. This had prompted her to pursue a PhD in Irish Studies, with a strong inter-disciplinary element. Dr Brehony then moved on to discuss how these kinds of experiences, outside academia, can inform a broad range of research.

Dr Brehony's research on the Irish in Cuba was framed within the process of migration to the Atlantic world and colonial 'whitening' (blanqueamiento) strategies in the Spanish Caribbean – an effort to 'whiten' the island's population, which had a black majority. Cuba ramped up slavery after the sugar boom in the aftermath of Haiti's independence, but this led to concerns about the racial mix on the island; the planter elite feared a repeat of what had occurred in Haiti. In 1818, colonial officials began to target Catholic migrants and recruited hundreds of Irish families, living in the United States, to come to Cuba in order to create some of the earliest "white colonies" or buffer zone between slave plantations and the white elites. Her research in the Cuban archives focusses in part on the experience of Irish women in these circumstances, and throws new light on the politics of gender and race in trans-cultural relationships with Cuba's majority African diaspora and immigrants from Europe in a frontier slavery region under Spanish colonial law.

Dr Sara Goek (Mellon/ACLS Public Fellow) discussed her research on Irish migration in the post-war era. She began by touching on the issue of reflexivity and her own experience as a return migrant to the United States due to the expiry of her visa.

As a social and cultural historian with interests in oral history, music, identity, and migration, Dr Goek's doctoral research at University College Cork encompassed each of these areas. She interviewed Irish traditional musicians who migrated to Britain and America between 1945 and 1970, many of whom later returned to Ireland. Most of the migrants that she interviewed were not professional musicians and had other occupations. The oral histories reflect on interrelated themes including migration, work, culture, community, social life, and ethnicity. Dr Goek's research also explores gender, class, and inter-generational issues related to migration.

The research considers musicians as migrants and music as an everyday cultural practice, both situated in historical and geographical contexts. Compared to the situation in their work environments, migrants had greater agency in how they socialized: they could choose to go to ethnic venues or not, or which ones. Musicians could choose to play more modern musical genres or to stick with the pure traditional. In making those choices, they positioned themselves within a spectrum of Irish identity and its class distinctions. Through these oral histories musicians and singers articulate the process by which they helped create a shared culture that their listeners could relate to, or in some cases chose to reject.

An important thread within this research is the question of mobility and the movement of migrants across and between places. Mobility, according to Dr Goek, is not just an elite concept. Working-class migrants are also highly mobile, capable of identifying with multiple places at once. Considering mobility and transnationalism raises questions fundamental to the human condition around the 'process' of migration and the concept of 'home'. Was the Ireland these individuals returned to, still 'home'? The way they answer that question varies depending on their life story and may change over time. As one individual interviewed by Dr Goek reflected, 'an emigrant's home is in their shoes'.

Dr Brian Hughes (Mary Immaculate College) is a historian of the Irish Revolution. His research has examined the impact of the Irish Revolution on individuals and communities, and specifically the use of intimidation and coercion by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) at a local level. He was previously a National University of Ireland Research Fellow, based at Maynooth University, where he worked on a project on the fate of southern Irish loyalists after the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922.



Dr Sara Goek
Mellon/ACLS
Public Fellow



Dr Brian Hughes
Mary Immaculate College

Dr Hughes is particularly interested in the movement of people in the years that followed the establishment of the Free State. While this area has been a subject of scholarly interest since the 1970s, there has been a surge in interest during the decade of commemorations. In his research, Dr Hughes concentrates on the fluidity of identities and seeks to interrogate the term 'loyalist' more deeply. His research also examines what became of southern loyalists after 1922 and whether terms such as 'ex-unionist' or 'ex-loyalist' do justice to a complex set of allegiances and identities.

According to Dr Hughes, applying blanket terms such as 'refugee' and 'loyalist' to those groups who left Ireland after the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922 is deeply problematic. The impact of Irish independence on the Protestant population in the twenty-six counties is reflected in the significant drop (33 per cent) in the non-Catholic population of the new state during its formative years. While the decline in the Free State's Protestant population has attracted scholarly attention, establishing the precise factors that influenced individual decisions to migrate remains problematic. It is difficult to determine if this Protestant 'exodus' was a consequence of Irish nationalist discrimination, and to what extent it was voluntary or involuntary. In addition, little has been written about the effects of migration on Irish Protestant loyalists and how they fared after leaving the Free State.

However, in terms of the concept of 'loyalism', the picture is much more nuanced. A large number of Catholic 'loyalists' also chose to leave Ireland in the aftermath of independence. Many of these 'Catholic loyalists' were either former members of the predominantly Catholic police force, the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC), or ex-British servicemen. Dr Hughes asks how those Catholics who left the new Free State would have thought about their own identity and to what extent political events or social networks were the determining factors for these individuals. The migration of ex-RIC members from the twenty-six-county area to the United Kingdom, after the force was disbanded in 1922, was reasonably well documented. Those ex-RIC men who moved to the new Northern state were also referred to as refugees even though many of them joined the newly established Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC).

As Mo Moulton has demonstrated, the migration of southern Irish loyalists (broadly defined) to Britain has rarely been characterised as immigration at all. Their own accounts suggest a far more complicated process of assimilation than might be assumed. More work remains to be done to uncover the place and experiences of southern Irish loyalists after 1922. Doing so also asks important questions about what it meant to be 'loyal', and particularly to be 'loyal' and Irish, in the first place.



Dr Regina Donlon
Maynooth

Dr Regina Donlon (Maynooth) began by stating that the key issue for her in relation to migration studies is identity formation and how this has evolved from the period of the Irish Famine migrants, of the mid-nineteenth century, up to those migrants who have departed since the financial crisis. The bulk of Dr Donlon's research is focussed on nineteenth-century migration, particularly German and Irish migration to the United States. In the 1990s there was a surge in scholarly interest in Irish-America. However, these studies tended to concentrate exclusively on individual Irish migrant communities. As a result, there is a plethora of works looking at the Irish in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia and in smaller towns in Massachusetts. However, no one had taken the inquiry west of the Appalachian Mountains. Dr Donlon addressed this lacuna in her PhD research, resolving that comparative and transnational study was necessary to truly understand the Irish migrant experience in its proper context.

Dr Donlon's focus on German and Irish migrants to the United States allowed her to compare two migrant groups under such criteria as class, religion and skills. She highlighted the pride Irish people take in having 'built America' during the nineteenth century while suggesting they never take it a step further by recognising that Germans had designed it! This speaks to the significance of understanding the Irish migrant experience in its broader context. The majority of Irish migrants who arrived in America in the 1840s and 1850s tended to be 'Famine emigrants' which gave them a distinct experience to cling to. Most Irish migrants came from the same social background being unskilled, Catholic, Democrat voters. They could use these labels to develop their identity. For example, in St. Louis, the Irish controlled the Catholic Church as well as politics in the city (and also at the state level in Missouri).

This stems from that unified sense of Irish migrant identity in the mid-nineteenth century. However, by contrast, the German migrants identified by Dr Donlon were a mix of Catholics and Protestants, straddled the social strata, could be Democrat or Republican voters in the United States, and arrived in America possessing a wide variety of skills. Therefore, the German migrant identity that emerged was not united around certain labels and they could not capitalise when power was 'up for grabs' in the cities.

Dr Donlon's contribution also focussed on the centrality of migration to Irish families and the phenomenon of identity building. She drew attention to the stigma surrounding the Irish Famine migrants and how subsequent waves of Irish migrants sought to differentiate themselves from the Irish arrivals of the 1840s/50s. Subsequent migration from Ireland has been represented rather differently. For example, during the 'Great Recession', migrants from Ireland were presented as the 'most educated' generation and as possessing desirable attributes such as liberal social and political attitudes.

PANEL DISCUSSION

There followed a lengthy discussion of "Victimhood" as a key narrative in Irish discourses of migration. Discussing the 'Irish undocumented', the commonly cited figure of 50,000 illegals in the United States was described as an exaggeration. Contributors argued that these undocumented Irish are not disadvantaged but are, in fact, part of a transnational elite. The centrality of victimhood in these narratives has fed the duplicitous and racially motivated proposal that the first Irish migrants to America were effectively slaves.

Discussion then turned to whether in Ireland we tend to miss the diversity of class, religion and ethnicity within Irish outward migration, because of an excessive focus on the exile/victim narrative. Wealthy Irish migrants have shaped societies elsewhere. Contributors wondered if the victim motif is of benefit to those who stayed behind in Ireland, enabling them to justify their decision to remain. Here, Irish exceptionalism was challenged with contributors drawing attention to Europe's long history of outward migration. Participants also discussed the issue of race and Irish migration. It is said that the Irish 'became white' in Australia and America. However, non-white Irish people who had to emigrate because they could not make a living here – e.g. from industrial schools because they were racialised by white nuns – did not share the customary advantages abroad of Irish ethnicity.

SESSION THREE

MIGRATION AND THE ARTS

CHAIR



Prof Gerardine Meaney
UCD

PANELLISTS

Patrick Crowley [UCC](#)
Aileen Dillane [Limerick](#)
Debbie Lisle [QUB](#)
Charlotte McIvor [NUI Galway](#)
Vukasin Nedeljkovic [DIT](#)
Tina O'Toole [Limerick](#)



Dr Patrick Crowley
[UCC](#)

Dr Patrick Crowley outlined his research on modern and contemporary cultural production in the French-speaking world, with a particular emphasis on poetic form – that is, the structure and genre of a literary work. His early research focussed on how generic elements of the novel, biography, autobiography and essay are incorporated into contemporary hybrid forms of French prose works to produce texts that unsettle the protocols of genre and conventional identity. Dr Crowley then discussed how his work relates to migration. He began to consider literary form from French colonial and Francophone post-colonial perspectives and to ask how literary forms have travelled to the French colonies and also how they have travelled back to post-colonial France. Dr Crowley considers the ways in which French literature has been adapted, appropriated or subverted by North African and Caribbean writers. These questions have helped him to rethink genre and analyse cultural encounters and exchange through productive notions of hybridity. He has a particular interest in modernist, experimental and hybrid forms of Algerian Francophone literature and its constant interrogation of colonial history and its legacies both within Algeria and within post-colonial, post-migratory communities in contemporary France.

Over the past fifteen years Dr Crowley has collaborated with colleagues in social studies. Moreover, he has also contributed to postgraduate courses on migration and diaspora studies after receiving an invitation from Dr Piaras Mac Éinrí to contribute to the MA on Contemporary Migration & Diaspora Studies at UCC. Dr Crowley is a member of the Institute for Social Sciences 21 (ISS21) Migration and Integration Research Cluster where he was a co-organiser of the 'Crisis, Mobility and New Forms of Migration' conference held in UCC in 2014. In 2015 he received funding from the Irish Research Council for a workshop designed to examine how the European Union funds cultural associations and cultural production in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia via the European neighbourhood policy. As this related to the EU's long-term policy of reinforcing border stability he expanded the project and, with Claire Dorrity (Department of Applied Social Studies, UCC) and Caitriona Ni Laoire (Department of Applied Social Studies and convenor of the ISS21 research cluster on migration and integration at UCC), co-organised a workshop titled Mediterranean Crisis and EU Cultural Policies. Since 2015 he has worked on three editorial projects relating to North Africa: a special issue of *Studies in Travel Writing* on cultural encounters in the Maghreb (specifically Algeria); a special issue of *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies* titled 'The Contemporary Roman Maghrébin: Aesthetics, Politics, Production 2000-2015' and an edited volume on Algeria titled *Algeria: Nation, Culture and Transnationalism 1988-2015*.

Dr Aileen Dillane (UL) began by defining Ethnomusicology as the study of music-making and music in its cultural context. In some respects, the discipline has its roots in the early twentieth-century era of European imperialism and to a certain extent was linked to colonial enterprises. However, Ethnomusicology emerged as a distinct field in response to the hegemony of western art-forms when people realised there was a whole world of music beyond western art-music. These include: folk musics, local musics, and popular musics. Dr Dillane is a specialist in Irish music with research interests in ethnicity, identity, critical and cultural theory in addition to the folk, traditional, and popular music of Ireland, the UK, North America, and Australia. Ethnomusicology is, therefore, quite reflexive and prone to interrogate itself about representation and 'giving voice' (i.e. facilitating voices to be heard rather than mediating those voices). At its core, ethnomusicology is about why we make music and why that is important. It is about genre, text, and context but it is also about creativity, process, and people.

In her contribution, Dr Dillane discussed the concept of music as something that travels very naturally regardless of whether one is a musician or a consumer of music. Music is at the core of expressing identity. She also reflected on her doctoral research at the University of Chicago. There, with the city's bars as her field, Dr Dillane's research focussed on the musical mediation of identity through musical forms. This research was conducted at a time in the late 1990s and early 2000s when Irish music was already global in reach. Dr Dillane found herself studying the musical performance of Irishness in Chicago, a city with a history of mediating Irish identity through music. Her research has considered the creation of music in the context of this dynamic, multi-cultural environment. Chicago encompasses the whole spectrum from conservatism, with people feeling the need to maintain a connection to a perceived authentic Ireland, to experimental radicalism reflective of the multi-cultural matrix of the big city. In turn, this leads to a creative tension. Dr Dillane's recent work considers the creation of music in the context of this dynamic, multi-cultural environment.

Bringing things closer to home, Dr Dillane shifted her attention to the Shannon and Limerick-based group the 'Rusangano Family', whose members are award winning artists as well as community musicians (two of whom are from migrant families and one who is from Shannon). The group is an important contributor to the vibrant multicultural music scene in Ireland. Introducing the piece 'Heathrow', Dr Dillane referenced the previous day's discussion of Activism and Agency, the Asylum Process & Direct Provision and how to find ways of facilitating creativity. This was, she argued, happening already through globalised music forms such as rap. 'Heathrow' speaks to these issues and reaches out to migrants and migrant youth, as well as to broader audiences because of its creative strength.

Most importantly, Dr Dillane wanted to emphasise that artists and musicians are often well ahead of formal policy in terms of fighting for rights of people new to Ireland, through documenting and speaking to lived experiences. 'Heathrow' is a textbook example of articulate and engaged critique of the problems faced by asylum seekers making their way to Ireland and other European destinations. Like various forms of writing and theatre currently created by migrants or first generation immigrants in Ireland, music making is already happening in and across various communities. We, as academics, simply need to tune in and learn more.

Professor Debbie Lisle (QUB) focussed on mobilities and migration in relation to borders and border-security technology. She has been working with Dublin airport and Heathrow on the question of the Irish border in the aftermath of Brexit. Professor Lisle's most recent book 'Holidays in the Danger Zone' examined the entanglements between war and tourism. In her presentation, Professor Lisle also questioned the exceptionalism of the 2015 'Migrant Crisis'. She had carried out some fieldwork in Kos, in the Greek islands, which contests this framing of 'crisis' and 'exceptionalism'. She is currently working with an art gallery in Belfast on a project that brings together artists working on these interconnected issues.

Professor Lisle spoke to some of the themes that were identified over the course of the two-day workshop. She began by referring to 'neo-liberal framing', declaring that scholars need to consider the use of this term. Framing something as 'neo-liberalism' means you are creating 'neo-liberalism' as a real thing. There is a need for a different set of concepts to explore the multiple heterogeneous forces that neo-liberalism produces and masks.



Dr Aileen Dillane
UL



Prof Debbie Lisle
QUB

She argued that we need to think more about heterogeneity and multiplicity rather than loading everything into something called 'neo-liberalism' which reduces everything to economics when, in fact, there are several different registers at work. Professor Lisle believes we need to reconsider our approach to questions surrounding 'mobility' and how it relates to static concepts such as power, security and sovereignty. Even the comparative frame is a static frame as is the transnational frame that buys into sovereign logics.

Professor Lisle also discussed how academics can engage ethically in current debates concerning migration. For her, scholars should engage with a sense of deep discomfort. She described academic privilege and creating the space for migrant voices rather than monopolising the issue for research. Scholars must not congratulate themselves for identifying these issues or for engaging in this field of study. Professor Lisle believes that we must remain uncomfortable with our own positions of privilege while warning that the Humanities are facing enormous challenges. Despite the rich array of research being carried out by Humanities scholars, across the range of disciplines, they are not being involved in projects that are highly relevant to these debates. The Humanities can be the most critical voices and she warned that this can be perceived as a threat, with the possibility that funding calls are re-framed/re-structured to inhibit or in some way curb that critical voice.



Dr Charlotte McIvor
NUI Galway

Dr Charlotte McIvor (NUI Galway) began by situating herself. She is the daughter of an Irish immigrant to the United States and this has enabled her to draw down Irish citizenship through her father. This, she argued, says a great deal about the nature of Irish citizenship. Dr McIvor specialises in intercultural performance at the intersection of migration and critical race and gender studies. She was the recipient of an Irish Research Council Starter Grant (2014-2015) for the project "Interculturalism, Migration and Performance in Contemporary Ireland".

Dr McIvor went on to discuss the recent publication of her first book, "Migration and Contemporary Performance in Ireland: Towards a New Interculturalism" (Palgrave, 2016). The book investigates how Interculturalism performs at the intersection of social policy and aesthetic practice through a case study of Irish theatre and performance post-1990s. It proposes a new framework for analysing Interculturalism in theatre and performance studies, firstly, by theorising the use of Interculturalism as a keyword of social policy and not only aesthetic experimentation and, secondly, by examining its role in one historically specific location. Using case studies from theatre, dance, photography, and activist actions, Dr McIvor's new book explores major debates over aesthetic Interculturalism in theatre and performance studies since the 1970s and analyses Irish social Interculturalism in a contemporary European social and cultural policy context. Drawing together the work of professional and community practitioners who frequently identify as both artists and activists, "Migration and Contemporary Performance in Ireland: Towards a New Interculturalism" proposes a new paradigm for the study of Irish theatre and performance while contributing to the wider investigation of migration and performance.

Since the book was completed, the ground has continued to shift. Dr McIvor noted that we were currently in the middle of the worst humanitarian crisis in terms of displaced peoples since WWII and that western politics had shifted to the right. There had also been a growth in theatre productions and projects in Ireland thematised around migration (and particularly refugees and those seeking asylum). Brokentalkers' "This Beach", Fionnuala Gyax's "Hostel 16", Outlandish Theatre Platform's "Megalomaniac" and Catherine Young Dance's work "Welcoming the Stranger" for the Roger Casement Project had premiered during 2016. There was ample evidence to suggest that 'Interculturalism' has not receded as a keyword (particularly in its incarnation as 'intercultural dialogue').

Dr McIvor is currently working to expand her project by engaging in a comparative European study. She will examine how the arts are used instrumentally to challenge discourses of integration, multiculturalism and interculturalism, and what happens when we chart the development of EU policy on multi/Interculturalism since the late 1990s alongside the growth in the study of migrant/minority ethnic theatre cultures as well as theatre concerning those who are refugees/seeking asylum. This will underline the relationship between theatre, performance and citizenship. Is there a theatre of crisis being generated that works to politically neutralise these subjects by offering arts engagement in place of other kinds of political enfranchisement?

How are we, as researchers/practitioners, implicated in these structures of power and how might we productively challenge these structures? Continuing to make visible the history and ongoing output of "New Irish" and minority ethnic artists, we should not be waiting for these artists to emerge but take seriously the sustained diversification of our national population and the work that has emerged in both community and professional contexts, paying special attention to the barriers to professionalisation experienced by minority ethnic artists.

Vukasin Nedeljkovic (DIT), a PhD student at Dublin Institute of Technology, discussed his work on direct provision and the Asylum Archive. His work focusses on positionality and treatment of asylum seekers within the Irish state. In his contribution, he provided a brief history of direct provision, charting its inauguration in November 1999 to accommodate asylum seekers. There were more than 150 centres located across the country, some of which include former convents, army barracks, hotels, and holiday homes. Most of the centres are situated outside of cities, on the periphery of society. As a consequence, opportunities for integration are reduced. These asylum-seekers end up living in over-crowded, un-hygienic conditions where families with children are often forced to share small rooms. The management controls their food-intake, their movements, the supply of bed-linen, and cleaning materials. This is a product of exerting their authority and power. Legally, these centres constitute a 'direct provision industry' which makes profit on the backs of the asylum seekers.

He described the unknown identity of asylum seekers. Direct Provision centres separate and conceal asylum seekers from mainstream society which ultimately works against their long-term integration. He then moved on to discuss direct provision as 'ghettoised environment', framing the system as a continuation of Ireland's history with institutional asylums: borstals, Magdalene Laundries, Mother & Baby Homes, and 'lunatic asylums'. When the Irish state initiated the direct provision scheme, it deliberately constructed a space where institutional racism could be readily instituted explicitly through the threat of transfer to different accommodation or deportation, implicitly through marginalisation and regimes of control. In this sense, the direct provision centres are the place where the 'bottom has dropped out of everything'.

Nedeljkovic then spoke about his own experience when he was housed in direct provision from April 2007 to November 2009 while seeking refugee status. The Asylum Archive grew from that experience and he kept himself intact by capturing and communicating with the environment through photographs and video. This creative process helped him to overcome confinement and incarceration. Through the Asylum Archive he examined the notion of direct provision, constructing a theoretical framework around the issues of memory, power, authority, detention and supervision. While the Asylum Archive began as a coping mechanism when he was in the process of seeking refugee status in Ireland it is now directly concerned with the realities and traumatic lives of asylum seekers. Its main objective is to collaborate with asylum seekers, artists, academics, and civic society activists amongst others with a view to creating a documentary platform and online resource which brings forward accounts of exile, displacement, trauma and memory. Asylum Archive is a platform open for dialogue and discussion inclusive of individuals who have experienced sociological and geographic displacement; memory loss; trauma; and violence. It is accessible, due to its online presence, to future researchers and scholars who may wish to undertake study of direct provision in Ireland.

Dr Tina O'Toole (UL) is a literary scholar with research interests in Irish writing (primarily in late nineteenth- and twentieth-century culture), the history of sexualities, and migrant and transnational literatures. She began by describing herself as working at the nexus between literary history and gender and sexuality studies. Two of Dr O'Toole's books focus on the retrieval of Irish women's writing with a specialism in the late nineteenth-century/early twentieth-century. She also has a long-standing interest and engagement in feminist and queer activism. Five years ago (having co-edited a 2012 special issue of "Éire-Ireland" with Piaras MacÉinrí on "Irish Migrations") she worked with a colleague in UL to co-design a postgraduate module on literary migrations. This gave Dr O'Toole the opportunity to read and teach across a range of, mostly twentieth-century, Irish literature and literature of the Americas.



Vukasin Nedeljkovic
DIT



Dr Tina O'Toole
UL

One of the lessons of her involvement in this module was her realisation of the extent to which Irish literature is predicated on the central narrative of migration. In a period of mass migration, literature and culture more generally became a crucial component in explaining this narrative to ourselves. We tend to forget that James Joyce, Kate O'Brien, Elizabeth Bowen and Samuel Beckett were all migrants and that this where much of our literature is coming from.

The majority of the women writers that Dr O'Toole has researched were Irish feminist writers of the 1890s who migrated across the British colonial system. Dr O'Toole then focussed on what she described as the 'semi-nomadic' life that George Egerton lived, in penury, in Dublin before moving to New York, Norway and London (with a stint in Millstreet, Cork, in between). We know from Egerton's correspondence that members of her family were positioned across different parts of the imperial world.

Dr O'Toole then described on her long-standing engagement with migration. On a personal level she identifies with the late 1980s / early 1990s generation who emigrated in large numbers. Growing up, she had always assumed that she would not be able to remain in Ireland. She recalled that the song played at her school-leaving concert was 'Leaving on a Jet Plane!' Although she had remained living in Ireland, many friends had migrated to other parts of the world. Dr O'Toole recalled that, when she first became involved in activism, she maintained a regular correspondence with close friends who were doing exactly the same thing in Stockholm, San Francisco, New York, and London. In microcosm, their experience gestures to that of so many other kinship groups. More specifically, Dr O'Toole drew attention to the development of queer kinship networks of those who emigrated in large numbers in the late 1980s/early 1990s and relied on the few who stayed behind in Ireland to connect back in. The networks she referred to became publicly visible, for the first time, during the 'Home to Vote' aspect of the 2015 Marriage Equality Referendum. Members of this group would have shared a broadly similar background, well-educated white-Irish, working- or lower middle-class.

In concluding, Dr O'Toole discussed what it is that the arts, humanities and literature contribute in terms of migration. The literature she studies made available an affective space in which nineteenth- and twentieth- century Irish people, both those who migrated and those who remained in Ireland, could identify, explain and to some extent begin to transcend the breach caused by emigration. Literature also has a commemorative function. The experience of those young gay men who returned home to die here in Ireland during the 1980s and 1990s is memorialised in novels such as "The Blackwater Lightship". The Arts continually, on a shoestring budget, create spaces in communities and civic society for us to interact and transact different kinds of things and to forge communities. Dr O'Toole referenced as examples the community garden near the Direct Provision accommodation centre in Clonakilty in West Cork, created by members of the local community in collaboration with people living in DP, and also a queer community choir in Cork city which includes members from nine different countries who speak twelve languages between them.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Participants considered the common threads surrounding material culture and expression. Dr O'Toole referred back to the early Irish emigrants who worked as domestic servants, etc. While less literature and written records survive from working class migrants, we find that material culture has been handed down, in textiles or quilt-making, for example. Work has also been done on the clothes that were sent to America. Dr Dillane described music as one of the most material and non-material entities. It can be found in traces in songbooks or recordings from the 1920s. Sometimes it is only through re-performance or re-engagement that it takes on a new materiality, occasionally leaning back into older narratives, enabling textual and contextual readings. Dr Dillane also drew attention to projects where migrants and asylum seekers can be brought to a space where they can sing.

This is a recognition that people have emotional and creative needs in addition to basic requirements in terms of food, housing etc. By using an instrument, you momentarily cease being an asylum seeker and become a musician. Those moments can be transformative. Dr McIvor observed that while theatre was a particularly stubborn material form, it is also a form where discourses of 'live-ness' and the utopian performative can become romanticised. It can be a struggle to balance the utopian and the material, which can disrupt that utopian possibility. Vukasin Nedeljkovic noted an effort within the visual arts discourse to work with asylum seekers. However, he pointed out the importance of not 'othering' asylum seekers and to avoid romanticising them,

Professor Lentin asked if we are afraid of 'the other' whom we research. Why is it that as scholars, in broad terms, we are still 'talking to ourselves' about migration? She also queried the sudden interest of funding bodies in questions related to migration. Lucky Khambule, who works with people living in direct provision, then spoke about various issues that had been raised during the workshop. Asylum seekers in Ireland feel it is important that they, themselves, are heard and that no one else should speak on their behalf. People who speak on their behalf are usually shut-down, but when you speak for yourself nobody can silence you. He also emphasised the singular importance of education to everybody in direct provision. The barriers to education were a major grievance to people in direct provision.

It was therefore imperative that the research being carried out will have positive results and can influence policy. He also praised Vukasin Nedeljkovic's presentation, noting that the images captured in his slideshow presentation help to visualise what is happening inside direct provision centres. He noted that there are serious health issues among those in direct provision, including mental health issues which are not really discussed. In response, Professor Meaney said that it was critical that academics pursue the issues related to education and direct provision, and that the Irish Humanities Alliance would seek to positively influence policy in this area.



Lucky Khambule
Spokesperson for MASI-
movement of Asylum
Seekers in Ireland

SESSION FOUR

GENDER/POLITICS/RACE

CHAIR



Dr Charlotte McIvor
NUI Galway

PANELLISTS

Ronit Lentin [TCD](#)
John Morrissey [NUI Galway](#)
Anne Mulhall [UCD](#)
Kevin O'Sullivan [NUI Galway](#)
Jennifer Redmond [Maynooth](#)



Dr Anne Mulhall
[UCD](#)

Dr Anne Mulhall ([UCD](#)) outlined her research interests in the areas of migration studies and identity. Her work is deeply involved with critiquing structural racism, migration and deportation. Ten years ago, Dr Mulhall worked alongside migrant women writers on an outreach project, entitled, 'Women Writers in the New Ireland'. To take her research outside the university by initiating this project, Dr Mulhall described a process of transition from analysing texts to collaborating with people. As a critic, she has given a lot of thought to the question of who benefits from this type of research by drawing attention to the 'academic capital to be gained from being a critical/radical voice around issues of gender, race or class' despite there being a disconnect with the people at the coal-face of these issues. Among the issues highlighted in the network were discrepancies in terminology with the tendency of some members to openly describe themselves as 'expats' rather than 'migrants'. Within this network there were members who determinedly described themselves as 'expats'. Other members of the network had come through the direct provision system. Dr Mulhall recently discovered that one of the women writers in the group ended up being deported. This underlined her point about the ethics of research in this area and raises an important issue about who benefits from this research. She described a complex relationship between research and migrant cultural production. Researchers become the beneficiaries of the research whereas the people who are the creators of the material do not benefit and may suffer for the visibility it brings.

In terms of literary studies, Dr Mulhall also discussed the issue of cultural production and appropriating cultural outputs to research. She described a parasitic process of waiting for the work to appear so that it could be critiqued and a career in literary criticism be fashioned. The issue is not to appropriate these outputs to our research but rather to critique the institutions that prevent people gaining access. Dr Mulhall suggested that academia cease thinking about the cultural production of people who are of migrant background in Ireland as potential subjects of research. It was important that these outputs, which are other people's work, are not appropriated by academics for the purpose of career advancement. It must be possible, she argued, to find ways of improving access and amplifying the concerns of migrants in Ireland without claiming ownership. She described the distance between being a researcher and being a political actor who is acting in solidarity with people. She was not sure if these two things are reconcilable and believed that her engagement with migration now occurs through activism. This had helped her learn about how little is known within academe and appreciate that academics are not always the people best placed to articulate what is happening. Dr Mulhall is, essentially, in the process of working out how to 'step aside' and let migrant voices take centre stage.

Dr John Morrissey (NUIG) outlined his interest in how migration is understood via multiple ontologies of security and its attendant bio-politics and legal mechanisms. He has been working on how specific discourses of securitisation have been instrumental in framing security and governmental regimes of power and how they might be resisted by formulating and trying to strategize alternative subjectivities. For the past ten years Dr Morrissey has been working with students in Bosnia and Herzegovina on a programme that he directs at NUI Galway (the MA in Environment, Society and Development). There, he has learned much about contesting security – for whom and for what – by working and writing with community leaders and activists on projects dovetailing security with a range of concerns, from gender to climate justice.



Dr John Morrissey
NUI Galway

Dr Morrissey began his presentation by citing the 1994 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme as a key announcement of the import of human security for the twenty-first century. The report set out a people-centred concept of human security in which 'security' is understood in the context of human life, dignity and human rights, and not by hegemonic statist concerns of arms, borders and policing. Human security as a guiding principle of locally-attuned interventionary strategies has been increasingly adopted in the Global South, and exhibits a politics that is invested with an explicit focus on those who are most marginalised from institutional decision-making: poor people, women, children, the elderly and migrants. In the Global North, however, old statist ontologies of securitisation have persisted. The hard security issues of borders, policing, bombs, bullets and conflict were further emboldened during the war on terror.

Dr Morrissey's work over the past decade has considered American interventionary violence in the Middle East, which has been underpinned by economic interests, and enabled via various bio-political frameworks of security. His new book, *The Long War*, examines many of these issues, in which he focusses on US Central Command, or CENTCOM, the command responsible for the military management of one of six 'Areas of Responsibility' divvied up by the US military in our contemporary world. He referenced various CENTCOM Commanders who have repeatedly claimed that their mission is centrally about securing the Middle East from itself. CENTCOM's interventionary violence, however, in the Middle East and Central Asia over the last thirty years has everything to do with not just the crisis in migration seen in Europe, but also multiple migrations across the region.

His current IRC-funded 'HAVEN' project focusses on the EU's response to the Mediterranean refugee crisis. It involves post-graduate fieldwork in camps in France and Hungary; an international symposium; and a book. It tries to think through an alternative vision of western interventionism. For Dr Morrissey, resourcing interventions of a different kind is absolutely critical. It's about what we choose to invest in and whether we can learn from examples in the Global South. The evidence would suggest the EU's security thinking is impoverished: ethically, intellectually and in terms of effective policy, with migrants treated as a source of insecurity rather than being seen as a consequence of insecurity. He argued that the EU should strategize for a politics of solidarity not pity, and remarked on the morass of overly instrumental H2020 research calls on migration.

Dr Morrissey maintained that we need to increasingly advocate for an AHSS-led research agenda that aims to bring together scholars, policy-makers, activists and refugees and migrants themselves to creatively consider how to respond to what is the most pivotal societal challenge for the European Union today. There is a need to challenge the negative portrayal of migration, both in the media and within many political organisations. AHSS scholars can play vital roles in theorising more humane, nuanced and historically and geographically sensitive accounts of the crisis that resist the allure of simplified, responsive representations of 'Us' and 'Them'. This must be increasingly done with a firm eye on engaged public scholarship, especially in our so-called post-truth world.

Dr Kevin O'Sullivan (NUIG) began his career as a diplomatic historian before developing an interest in the relationship between Ireland and Africa as it was structured through NGOs and other channels. His primary research focus is Western intervention in the post-colonial world and the way in which Ireland's identity was constructed in that context. His first book, *Ireland, Africa and the End of Empire: Small State Identity in the Cold War, 1955-75* (Manchester University Press, 2012), explores Africa's impact on Irish foreign policy in the twenty years after Ireland joined the United Nations. He has also published an article in the *Irish Historical Studies* about the concept of Ireland as a caring nation and how this has been portrayed on the international stage by successive Irish governments since the state joined the UN in 1955.



Dr Kevin O'Sullivan
NUI Galway

He is currently working on a transnational history of humanitarianism, using NGOs in Britain, Canada and Ireland to explore the emergence of the contemporary humanitarian 'industry' and the globalisation of intervention between the late 1960s and the mid-1980s. That period – spanning the Biafran humanitarian crisis (considered the first televised famine) and Live Aid – transformed the NGO sector and with it our understanding of humanitarian aid.

Dr O'Sullivan is particularly interested in how people in the west encountered the Third World through the medium of humanitarianism. Over the past five years he has also worked extensively with humanitarian NGOs in Ireland, Britain and France to encourage the use of history as a tool for humanitarian policy-making. Understanding the historical construction of the sector is vital to an industry which, by its very nature, tends to work within a perpetual present.

Dr O'Sullivan is particularly drawn to the global North/South dynamic and where Ireland fits in that context. This is a recurring theme in his work, including articles in the "Irish Historical Studies" (2013) and the "Journal of Genocide Research" (2014), in which he investigated Irish attitudes to the South. In the Irish response to Biafra, for example, despite identifying with an anti-colonial perspective, Ireland adopted the same language and practices in humanitarianism as British NGOs. Irish missionary magazines talked about the humanitarian 'crusade' in West Africa, while Concern's activities conformed to a model of paternalism visible in other NGOs like Oxfam and Save the Children. The problem, however, is that it is easy to pick on such unfortunate uses of language and practice – researchers must be mindful of how good intentions become re-packaged into something altogether less beneficial to those they purport to help. One of Dr O'Sullivan's key research interests is to explore the logic of a system that produces these kinds of outcomes. Archives are vital to that process. There has been an explosion in the historiography of humanitarianism over the past ten years as the archives of Western NGOs have been made available. For instance, the Oxfam records were recently deposited in the Bodleian and, from preliminary investigation, will be a major resource for historical research in this area.



Prof Ronit Lentin
TCD

Professor Ronit Lentin (TCD) described her current research as predominantly concerned with race and racism, with a specialist focus on Palestine. She draws on the migrant experience of her parents and her own knowledge of the Middle East. When she began working on racism and immigration in Ireland there was a lot of commentary on Ireland's relatively recent experience of inward migration and a denial that the Irish can be racist. However, she queried the idea that Ireland's experience of inward migration is either recent or 'sudden'. Professor Lentin objected to the notion of European mono-culturalism morphing into multiculturalism since all of Europe was, historically, a source of migration to other parts of the world. The same was true of Ireland. She drew on Irish history to demonstrate that there had been successive waves of inward migration into Ireland. She asked 'who are the Irish?' and pointed out that the Celts, the Vikings, the Normans, the Saxons and the Huguenots had all come to Ireland over the past 1,200 years or so.

Professor Lentin also critiqued the idea of Irish exceptionalism and deconstructed the idea that Ireland is either 'friendly' or 'welcoming' to newcomers as a myth. During the early 1990s, Ireland became an attractive destination for migrants and asylum seekers, but this was not embraced as a positive development. Instead politicians spoke of a 'migration problem' or a 'refugee problem'. Professor Lentin also referenced cases of anti-migrant/refugee violence. Political discourses of 'problems' can be linked to these instances of violence on the streets. She made reference to racialisation and the common tendency of Irish people to ask 'where do you come from?'

Professor Lentin also discussed her recent research on the disavowal of the existence of asylum seekers in direct provision. She drew parallels between Ireland's history of such institutions as Mother & Baby Homes and present-day direct provision centres. Once again, Ireland 'manages not to know' even though their existence is obvious. She described the way that people are forced to live within direct provision centres as 'unacceptable'. Professor Lentin also discussed Irish involvement in both the Catholic Church missions and aspects of British colonialism, as administrators or soldiers.

She then moved on to examine the ethics of academia, activism and politics, and questioned why academics often separate themselves from their politics. In conclusion, she felt that scholars needed to be conscious of this issue when they researched migration and racism and suggested it was time for those of us with permanent jobs and positions of security to 'move aside,' make space for migrants and let migrants tell their own stories.

Dr Jennifer Redmond (Maynooth) discussed the three main strands to her research on migration. She first developed an interest in women migrants on account of the archetypal Irish emigrant to Britain being the man – ‘the navvy’. This seemed to leave out women’s specific experiences which were qualitatively different to those of men. Discussion of Irish women who migrated to Britain has tended to focus on women who left in order to escape social censure (for example, pregnancy outside of marriage). This, Dr Redmond argues, is degrading to women because it overlooks the role of women in the economy as active participants. She discussed the challenge of reframing women migrants, not as victims of Catholic intolerance, but as economic agents.

Dr Redmond’s research also challenges numerous myths about the Second World War, in both Ireland and Britain. Dr Redmond has sifted through 23,000 surviving Travel Permit applications in the National Archives of Ireland from Irish migrants in Britain during the war, 15,000 of them generated by women. This evidence challenges national myths about the Second World War and Ireland’s neutrality. It reveals the important role that Irish migrants played in the British war effort. Approximately 100,000 migrants from Ireland worked in British home front industries. Ireland also sent men and women to the frontlines and engaged in other activities that compromise the idea that the Irish state was neutral in the war. Dr Redmond highlighted the ways in which this also challenges Britain’s notion of itself during the war. British narratives of the Second World War have underplayed immigrant contributions to the war effort. Within Ireland itself there is a reluctance to acknowledge the ways in which the Second World War impacted on everyday life. When discussing these issues with students, Dr Redmond points out that contemporary discourses that accuse migrants of lowering local wages & conditions or over-subscribing local accommodation were historically levelled at the Irish who went to Britain. She asks her students to recognise the parallels between current inward migration and emigration in Irish history.

Addressing conversations that had been happening over the course of the two-day workshop, Dr Redmond discussed related issues in her research on the revolutionary period in Ireland. She has come to consider the question of masculinity and migration. She noted that the notion of men as gendered human beings is something that has been largely unaddressed by historians. The historical profession has been stubbornly resistant to thinking in these terms. She received Irish Research Council New Foundations funding to hold two symposia on the topic of Revolutionary Masculinities in 2016 and 2017 which will result in a special issue of a journal.



Dr Jennifer Redmond
Maynooth

PANEL DISCUSSION

In a broad ranging discussion of the issues raised during this session, participants considered: categorisation; research ethics in migration studies; NGOs; human rights; issues related to research and activism; and multiculturalism. Responding to the issues raised by Dr Mulhall, Dr Mac Éinri addressed the issue of ethics, NGOs and our responsibilities as academic researchers. He felt it was a complex question and believed that 'stepping aside', in some instances, could undermine efforts to make progress on these issues. He also felt the conundrum would not be dealt with if there was no research taking place. There then followed a discussion on the role and nature of NGOs, historically, and in relation to migration.

The study of identity was also considered, with some attendees suggesting that it was a consciously political way of disrupting the 'Us' and 'Them' dynamic. Professor Lentin stated that she was opposed to categorisation from above, which she saw as connected to the issue of power, but would not oppose it if it comes from below. Culture was also problematic as it is often used to both categorise and 'solve' political problems. The culturalisation of race had been detrimental. She also queried why academics feel the need to separate academia and politics and why academics believe they must 'give up' their activism? Academics are human, and part of being human is being politically active or not as the case may be. The fact that we are academics should not mean we automatically have to let go of our politics and our activism. If the matter was down to compromised objectivity this was ridiculous because, she argued, objective academics do not exist! She also touched on the 'human rights' discourse and its Eurocentric nature and described NGOs as self-perpetuating agencies.

SESSION FIVE

WAYS FORWARD FOR RESEARCH AND COLLABORATION

CHAIR



Prof Daniel Carey
NUI Galway

PANELLISTS

Ríona Ní Fhrighil [NUI Galway](#)
Allen White [UCC](#)



Dr Ríona Ní Fhrighil
[NUI Galway](#)

Dr Ríona Ní Fhrighil (NUIG), outlined the background to her interdisciplinary Aistriú project, proposed as part of the Galway application to be the 2020 'European Capital for Culture'. Dr Ní Fhrighil and eight colleagues from across the School of Humanities and Languages, and representing a range of disciplines including Gaeilge, School of Languages, Film, Theatre and Irish Studies, developed the project. In its genesis, the project was conceived as a 'push back' against the decorative or symbolic function of the Irish language in the first iteration of the bid.

The project team felt, very strongly, that rather than responding to the theme of Language, as it was assumed they would do, that they would instead address the theme of migration. As academics working with texts – song, folklore, literary texts, autobiographical material and journalism, from the seventeenth century to the present – they came to the view that there was a wealth of material that provides a vocabulary and representations that attest to the long experience of migration & emigration, especially among Irish-speakers. These texts are highly relevant to contemporary challenges and to the discourse around migration. This project's emphasis will be on critical engagement that contests and refines received narratives about migration.

Canonical writers such as Pádraic Ó Conaire (1882-1928), and Máirtín Ó Cadhain (1906-1970) recorded aspects of the exhilaration and trauma associated with migration, including the culture-shock felt by those who had to adjust to a new English-language culture. Both writers also dealt with issues of class and race in their writings.

Neilí Uí Bheaglaoich provided a female perspective in her autobiographical account of working as a domestic servant in a Jewish household in Chicago during the 1920s and 1930s. More recently, Irish-language writers such as Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, Louis de Paor and Alex Hijmans, a Brazil-based Dutch national who writes only in Irish, have interrogated themes concerning cultural and linguistic assimilation and the forced migration of other ethnic communities, across Europe and throughout the world.

Indeed, Alan Titley's prescient 2009 novel "Gluaiseacht" (movement in the physical, political and musical senses) tells the story of two minors making a dangerous crossing by water to be smuggled into Europe. This work challenges the myth of exceptionality.

Dr Ní Fhrighil said that the Aistriú project will work across academic disciplines, art-forms, and languages while attempting to reach as wide and as diverse an audience as possible. Excerpts from twenty-five Irish-language texts, documenting aspects of migration in various contexts, will be chosen. Working with the School of Languages in NUIG, the European Federation of Associations, and Centres of Irish Studies (EFACIS), translations from various languages, texts themselves will migrate and be refracted by other linguistic and cultural contexts. Artists from across Europe will be invited to collaborate or create new work in response to the translated Irish language texts.

While Galway is the European Capital of Culture in 2020, these translated texts will be presented to the general public. It is also envisaged that an anthology of the translated texts would be suitable for use by educators and students at both senior cycle and third level. This would be the first publication of its kind and would have a positive impact on curriculum design. A dedicated interactive website will also be adaptable to a classroom setting, potentially incorporating exercises around the texts.



Dr Allen White
UCC

Dr Allen White (UCC), an expert in transnational migration, children, asylum, refugees and racism, discussed the work of UCC's 'Migration and Integration' research cluster. The cluster has brought together researchers from a wide range of disciplines including Applied Psychology, Applied Social Studies, Education, Geography, Languages, Law, Philosophy, Sociology and the Study of Religions. These researchers share an interest in issues of migration, integration and cultural diversity. These include asylum, social services, gender & migration, migrant children & young people, narratives of identity, globalisation, institutional racism, human rights, post-colonialism and cultural identity.

The 'Migration and Integration' research cluster has organised a number of conferences and workshops. In July 2014 it arranged a two-day workshop on the theme: the 'EU and the Southern Mediterranean'. This event brought together activists and academics from Ireland, Britain and Europe. Moreover, in September 2014 UCC hosted a major international conference on the theme of Crisis, Mobility and New Forms of Migration. The conference explored the multiple ways in which contemporary economic, social and political crises in Europe (and globally) intersect with new and old patterns of migration-related mobility. It examined the ways in which the economic crisis has had a profound influence on societies, across Europe and beyond its borders, with major implications for migration and integration.

As part of the conference, the cluster also hosted the launch, by Dr Sarah Spencer, of four books in which members of the cluster were contributors:

1. Mary Gilmartin and Allen White (eds), "[Migrations: Ireland in a Global World](#)" (Manchester University Press, 2013).
2. Rosarii Griffin (ed.), "[Education in Indigenous, Nomadic and Travelling Communities](#)" (Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).
3. Mehmet Okyayuz, Peter Herrmann, Claire Dorrity (eds.), "[Migration – Global Processes Caught in National Answers](#)" (Weinar Verlag, 2014).
4. Angela Veale and Giorgiá Doná (eds), "[Child and Youth Migration: Mobility-in-Migration in an Era of Globalization](#)" (Palgrave MacMillan, 2014).

The ISS21 (Institute for Social Science in the Twenty-First Century) has, therefore, placed a lot of work and emphasis in recent years on developing international networks and interdisciplinary collaborations between the Humanities and Social Sciences researchers interested in migration. It also contributed to and participated in the different consultations and lobbying strategies employed by the IHA and the ISSP over 2014-17 that sought to shape and feed into the Commission's SC6 work Programmes in 2016-17 and 2018-20. It was therefore very disappointing when the last (and likely text) of Migration topics for 2018-2020 emerged over the last few months. In essence, these leave very little space for meaningful, worthwhile and substantive engagement between Humanities and social sciences researchers.

CONCLUSION:

WHAT DO I KNOW OF THE MIGRANT EARTH?

(DEEMA K. SHEHABI)

The exceptional strength and importance of humanities research taking place in Ireland on migration speaks not only to our history – as an exporter of people, above all in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – but to Ireland's position as a place of inward migration, transformed in its demography in the twenty-first century. Our relationship to these contemporary events, part of a decisive moment in Europe and the wider world, poses a series of major social but also intellectual and creative challenges.

Humanities perspectives illuminate migration as a shared historical condition, as a phenomenon underpinned by issues of gender, as an experience that the arts can mediate and communicate, and as a critical challenge in which the human and human rights must take priority. Our engagement with these questions constitutes a moral and political imperative, predicated on the argument that policy is incomplete if it considers only presentist concerns, narrowly conceived as requiring managed 'solutions' (often bound up with exclusions, detention, security, and, in the Irish case, direct provision).

This conference provided a powerful demonstration of the productive connection between migration histories, music, drama, photography, language, politics and advocacy. We look forward to realising the potential of the humanities to contribute to public discussion in this context, and to a wider appreciation that we cannot move towards a more just society unless we further this understanding.



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