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The Irish on Tyneside: Migration and Identity

Franca Puddu

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD

**University of Durham
Department of Geography**

1997

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- 3 APR 1998

The Irish on Tyneside: Migration and Identity

Abstract

In this thesis I set myself the task of defining and analysing the interaction, in a particular geographical situation, of the migration process with the process of identity formation. I analyse the evolution of the notion of identity and the models of identity formation in order to explore the ways migration and identity mutually affect each other. I show how identity shapes migration decisions and how it is, in turn, transformed by the migration experience.

I argue that migration is better defined as a process shaped by historical, economic and social factors, rather than a one-off event. In order to understand the mechanisms that shape the migration process, I undertake an analysis of the various stages which underpin the migration process: decision-making process, job and residential mobility, settlement.

Identity emerges from the analysis as a construction that is fluid, generative and relational. Its range of meanings varies according to the changing cultural contexts of migrants' experiences. This intersection of meanings can be seen in the ways in which identity is constructed in relation to migration and, in particular, to the formation of ethnic minorities in Britain. The thesis presents a case study of an Irish community in the North East of England. It focuses on extensive fieldwork that involved qualitative methods and allowed in-depth analysis of the issues under study. Through an (auto)biographical, ethnographical approach I present the individuals' own experience of migration allowing for self-reflection and analysis.

I argue that migration and identity are most usefully defined as processes which reflect a definition of identity that is not fixed, but contextual and relational. Through the analysis of migrants' own accounts, I show that identity is not a permanent, unified entity, but is made up of components that are continuously negotiated according to context and the specific situations in which any given migrant find her/himself. The analysis sheds light on how identity articulates on different levels: the personal and collective levels as well as the local, regional, national, transnational levels.

When migration and identity are defined more precisely, both in terms of what constitutes identity and in relation to the migration process, the concept of identity formation becomes a more useful tool for investigating issues such as integration and assimilation and for broader issues of cultural studies.

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Declaration:

No part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other university.

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CHAPTER 1:

OBJECTIVES AND FRAMEWORK OF THE THESIS

1.0 Introduction

This thesis aims at a description and analysis of Irish migration to Tyneside. The study sets out to define and analyse the interaction of the migration process with the process of identity formation (Benmayor and Skotnes, 1994; Chambers, 1994). I will analyse the evolution of the concept of identity and models of identity formation in order to investigate the different ways migration and identity mutually affect each other (Rutherford, 1990). In describing the range of identities formed by Irish migrants on Tyneside, I seek to draw attention to various issues. Firstly, migration has been a peculiar feature of Irish history for centuries. The long established tradition of migration between Ireland and Britain has resulted in long-standing Irish communities in all the main urban areas of Britain, such as Tyneside, (Cooter, 1973). Therefore, a complete understanding of the cultural identity of the Irish in Britain requires an analysis of the pre-existing historical relations (Drudy, 1986; Jackson, 1986; Gilley and Swift, 1985; Swift and Gilley, 1989; Davis, 1991). Secondly, it is essential to present an account of the everyday experience of the Irish on Tyneside in order to understand the factors that structure the formation of identities. The Irish represent the largest single contingent of foreign nationals in Britain, and yet, studies of migration usually prefer to concentrate on other, so-called "ethnic minorities", such as migrants from the New Commonwealth (Miles, 1982; Castles, 1993; Castles and al., 1984; Castles and Miller, 1993). As a result, the knowledge of the Irish experience in Britain remains to a large extent unexplored. In this context, the present research acquires relevance as it

might shed light on the processes underlying Irish migration to Britain and, hopefully, help to build a picture of the meaning of the experience of being Irish in Britain today.

This introductory chapter will outline the context of the work, state its principal objectives, justify the topic of the research, and lay out the framework of the thesis. Presenting the objectives and the context of the thesis at this early stage is necessary in order to reach a basic understanding of the topic and the numerous issues that will be addressed in the chapters to follow. In addition, it will show the reasons for my interest in this research and illustrate the agenda behind the investigation.

1.1 Context of the research

A considerable portion of the literature on Irish migration, and especially on the Irish in Britain, has been devoted to historical analyses of the topic which concentrated on the nineteenth century emigration, particularly on emigration in the post-famine years (Handley, 1947; Lees, 1979; Finnegan, 1982; Gilley and Swift, 1985).

Studies which focused on the Irish in various urban areas of Britain in more recent times have tended to be typically demographic in nature, or to refer to one particular stage of the migration process at the expense of the others, such as the decision-making process (Hannan, 1974), or patterns of settlement (Walter, 1978), residential distribution and segregation (Walter, 1984). None of these works seems to take a more holistic approach in which the analysis of the migration process is addressed to all its stages. Nor were they comprehensive of the cultural dimension of Irish migration. Where such an approach was taken (Lennon et al., 1988; Wall, 1991;

Kells, 1995; Gray, 1996), the cultural issues of ethnicity, integration and assimilation were only marginally linked to the migration process as seen through all its different phases, and were treated unproblematically on a purely descriptive level.

Turning to the literature on ethnic relations in contemporary Britain was quite a frustrating experience. As a matter of fact, within that body of work there was nothing touching on the dynamics of identity formation amongst the Irish, with whom I was setting out my research. Existing approaches to identity formation tended to problematise black or Asian people; moreover they seemed to be rather insensitive to various forms of combination between cultures, that is of people being positioned within several rather than alienated and torn between two. In this context, new approaches based on concepts such as hybridity, multiplicity, and fragmentation, seemed to offer higher analytical viability.

However, I was struck by the very absence of reference to Irish issues in these theories of cultural studies, as if it was assumed that being white was enough to share the same identity modules as the host population; or that the fact that the Irish have been part of the scene for such a long time could suffice to imply complete assimilation and total absence of conflict within presumably similar identities. Consequently, I felt the need to extend beyond the current debates on identity, which are connected with postmodernism and post-structuralism and refer mostly to New Commonwealth migrants' identities, and try to apply some of the ideas developed through that debate to a framework which could tackle the issue both theoretically and empirically. Despite their value, these theories are still waiting to be related to concrete analyses of

the processes of identity formation. Thus, it is not a simple case of applying these ideas in toto to the case of the Irish on Tyneside, as their level of abstraction might be unhelpful. In this sense, just as I think of identity formation as an unfinished process, always becoming rather than being, so too this work is meant to be an account of an unfinished struggle to reach new approaches and bring Irish people into the mainstream of cultural studies.

However, the ideas produced around postmodernism and post-structuralism are extremely productive, in that they initiate styles of writing which give voice to the tensions of multiple identifications and open new avenues in describing cultural identities. There is a general reconception of identity through the analysis of diasporan cultures. Clifford (1992) and Gilroy (1992) have begun to explore the tensions between continuity and fracturing, similitude and difference which are present in all forms of identity, but more evidently so when they relate them to migration. This points to new forms of language for describing the emergence of post-migration opportunities, intermediate positions that find no place in the existing categories.

However, these formulations do not enable us to look into processes of identity formation as they do not always specify the broader social and historical reasons for migration. In this way, difference and hybridity could easily in turn become fetishised themselves. It does not become clear on what basis many of these elegant and sophisticated formulations are made and, more importantly, how applicable they are. As James (1992) points out, the issue of identity has become hypertheorised, but there is still a lack or even absence of concrete work on identity formation.

Moreover, as Morley (1997) points out, the boom in ethnographic methods and the shift from overly structuralist approaches to micro-analyses that fall back into a form of methodological individualism (Knorr-Cetina, 1981). I shall attempt to abandon this dichotomy between macro and micro in preference for a conceptualisation of migration and identity acknowledging that macro structures can only be reproduced through micro-processes (Giddens, 1984; Morley, 1997). Therefore, research in this field, I shall argue, should be both theoretically informed, and also empirically grounded; both concerned with the fundamental structures and the subjective dimension that control the processes under study.

First of all, a historical understanding of identity formation for the Irish in Britain is necessary in order to understand how Irish identities developed as a result of different factors. Besides, it will help to explain the place of the Irish and their identity at different levels. Therefore, it will allow us to explore the importance of local, regional and national identities, in addition to other forms of identification.

Secondly, cultural identities are seen as narrative processes. The need to study the active projection of the self through narrative forms is being recognised by many social theorists. Indeed, we may say that turning to narrative is a way of overcoming some of the difficulties with theories which totally decentre the subject without putting anything in its place (Hall, 1987; Giddens, 1991; Somers, 1994).

Hall outlines two views of cultural identity which could be related to different forms of narrative through which Irish cultural identity could be constructed. The first position refers to identity in terms of the idea of a shared culture, a sort of collective self which provides unified points of reference and meaning. The second one, more open, refers to a sense of cultural identity as a matter of becoming as well as being, as one means to come to terms with diaspora, translation, hybridity (Hall, 1987; 1990; 1991; 1992).

These metaphors of migration, translation, and hybridity, prevalent in contemporary theories of cultural identity, could be referred to real processes within which Irish migrants are placed. Therefore, the question to be addressed becomes: how do they weave together the fragments of the different cultures they inhabit into provisional constructions of identity? I want to assess whether the two senses of identity described by Hall can be found among the Irish people living on Tyneside, and how these emerging identities, whatever they are, are imagined, represented, and experienced. It must be stressed, then, that the work of authors like Hall does not itself provide the form of historical and ethnographic analysis which is needed to map these processes. However, it does bring out the tension between different conceptions of identity, a tension that I, myself a migrant, felt throughout this research at all its levels.

1.2 Irish Migration to Tyneside: Some Empirical Themes

As for many other urban areas in Britain, the Irish presence in Tyneside is rooted in the past century when a considerable inflow of Irish workers took place (Cooter, 1973; MacDermott, 1977; Byrne, 1996). Tyneside (see Appendix One) is almost a museum

of Irish migration where different layers, corresponding to subsequent “waves” of migration, can be identified. As a place of long standing Irish settlement, different typologies of Irish migration are available for study and show the dynamics of the migration process within different economic and social circumstances evolving in time. The main feature of Irish migration to Britain and to Tyneside in this specific case, has been the lack of data, both in terms of statistical evidence, and empirical research dealing with the topic.

Several questions must be addressed when considering Irish migration, and also the choice of Tyneside must be justified. Questions as to why Irish people emigrate and what reasons made them choose Tyneside as a destination? How do they move within labour and housing markets? What strategies do they apply to their migration trajectories? How do they describe their experience within British society? What are the outcomes of the processes involved, namely what identity formations can be outlined as emerging from the migration experience?

Firstly, as there has been much attention on the movement of skilled and professional mobility (King and Shuttleworth, 1988; Shuttleworth, 1991, 1993) there is a strong interest in the differences in employment, and the sectoral and occupational nature of employment of the migrants. It is often believed that while in the past migrants belonged to the working class, nowadays a rising number of educated and skilled migrants is moving from Ireland to Britain. Therefore a relevant change in the composition of the migration flow has been suggested (Walsh, 1989; Sexton, 1987). However in areas like Tyneside this assumption has to be checked against empirical

results as the peripherality of the region compared to core centres of the economic system formed by Ireland and Great Britain may have an impact on the typology of migrants.

Secondly, the means and channels by which all types of migration occur deserve attention. The decision-making process is an important area of research and as such the factors leading to the decision of migrating will be analysed: economic factors, cultural attitudes, personal circumstances, etc.

Thirdly, through a reconstruction of individual careers and household residential histories an attempt will be made to explore the impact of identity on patterns of labour and housing mobility.

Finally, the impact of the migration experience on the process of identity formation will be explored. Central issues such as integration and assimilation will be investigated in detail together with the range of identities resulting from the migrants' accounts.

The structure of the labour markets involved will be more closely analysed together with the role of employment and unemployment. Here, the following questions could be identified in particular: firstly, the place of contemporary Irish migration to Tyneside in contemporary Irish migration to the UK and the estimation of the magnitude of Irish migration flow into Tyneside. Secondly, the reasons why migrants

leave Ireland. Finally, an assessment of the reliability of the available statistics on Irish migration to the UK.

Attention will be given to the decision-making process and the role of identity in shaping migration decisions. Along with purely economic factors of which unemployment seems clearly to be the main one, other non-economic reasons appear to be important. First of all it has been argued that the Irish nation has developed a “migration culture” and that cultural developments are important determinants of migration (Hayes, 1990; Kearney, 1990). Irish migrants themselves would often argue that the Irish have a particular propensity to migrate and that this propensity is deeply rooted in Irish society and tradition.

Clearly, history might have played a paramount role in the formation of such culture (Miller, 1985, 1990; Heaney, 1990, O’Connor, 1972). Obviously, many of the analyses of the “pull-push” factors have been based on economic issues as it is clear that these are strong motives for emigrating (Walsh, 1989, Lee 1990), but it would be restrictive to confine the determinants of emigration to the economic arena. Cultural factors also play an important role and do contribute to the uniqueness of the Irish experience of migration (Shuttleworth, 1991). Therefore, it was felt that culture would be a useful dimension to add to the analysis of the decision-making process. As a matter of fact all the elements which could affect the decision of migrating should be taken into account together with the role of information available to probable migrants and the impact of expectations on the final decision to leave. Within this framework the following research hypotheses were formulated: firstly,

that the Irish have a “migration culture” that is strongly rooted in the tradition of Irish migration and that this culture may take the form of a “contagious effect”. Secondly, that the decision to emigrate is rooted in the migrants’ life-course experience and therefore it should be considered at least partly non-economic in cause. Thirdly, that the role of information chains reinforces the tendency to move within friendship/kinship networks rather than official channels. Finally, that the traditional links between Ireland and Britain still are relevant in the decision to emigrate (i.e. plenty of contacts available, absence of language barrier, similarities between Tyneside and Ireland).

Besides, a consideration of migrants’ attitudes to migration and their perception of Ireland will help us to better understand the cultural factors involved in the process, both before migration takes place and after. Furthermore, the role of culture is paramount in the investigation of the wide themes of integration and assimilation and the analysis of identity formation. Several research questions emerged as to:

- One) The extent to which migrants feel integrated into the host community
- Two) Whether they retain their sense of identity as Irish
- Three) The impact of anti-Irish attitudes in the shaping of identities
- Four) The difficulty in conveying a sense of Irishness to the second generation
- Five) The range of identity formations.

The choice of an in-depth approach to the investigation brought me to the choice of Tyneside as the location of my research, in that it would allow better access from Durham over a period of time. I did not simply want to collect a number of one-time

recorded interviews from which to extract information which was likely to be shallow and lacking any reflexive value. I was looking for a way to understand much more deeply how Irish people lived here and how they represented themselves in this context. That required much more personal involvement, starting with a “going native” period of participant observation (with all that it implied, including “having a bit of a craik” with the Irish lot, exhausting set dancing, innumerable coelis, wearing the shamrock at St. Patrick’s Day services, and many other Irish oddities), to a more reflexive, and indeed self-reflexive, level in the research where sharing the migrants’ experience was, above all, trying to work out, together, both their role and mine in the setting created by the investigation.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Correcting the shortage of information on the experience of the Irish in Britain at the present day is in itself the first firm empirical objective of the thesis. Against the background of contemporary cultural studies, the thesis should be seen as a contribution to the study of Irish cultural identities in Britain. This thesis, therefore, aspires to bringing attention to this aspect of Irish migration to Britain and encouraging further research in this field.

The main focus of the research is on Irish migration to Tyneside, Firstly, the research devoted attention to mobility with reference to the role of employment and unemployment in Ireland and Tyneside . Secondly, the individual’s view is taken into account as attitudes to migration and perceptions of Ireland and Tyneside as residential and employment locations are investigated. Thirdly, self descriptions of

integration and assimilation are discussed as this has important implications for the concept of identity formation. Finally, relevant areas of meaning such as the Catholic heritage together with historical aspects which are of importance when investigating themes such as “identity” were discussed to further extend the picture of the Irish people living on Tyneside.

The basic empirical aim of the study, therefore, is to provide an account of Irish migration from the migrants’ point of view. This will be concerned with all stages of the migration process: decision-making, job and residential mobility, processes of identity formation which result from migration. However, the role of economic and social factors in the migration process will also be highlighted by the findings of the research. It must be stressed that as this research set out to study international migration, it takes into consideration migrants from the Republic of Ireland. However, several migrants from Northern Ireland were also interviewed, in order to reach a better understanding of the issues involved. Besides, although the vast majority of the informants are first-generation Irish, I included several second-generation Irish since they could provide further information on the process of identity formation.

From a methodological point of view, this work should be seen as an attempt to assess the theoretical relevance of concepts developed within contemporary cultural debates in empirical research; and the usefulness of a qualitative approach to investigation which is based on a biographical, ethnographical approach to the study of migration.

1.4 Framework of the Thesis and Research Programme

This thesis proceeds as an investigation of the migration process and the process of identity formation that involves. Chapter 2 will link two bodies of theory: theories on migration and settlement, and theories on cultural identities. A literature review will be presented in order to place the study in the context of past and present research on the topic. It will look at the different stages of the migration process, and then attempt to conceptualise the process of identity formation. The concept of narrative identity will be illustrated as a means to explore the processes underpinning migration and identity formation. The discourse provides a framework for understanding the issues discussed in later chapters, such as migration decisions, job and residential histories, attitudes to migration, identity, integration, and assimilation.

Chapter 3 outlines the origins of Irish migration and its developments. A historical dimension to the study will be invaluable as it would not be possible to understand the context of Irish migration to Tyneside without looking at Irish migration as a deeply rooted phenomenon.

In chapter 4 the research methods employed in carrying out the research will be presented and justified. Some theoretical implications related to the approaches adopted will be explored before proceeding to the central chapters of the thesis, which deal in detail with the findings of the research.

Chapter 5 presents some economic themes of Irish migration to Tyneside. It provides an analysis of the role of employment and unemployment in both labour markets

involved, and their impact on migrants' experience. The data presented will enable the evolving pattern to be described and some explanatory factors behind the current place of the Irish community will be explored .

Chapter 6 focuses on the findings of the in-depth study and provides detailed information on the typology of migrants and the decision-making process. It outlines a profile of the interviewees exploring their patterns of residential and employment location through the individuals' job/residential histories. In addition it looks at the decision to emigrate from Ireland and to return to Ireland, and to the channels through which migrants move.

Chapter 7 deals with cultural themes such as identity, integration, assimilation. The process of identity formation will be explored in great detail, in an attempt to outline all the emerging identities. Through the data collected with the interviews a picture is provided of migrants' attitudes and perceptions of migration and their self-descriptions of their role as migrants.

Chapter 8 offers the conclusions and aims to pull together the main strands of the research. The results will be summarised here and further research avenues and questions raised by the research will be considered. The cultural dimension of Irish migration will be taken into account together with an assessment of the place of Irish migration to Tyneside in the British scene.

CHAPTER 2:

MIGRATION AND IDENTITY: CONCEPTUALISING THE MIGRATION PROCESS AND THE (TRANS-)FORMATION OF IDENTITY

2.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide an explanatory framework that will offer guidance in the analysis of Irish migration to Tyneside. This chapter will discuss explanations of international migration and, with a general review of the literature on the subject, will provide a background for the following chapters which deal in detail with the specific case of Irish migration and settlement on Tyneside.

The first part of the chapter will consider different approaches and explanations of international migration. Different issues and problems that arise from the literature will be discussed in order to place this research, and the approaches adopted, in the context of literature on international migration and identity formation. It will also illustrate how the case of the Irish migration to Britain fits into the broader context of international migration and why Tyneside was chosen for an in-depth study.

It should be clear that it would be naive to expect a complex phenomenon such as international migration to have any simple explanation. Furthermore, an attempt to provide a “Grand Theory” as an explanation has proved unsuccessful in the past in that different types of migration, different stages of migration, and different contexts escape the interpretative power of a single theoretical approach. Therefore, it should be more appropriate to aim at a framework which looks at the specific context of Irish migration to Tyneside in order to understand the migration process on the one hand,

and the process of identity formation on the other. In this context, the concept of narrative identity will be explored as a useful tool in the study of migration at different levels of analysis: decision-making, job/residential mobility, identity formation.

2.1 Approaches to International Migration

There is a variety of theoretical approaches to explaining international migration (De Jong and Gardner, 1981). Reviews of the literature on migration usually recognise two main distinct approaches among many: a functional perspective and a structural perspective. However, they both reduce to the same assumption about migration as a process, that is migration of labour as a response to wage differences or economic inequalities between countries of origin and countries of destination, caused by a difference in the level of socio-economic development. Therefore, migration is simply seen as circulation of labour, and the social, political, cultural aspects of migration are subordinate to the economic perspective (Schiller, 1992).

The earliest systematic approaches to migration derive from the work of Ravenstein(1889), who proposed the formulation of statistical laws of migration. This tradition remains alive in the work of many demographers, geographers and economists (Jackson, 1969; Cohen, 1987; Zolberg, 1989). The theories advocated in such works emphasise people's tendencies to move from low-income areas to high-income areas. Such approaches are often know as "pull-push" theories because they perceive the causes of migration in a combination of "push factors", urging people to leave the area of origin, and "pull factors", attracting them to certain receiving countries (Lee, 1966; Todaro, 1969; Mabogunje, 1970; Borjas, 1989).

The functional perspective focuses on micro-economic processes, particularly the decision-making behaviour of individuals, who respond to real or perceived inequalities in the distribution of economic opportunity by migrating. This approach assumes that migration will lead to a reduction in the inequalities between countries and foster development in the countries of origin. This model is essentially individualistic in that it emphasises the individual decision to migrate, based on rational comparison of the costs and benefits of remaining in the area of origin or moving to another destination. Other factors, such as government restrictions, are ignored. Such theories have been criticised as simplistic and incapable of explaining the way migration works (Boyd, 1989; Skeldon, 1990). The main disadvantage of the “pull-push” interpretation is that it does not provide a clear explanation of how the various factors combine together to cause population movement and it treats migration as a one-off event, therefore failing to explain return migration, repeated moves, transnational migration, etc.

The structural perspective, on the other hand, focuses on the macro-economic processes that produce inequalities within global and national economies. According to this approach international migration does not reduce inequalities but, quite the contrary, it intensifies inequalities and perpetuates underdevelopment, because of the loss of human capital.

Functional models of population movements are based on neoclassical development economics, in which migration is the means by which surplus labour in a largely agricultural economy is transferred to the urban industrial sector, or from developing

countries to developed countries. This is supposed to provide for economic growth (Zelinsky, 1971). According to this theory, competition among migrants will eventually depress wages in the receiving countries, while remittances and the return of skilled migrants to the country of origin will stimulate economic growth. However, this has been proven not to be the case as rural-urban and international migration from developing to developed countries has persisted despite high levels of unemployment in the receiving areas. Harris and Todaro (1970) tried to solve these theoretical failures, proposing that individuals respond rationally to perceived differentials in wages and the expected probability of getting unemployment, rather than actual opportunities, therefore they migrate despite opportunities being in fact limited. Again, this is a micro-social approach in the sense that it assumes that social process is the result of the aggregate of individual decisions and actions. Kearney(1986) points out that this model lacks explanatory value. Besides, this approach reduces migrants to mere embodiments of labour, in that it does not take into account gender, ethnicity, social class; and it fails to consider the political and other structural barriers to mobility (Cadwallader, 1992; Massey et al, 1993).

The structuralist approach explains migration in terms of the exploitative political-economic relationship between sending and receiving countries. According to this macro-social approach, migration is not seen as merely the result of the aggregation of individual decisions and actions, but as the product of objective economic, political and social structures which generate the necessary conditions for labour migration. Within this approach, three closely related forms are generally identified: neo-Marxist dependency theory, world systems theory, and modes of production theory.

Dependency theorists argue that labour migration is the result of uneven spatial development which is the consequence of colonial and neo-colonial relationships between capitalist economies in the core and underdeveloped peripheries. Migration thus is not only a response to the inequalities of underdevelopment, but also a process which serves to reinforce it (Amin, 1974). Because migration is selective, it is the most productive and educated workers who move from the developing countries, therefore migration is seen as a loss of value to the country of origin which is greater than the return to the individual in remitted wages. In this context the periphery provides for the reproduction of a reserve of cheap labour that is selectively recruited by the core (Piore, 1979). Dependency approaches tend to emphasise historical processes such as colonialism and exploitation through inequality but they do not provide sufficient analyses of the existing social relations of production in the source area (Prothero, 1987).

World systems theory tries to address this problem, arguing that the global market economy establishes the means of production, flow of capital and commodities, and creates the ideological conditions that produce migration (Portes and Walton, 1981). Zolberg (1989) proposes to analyse labour migration as the movement of workers within the dynamics of the transnational capitalist economy which simultaneously determines both the “push” and the “pull”. This implies that migrations are collective phenomena, which should be examined as subsystems of a global economic system. Furthermore, each specific migratory movement can be seen as the result of interacting macro- and micro-structures. This analysis presupposes a historical approach based on

a concept of global interdependence: migration, like other international processes, takes place within an overarching system, itself a product of past historical development (Portes and Borocz, 1989).

The modes of production approach acknowledges the historical significance of colonisation but it stresses the role of preexisting forms of production which may coexist with capitalism in the peripheral societies. Individuals thus are implicated in various forms of production relations and may move between them. Migration may become the only viable response where local conditions imply limited employment opportunities and rapid population growth (Kearney, 1986). Perrons(1986), Breathnach(1988), Walsh(1989), ascribe the large-scale migration from Ireland to the island's integration into an international economic system based on functional complementarity which led to an international division of labour (IDL). According to Shuttleworth(1993) Ireland's position under the new international division of labour(NIDL) has not changed. However, Shirlow and Shuttleworth(1994) show how an analysis of Irish migration entirely based on the NIDL would be an oversimplification and how important is the role of the Irish state's ideology for education, training and migration.

The duality between theories which describe mobility patterns either as the cumulative result of individual decisions or the result of a society imposing constraints on individuals has led to an impasse in migration theory (Skeldon, 1990). The need for a unified framework has produced an integrative approach that links different levels of social organization, takes into account the origins and destinations at the same time,

and considers both historical and contemporary processes, both in the developing and developed countries (Fawcett and Arnold, 1987; Massey, 1990).

Fawcett and Arnold (1987) propose a “migration system paradigm” which is defined as a loosely structured set of concepts that will provide some guidance in research. They argue that international migration is a unified social process and that individual decisions are conditioned by structural forces operating at each stage of migration. Their theory is an attempt to overcome the opposition between macro-and micro-scales of analysis or, as Giddens (1984) puts it, between structure and agency. Massey (1990) also tackles the structure/agency problem arguing that while individual decisions and actions are conditioned by contextual factors, the cumulative effect of individual decisions may, over time, alter the decision-making context. Both these approaches observe that networks are important in the migration process (Fawcett, 1989; Boyd, 1989). Therefore, the systems approach focuses on both the macro- and micro-linkages between places linked by migration, that is both the political-economic relations and the personal relationships between individuals and families. Migration is thus conceived as a sequential process of decision, transition and adaptation by the individual, made within the context of general political-economic and specific social relationships at each stage (Fawcett and Arnold, 1987; Kritz and Zlotnik, 1992).

But while Massey (1990) and Boyd (1989) take the household as a key analytical category, Goss and Lindquist (1995) use the migrant institutions, such as recruitment agencies, as their analysis unit within a framework which draws from the structuration theory (Giddens, 1984). More recently, other attempts to employ structurationist

approaches to the study of migration have been made (Gutting, 1996; Findlay and Li, 1997). They are a useful contribution to migration theory as they approach the structure/agency dilemma using a biographical approach (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993), and the concepts of practical consciousness (Giddens, 1984) and narrative identity (Somers, 1994). Previous studies of migration from an ethnographic point of view have proved to be useful in the explanation of how the migration process takes place (Bertaux, 1981; Bertaux and Kholi, 1984; Miles and Crush, 1993; Vandsemb, 1995), and how the process of identity (trans-)formation develops among migrants (Margolis, 1994; Kutsche, 1994). In this context, a new interest has emerged in the constitution of identity from a narrative point of view in relation to migration (King, et al, 1995).

2.2 Approaches to Identity Formation

One of the direct consequences of any migration movement is a search for a group-based identity in the host country. This leads in some cases to the formation of ethnic minorities (Waters, 1995). Such a process is inevitably a product of both “other-definition” and of “self-definition” (Castles and Miller, 1993). However, this process does not merely consist of keeping one’s distinct traditions or customs, nor is it fixed in identifying some kind of “roots” from which the migrants come from. Cohen and Bain (1988) refer to ethnicity as a process of historical individuation through which some sense of collective identity is generated, produced and reproduced from generation to generation, being changed and transformed in the process.

From the early 1960s identity has been on the agenda of migration studies and the issues involved have become even more problematic nowadays. In Beyond the

Melting Pot, Glazer and Moynihan (1963) found that ethnic groups were not melting but were re-forming and transforming their original sources of identity. However, the authors addressed the issue within the rigid conceptual framework of ethnicity studies with their fixed concepts and categories such as integration, assimilation, changes of group boundaries etc. (Glazer and Moynihan, 1975). Introducing the concept of “ways of seeing” migration, Berger and Mohr (1975) tackled the problem in a more efficient way. In A Seventh Man they tried to record the silence of the migrant workers in an attempt to offer an understanding of the accounts of the personal experience of migration. Probably one of the most successful analyses of identity formation and migration is given by Rushdie (1987). Himself a migrant, he addresses the issue of identity as arising from a loss of space intrinsically linked to migration, in which people are translated and become capable of reinventing the sense of self (ibid., p.67).

Bottomley (1992) links migration and identity with their relation to class, gender and power. One of her main aims is to interrelate subjective and objective accounts of migration with the experience of difference. As she points out, most of the literature about immigrants to Britain is about New Commonwealth migrants with authors like Miles (1982; 1989) who concentrate on racism, failing to give a full explanation of the processes at stake in the case of the Irish (ibidem,p30). Anthias (1992) also analyses ethnicity and gender in relation to migration. She addresses important issues such as how social or economic discrimination affect the formation of identity and ethnic identification. Other attempts to investigate identity formation in relation to migration is made by Kells (1996), Daniels (1993), and Gray (1996), who show that gender is of paramount importance in the case of Irish women.

Li et al. (1995) explore the relationship between place and the construction of ethnic identity. They note that ethnic identity is often a statement of a person's social position and power in the dynamics and structure of social and power relationships. This "positionality" is important in influencing migration decisions and it is a result of migrants' construction of identity. While migrants' ethnic identities are influenced by their cultures from their place of origin, the socio-political and economic environment which they inhabit further affects their cultural identification. This represents a step forward in the study of how people construe their migration actions in relation to their cultural identity, but also of how ethnic identity changes after migration.

Social theory has recently seen a vigorous debate on "identity". The discussion runs along two major lines: of the shifts in the concepts of identity and the subject; and their impact on cultural identities, comprising those aspects of different identities which stem from belonging or ascribing oneself to a particular ethnic, racial, religious, national culture (Hall, 1990; Rutherford, 1990). A crisis of identity seems to arise from the decline of old identities which stabilised the social world in the past, and the resulting rise of new identities and fragmenting of the modern individual as a unified subject (Hall, *ibidem*; p274). The structural changes which are transforming modern societies in the late twentieth century are also fragmenting the cultural framework which gave safe, stable locations to the subject as a social individual within clearly identified categories of class, gender, ethnicity, race and nationality. This has also a disrupting effect on personal identities, causing the loss of a stable sense of self as an integrated subject. This process is usually referred to as the dislocation or de-centring of the subject. But we have to address the question whether this is really a condition

of modernity only (Harvey, 1989), that is: was identity in the past so fixed and stable as we think of it now? And what is identity today, as a result of this crisis?

We have to look at the changes that have modified the conception of identity: from the Enlightenment subject, to the sociological subject, then to the present post-modern subject. The Enlightenment subject was based on a conception of Man (sic) as a fully centred, unified individual, capable of reason and action, and whose personal identity emerged at birth and unfolded through life while remaining essentially intact, continuous and consistent with itself. With the sociological subject we move a step forward into the complexity of the modern world, becoming more aware that the centre of the self, the inner core of the subject, was not autonomous but related to the world around it, and formed in relation to “others” who mediated the subject with the symbols, the “culture” of that world. According to this interactive conception of identity and the self, identity is formed through a continuous dialogue between the subject and the cultural worlds “outside”, between self and society. Identity, thus, bridges the gap between subject and structure. With the post-modern subject, it is precisely this reciprocal relationship which helped both subjects and the cultural worlds they inhabit to keep some stability, that is shifting. The subject is, as a result, becoming fragmented, unstable, emerging as a patchwork of several, variable, even contradictory identities. Consequently, any process of identification of the subject with cultural identities, which are themselves breaking up because of structural and institutional changes, has become more problematic. Therefore, the post-modern subject has no fixed, permanent identity. Identity is continuously being formed and transformed according to how we project ourselves into our cultural identities and the

ways we are represented in the cultural systems around us. Therefore, it is historically defined (Hall, 1992). It is not fixed at birth, biologically, but it assumes different representations at different times, without being unified around a coherent self. The subject then is faced with a myriad of systems of meaning and cultural representation which leaves him/her with a multiplicity of possible, unresolved identities with which one can only temporarily identify.

Globalisation is one of the processes which have produced dramatic changes in late-modernity with a corresponding great impact on cultural identity (McGrew, 1992). Modern societies are constantly, rapidly changing. This is, perhaps, the principal distinction between modern societies and traditional ones where tradition kept some continuity in past, present and future experience (Giddens, 1990). Discontinuity is, instead, the very essence of modernity, as a never-ending process of breaks with any previous condition and fragmentation within itself (Harvey, 1989). Therefore, modern society is no longer a unified whole, evolving from within itself, centred on a single organising principle and developing and reproducing itself according that principle. Instead, it has no centre, it is dislocated, its centre is displaced by a plurality of centres outside itself (Laclau, 1990). Difference, thus, becomes the most important characteristic of late-modern societies, but this leads to a conception of identity much more provisional than before. Different subject positions have to articulate together, but this articulation is never complete, therefore the structure of identity remains open (Hall, 1992). This process opens up the possibility of new identities, new subjects, new articulations.

Reverting to the point whether conceptions of identity and the subject have changed only recently, we have to bear in mind that the present idea of subject is the result of complex changes in the concept of human subject, changes which are deeply rooted in the history of our society and not the result of a sudden break.

Many major movements in Western thought contributed to the emergence of the modern individual subject. The Reformation, Renaissance humanism, the Enlightenment all gave rise to a decisive form of individualism, and centred on Man as a rational, scientific subject. Nevertheless, with Descartes we see the profound doubt following the displacement of God from the centre of the universe. Therefore, the subject was formulated out of this metaphysical doubt, it was never as stable and unified as one might think. Furthermore, several forces had an impact on its de-centring and dislocation. Marxist thought with its emphasis on history was to make a major impact on the conception of the modern subject. Freud's theory on the subconscious was another major influence in twentieth century Western thought and stressed the contradictory origin of identity, its incompleteness and fragmentation. Saussure also contributed to this de-centring of the subject. His work aimed at dismissing the individual as the author of the meanings we express in language, language being a social system where the meaning of words is not fixed. Derrida (1981) further stresses the point as the individual can never finally fix meaning. Meaning in language and texts is constantly unstable, perpetually disrupted by difference, sliding away from the speaker. Finally, the social movements which emerged in the 1960s, and feminism in particular, generated a new identity politics where the social identity of various groups emerged through the break-up of class

politics and a fragmentation into separate movements: peace movements, Third World movements, racial, gay movements and so on. All of these developments had an unsettling effect on late-modern thought and especially on how the subject and identity are now conceptualised.

When we address the issue of how this fragmented subject is placed in relation to its cultural identities, we have to look into different domains: how national identity is affected by modern experience, how globalisation displaces our cultural identities, how the subject relates to the global and the local in the formation of specific identities etc.

First, national cultures are certainly one of the main sources of cultural identity. In defining themselves as Irish or British or English, migrants express their identification with a particular national cultural identity. However, we are not born into a national identity, as nations are very much imagined communities, which are formed and transformed within and in relation to representation (Anderson, 1983). A nation is then a system of cultural representation, a symbolic community which can generate a sense of identity (Cohen, 1985). However, national cultures and national identities are by no means unified. A national culture aims at unifying its members within one cultural identity, despite the differences of its members as to class, gender, race, religion etc. Therefore, national cultures are not unified, but they act as a device which seeks to represent difference as unity or identity. National identities then, do not grasp all other forms of difference within themselves and are open to divisions, contradictions and conflict, in spite of the national cultures attempting at resolving those differences into one identity.

Globalisation helps in this process as it causes a loosening of strong identifications with the national culture and the emergence of other cultural ties either above or below the national level. This is even more evident in the case of migrants (Kearney, 1988; Rutherford, 1990; Hall, 1990). What is at stake then in the tension between the global and the local is the transformation of identities and the on-going process of negotiating the tension between the two. If we put globalisation and cultural identities into context we are faced with different possibilities. One of the possible consequences of globalisation for identity may be the erosion of national identities as a result of growing homogenisation (King, 1991). Another, opposite, effect could produce a strengthening of local identities by resistance to globalisation. Or else, national identities are declining but a process of transformation is taking place with the emergence of new identities of hybridity (Hall, 1991a&b). We should conclude then that the impact of globalisation remains contradictory, since it often gives rise to different movements. However, globalisation has undoubtedly the effect of dislocating the centred identities of a national culture. It has a major impact on identities in that it produces a variety of possibilities and new positionings and identifications, making identities more political, contingent, diverse, fragmented.

In the 1990s, therefore, cultural identities are emerging as not fixed, but in transition, between different cultural traditions at once. This is certainly the case with migration and its impact on the process of identity formation and transformation (Gilroy, 1992). The false dilemma of returning to one's roots or being assimilated opens up to another possibility which involves the formation of new identities, identities which are

composed of people who retain strong links with their traditions but at the same time come to terms with the new cultures they inhabit. These identities are the product of the interaction between different histories and cultures, as they belong to different “homes” at the same time. Such cultures of hybridity are the direct product of diasporas, as migration forces the individual migrants to inhabit at least two identities at the same time and to negotiate between them. Therefore, we cannot fully understand these two processes, migration and identity formation, without searching for the links and the complex ways they interact with each other in order to reproduce each other.

Identity plays a big part in the experience of migration, but also migration has the power to unveil our identities, not in terms of what we are, but of what we have become. Cultural identity then undergoes constant transformation, belonging to different time coordinates, to the past but also to the future (Hall, 1990). It is subjected to the continuous influences of history, culture and power. As Hall points out: “cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence, but a positioning” (ibidem,p226). In this sense, migration is an extremely cultural event (Fielding, 1992) in that it exposes the ways these points of identification stand within those discourses and reveals the processes of identity formation as always in process and constituted within representation. Any discourse then, either on migration or identity, and above all on how both relate to each other, is necessarily positioned.

2.3 Theoretical Perspectives: an (Auto-)Biographical Approach to Understanding Migration

In recent years, geography has paid more attention to the meaning of human action (in both objective and subjective meanings), and to the ways people experience and perceive the environment around them (Li et al., 1995). As a result, the discipline has become more attentive to the biographical roots of events and structures (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993), to a new perception of place, not as a merely physical entity but as a set of intersecting social relations (Findlay and Li, 1997), and to the importance of diversity, difference and context (Findlay and Graham, 1991).

This is all the more important since migration remains an essentially geographical process in which the individual and indeed the society express the relation between self and symbolic life of both social worlds, the country of origin as well as the home country (Li et al., 1995). Besides, international migration is having a major impact in reshaping societies and politics at global levels (Castles and Miller, 1993). Also, as migration is increasingly one of the key processes behind significant changes in the identity of places in a shrinking world, a new interest arises from the interaction of “self”, the “Other” and “place” in relation to migration (Chambers,1994; King et al.,1995). As Fielding (1992) points out: “Migration tends to expose one’s personality, it expresses one’s loyalties and reveals one’s values and attachments (often previously hidden). It is a statement of an individual’s world-view, and is, therefore, an extremely cultural event”(p.201). Moreover, migration, it is being argued, is more than a behaviour in a stimulus-response framework, and instead represents the expression of people’s sense of being at any point in time (Gutting, 1996).

In this context, more authors are engaging with the concept of identity (Li et al., 1995; Findlay and Li, 1997). This is important for two reasons: in shifting from behaviour to “identity” a full contextualisation of “action” at the level of the individual is reached, and, at the same time, the formation of “identities” is located in their cultural, social, economic and political context (Gutting, 1996). Another important implication of this approach would be the implicit attempt to overcome the structure- agency dualism (Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1984) and to interpret migration as a social event without the determinism intrinsic to many macro-analyses, and without decentring the subject (Werlen, 1993). In this sense, migrants should be seen as active social agents whose migration act is a manifestation of their identity. This means that, whilst their identity is moulded and shaped by countless social influences over their life course, they are capable of employing their knowledge of structures to achieve their aims and, by their collective actions, of reproducing and transforming structures (Bottomley, 1992; Findlay and Li, 1997).

Halfacree and Boyle (1993) call for a new approach to migration research and the adoption of a biographical approach which recognises migrants as active, socially embedded agents who influence and are influenced by the social worlds they inhabit. They argue that the meaning of migration, together with the perceived identity of the “Other” place and society is built over a long period of time. They suggest that the “seeds of migration” lie in the individual’s life course rather than in a sudden external event which becomes responsible for migration actions. In this sense, only a biographical approach could successfully explore how the formation of migration

intentions over time relates to the changing cultural contexts of the migrants' everyday life.

While this approach has been used in other disciplines such as sociology (Bertaux, 1981; Bertaux and Kohli, 1984) and anthropology (Langness and Frank, 1981; Okely and Callaway, 1992), in migration research few studies have employed a biographical approach illustrating its potential (Miles and Crush, 1993; Vandsemb, 1995; Gutting, 1996; Findlay and Li, 1997).

Several issues need therefore to be addressed. First of all, the biographical approach points toward the way the individual is positioned in relation to the processes which shape the social world. In other words, toward the extent to which migrants' actions reflect the wider social worlds in which they are acting, and how their actions in turn contribute to the construction or transformation of the social worlds in which they are positioned (Findlay and Li, 1997). However, another important issue emerges from the biographical approach, that is: to what extent is such an approach able to raise migrants' consciousness from a practical level to a discursive one (Giddens, 1984)? In this context, migrants could engage in an act of reflection and relate their migration actions to the wider social and cultural worlds. This is by all means the greatest challenge for migration research, and a goal, I realise, which is very difficult to achieve. Part of the difficulty lies in the very nature of the investigation, as cultural dimensions such as "identity", identity formation, "culture", and above all how these interact with actual behaviour, have proved difficult to analyse.

Therefore, although this changing conceptualisation of “action” referring to identity is an enormous step forward in migration research, there may be several practical obstacles in using the identity concept that is now ubiquitous in social science (Rutherford, 1990; Calhoun, 1994; Somers, 1994), but which is difficult to translate into empirical research. Berger (1972) introducing his “ways of seeing” concept, Williams (1973) with his “structures of feeling”, and especially Bourdieu (1984) with the concept of “habitus”, all tried to explore “culture” and the way the subject relates and interacts with it. All these concepts are useful when connected to a biographical approach which emphasises the situatedness of migration within everyday life (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993).

If we accept that we exist in “a context which is predicated upon action in time, not contemplation” (Thrift, 1986 p.91), then we should stop regarding migration as a discrete contemplative action but start seeing it as an “action in time”. Therefore, the reasons for migration cannot any longer be seen as the events prior to the physical relocation of the migrant from a given place to another. On the contrary, they must have some relation to the individual’s past and to their projected future (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993). In this sense, any specific migration exists as a part of an individual’s past, present and future, as a part of a biography (ibidem, p37). Moreover, this concept should be extended beyond the decision-making process and the investigation of the reasons to migrate, since it could as well apply to other stages of the migration process, such as settlement and the processes of identity transformation involved before, during and after migration.

However, another observation must be made. How important is the cultural dimension in relation to migration? How do cultures refer to migration? And how do migrants' perceptions of migration vary from a "stairway to heaven" to a sense of "being crippled inside" (Fielding, 1992)? In order not to reify the process of migration, we have to remember this dimension which helps to locate migration actions within a set of societal norms that get expressed through the biographies of individual migrants. If we contextualise migration actions, that is if we recognise the location of the actions within a "way of life", or, in Bourdieu's terms, a habitus, then we can integrate the process of migration into the everyday experience of the individual within society. Therefore, the "structured and structuring" concept of habitus stresses the necessity to link values to society and its impact on actual actions.

In-depth investigation of biographies of migrants is necessary in order to gain understanding and explanation not only of the intentions implicated in the migration decision, but also of the "life-cycle" and family aspects, as Rossi (1955) showed. Besides, job and residential histories investigated within such an approach add further information to subsequent stages of migration, including a hypothetical decision of return migration.

Therefore, if we are to locate migration within a biographical approach which takes into account identity and the context of social and cultural relationships around individual migrants, then we have to look into the ways in which identity is constructed and trans-formed on the one hand, and the ways in which it shapes our behaviour. We need, thus, to turn to specific issues of the constitution of identity of which Somers

(1994) is certainly a valuable example. Gutting (1996) has employed her notion of narrative constitution of identity to show how residential histories are the result of different influences from different identity narratives. This could be a useful example of a biographical approach to mobility. Another, although different, example of narrative and biographical approach to the study of migration is based on collecting and interpreting migrants' life histories (Miles and Crush, 1993; Vandsemb, 1995). These narratives are basically individuals' histories (or biographies, life stories, personal narratives as they are often labelled; Denzin, 1989). Feminist research has emphasised narrative as an alternative method for producing knowledge and giving voice to groups or individuals otherwise unheard (Gluck and Patai, 1991)

But there are other aspects worth noting. Through the telling of their individual stories, migrants are able to work out the meanings of events of the real world (Vandsemb, 1995). Stories are a means of interpreting or re-interpreting events or actions by constructing a causal pattern which helps to explain them. Besides, not only what is told, but how it is told, is a useful piece of information in that it reveals what the individual believes and the way he/she relates to the particular events mentioned. A story, thus, is a construction and it is not only to be related to social perception, but also to reality, between actual behaviour and social expectations, with distortions according to changing values and norms that may alter perception (ibidem, p.413). In this sense, migrants' stories are not only accounts of factual experience, but, through re-remembering, a reconstruction of the meaning of the past from the point of view of the present, or a way to give a meaning to the past for the present to have its meaning (ibidem, p. 414). Therefore, the bias in a life story, that is all those subjective aspects

that inevitably escape a so-called objective method, is also significant. In other words, what the migrant chooses to remember can be as significant as the facts elided.

However, several limitations must be taken into account. Narratives are always representations of reality and therefore narrative research cannot claim to refer exactly to what happened but rather to a reconstruction of reality which includes the perspective of the author (White, 1981a and b). On the other hand, I want to stress how identity is largely a result of the stories we tell about ourselves. In other words, identity always works through representation (Rutherford, 1990). Therefore, narrative is not an accurate or inaccurate description of real experience, but a tool which helps to give experience form and meaning (Vandsemb, 1995). Another limitation might be the false illusion that a chronological order of events can give in terms of causality and the emphasis on temporal sequence at the expense of synchronic relations.

However, the narrative has a great potential in migration studies on several grounds. First of all, it allows for greater attention for personal experiences, diversity, and alternative knowledge. Miles and Crush (1993) have stressed the potential of the method in recovering hidden stories, giving voice to migrants whose experience would go totally unnoticed according to the ethnocentred academic approaches. Furthermore, how people understand and relate to the opportunities and constraints facing them is extremely useful information in migration research. In this sense, narratives could be essential in order to explain the connection between thought and action, or how the individual experience the world. Again, we must stress how life histories illustrate both the logic of individual action and the effects of structural forces

within which life course evolve. Miles and Crush (ibidem) stress how this method should be seen and interpreted as an interactive moment, where the stories are not treated as unproblematical “sources” for the reconstruction of “real” events, but as the product of a complex series of interactions between the researcher and the migrants interviewed.

On another level, narratives make it possible to look behind decisions, actions, or events at the network of social relations that allowed them to take place (Bertaux-Wiame, 1982). As a matter of fact, by linking individual stories into a group biography, a deeper insight is gained into the social structures underlying the migration process. If collecting life histories a “saturation point” is reached when the same story gets told over and over again, then something more than a personal account emerges from the life stories collected, rather a social structure (Bertaux, 1981). Moreover, topics such as gender relations of migration, social networks, migrants’ sense of place, make the narrative approach especially relevant to the study of migration. Finally, we can position a biographical approach to migration research within a broader context in the field of geography and more generally in the shift in the social sciences: a highly self-reflexive moment in human geography, a literary turn in ethnography, postmodernism, feminist research, etc.

2.4 The Narrative Constitution of Identity

As we have seen in 2.2, the study of identity formation is relatively new in social theory and it is linked with theories of agency that have emerged from the “identity politics”. A shift has taken place in the explanations of action from “interest” and

“norms” to identities, that is, from a notion of abstract social agent to a specific category of concrete person. In this sense, these theories of “identity politics” assume that persons in similar social categories and also similar life-experiences will presumably act according to those common attributes: gender, race, age, class; but not because of some kind of learned values and interest which are determining action in a priori process. As Somers (1994, p 608) puts it: “I act because of who I am”, which leads her to move away from deriving the meaning of action and definition of self from artificial universalities and towards concrete notions of social being that inevitably begin from difference. But a question must be addressed as to how identity is formed and how it fits into a social construction of agency. Somers (1994) and Gutting (1996) link the concepts of narrative and identity together to generate a historically constituted approach to a theory of social action, agency, and identity.

In recent years, the concept of narrative has gone through a major reconceptualisation (Sewell, 1992). Whilst it was associated with the humanities in the past, it has gradually been elevated as a valid concept in social science. As a matter of fact, it is claimed that narrative is not only a form of social and historical representation, but that it is linked to both social epistemology and social ontology (Somers, 1994). Therefore, it is argued that social life is itself storied, in other words people make sense of their past and present experiences by putting together and integrating all the experiences within one or more narratives, and subsequently act in certain ways rather than others on the basis of these various narratives (Somers and Gibson, 1994).

Linking identity and narrative directs the attention to the new ontological dimension of narrative as opposed to the traditional role of narrative as representation (Mitchell, 1981; White, 1981; Polkinghorne, 1988). At the same time, the study of identity formation is intrinsically pertinent to ontology, a theory of being, and this is quite a different approach from the usual social science approaches to agency and action. Somers (1994) argues against this division and claims that associating identity and ontology with philosophy on the one hand, and action with interests, norms or behaviour on the other, is a limitation since it prevents social scientists reaching deeper levels of analysis which are achieved by linking the concepts of action and identity. Therefore a broader perspective is needed, one which aims at the study of social action through an analytical focus which embraces also social ontology and the social constitution of identity (Freeman, 1984; Bourdieu and Coleman, 1991).

The argument brought forward is that social life as a whole is narratively organised and mediated, which leads us to a constructed nature of history and knowledge in the form of public- and meta-narratives (Somers, 1994). However, the most important aspect of this new conceptualisation of narrative for migration research is the concept of ontological narratives (Gutting, 1996). Somers and Gibson (1994) define them as “the stories actors use and make sense of -- indeed, in order to act in -- their lives”. Ontological narratives, thus, are the means by which we define who we are, which in turn becomes a precondition for knowing what to do (Somers, 1994). What is also important here is to recognise that this “doing” will in turn produce new narratives and then new actions. Therefore, the relationship between narrative and ontology is processual and mutually constitutive (ibidem,p.618).

These ontological narratives are generated in what Schutz (1967) called the “flow of duration” and therefore are fundamentally biographical in nature. Ontological narratives then, make identity and the self something that one becomes, that is they embed identities in time and spatial relationships. They are formed in processes of interaction and through experience which leaves room for the selective incorporation of various sorts of information, processes of socialisation etc. Gutting (1996) stresses that whilst what is “experienced” is selectively appropriated by the individual, the fact remains that these ontological narratives are fundamentally social in nature. In this sense, they are constructed in relational settings, in spatial and temporal landscapes of people, institutions, social practices, public narratives, and economic and political structures. Thus they are also linked to what is referred to as structural factors. “Place” and “space” are, therefore, fundamental to the very constitution and construction of these narratives, which bring “space” back to the core of social science, although in a new perspective (Dear, 1995).

Ontological narratives, then, must be seen as the forces which ultimately shape action and can be related to any ontological feature, from family, to nation, community, race, religion. However, these features are not to be assumed as a priori categorisations, in a deterministic way, as single driving forces behind a particular action or event. On the contrary, a single ontological narrative always interact with other narratives, thereby producing actions. Therefore, when referring to migration, we should not assume that people migrate simply for family reasons or financial reasons, for instance; but we should examine both the meaning and prominence of a particular “story-line” within

migrants' narrative identity, which is always formed by the totality of ontological narratives. This means, as Bourdieu (1990) puts it, that whenever we research a particular action in a given context, we have to uncover the totality of these ontological narratives at that particular point in time. Obviously this needs intensive research methods (Sayer, 1992) and ideally a biographical approach (Bertaux, 1981).

The concept of narrative identity becomes very useful as it allows us to conceptualise action (migration/non migration) as constituted through biography and help to illustrate the way identity has an impact on all stages of migration, at the same time how migration contributes in turn to the process of identity formation. Gutting (1996) identifies different narratives in his study of residential history among Turkish migrants. The interaction of what he terms "return narrative", "real life narrative" and "family narrative" shows how the family's residential history is to a large extent to be explained by the varying significance of these narratives (Williams, 1991).

2.5 Narrative Identity and Decision-Making

Let us now turn to illustrating the usefulness of the application of an (auto)biographical approach to migration, which is based on the concepts of ontological narrative and narrative identity. We may apply this to different stages of the migration process, from initial decision-making to aspects of job and residential mobility, and finally to the outcomes of migration in terms notably of changes in migrants' identities.

The meaning of individual migration decisions cannot be fully understood if we do not take into account people's value systems, which are part of everyday routines and are developed over time (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993; Findlay and Li, 1997). One of the main strengths of a biographical approach consists, indeed, in the ability to acknowledge the impact of the multiple and changing cultural contexts of migration as developed over the life course. In this sense, we must recognise that the dimension of time is essential to a biographical study of migration. Furthermore, this helps us to understand that the meaning of an individual's migration decision is situated, or better "rooted", in his/her life history, not just in the moment when the decision is made. Therefore, migration decisions are embedded in values which relate to an entire life course, rather than being linked simply to the circumstances of the period of time immediately before migration.

That implies that different aspects should be investigated surrounding the decision-making, such as intentions, aspirations, and the multiple social influences shaping an individual's sense of place (Lee, 1983; Eyles, 1985; Smith, 1990; Rose, 1995). Therefore, different levels of meaning are presented, from personal objectives to perceptions of life style at home or abroad; from the complex web of cultural values interpreted as favouring or constraining migration to the influences around the would-be migrant, such as family, friends, school mates and many others. All these "factors" are nested in the general socio-cultural milieu of a particular place and they are particularly relevant in the case of the Irish migrants and their perception of migration, since migration itself has become such a significant feature of Irish society (Lee, 1983; Kearney, 1988).

Moreover, an approach based on narrative identity and life histories serves to illustrate the long time sequence involved in the germination of the “seeds” of migration (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993). That is not to say that all migrants’ biographies portray a growing desire to emigrate from childhood. Findlay and Li (1997) warn against simple generalisation of a linear “seeds” model of migration intentions. As a matter of fact, migrants’ perceptions are often reversed by different experiences during their life course and , far from being linear, they are strictly linked to all the other aspects of their cultural and social contexts. Moreover, this metaphor could be interpreted to infer a causal relationship between certain socio-cultural preconditions and a “subsequent uni-directional development of migration intentions” (Findlay and Li, *ibidem*,p.39). Therefore, I shall argue, what we should look for is not some kind of simplistic law-like explanation of migration decisions, but instead acknowledge the diversity of influences on the identity of migrants at a specific point in time and at a specific stage in their life course. This is mirrored by a diversity in the meaning attached to the migration act and also in the effects that migration is bound to have on migrants’ identities . Nevertheless, in trying to recognise that migration processes are generated through time, the “seeds” metaphor highlights the significance of historical linkages between the socio-cultural environment of a migrant and the formation over time of values which may lead to migration.

In addition, by approaching the issues involved from various angles according to different life stages as defined by the migrants themselves, it is possible to trace the ontological narratives which shaped the meaning of migration decisions, and how these

narrative identities develop over time and across geographical boundaries (Somers, 1994). In this sense, perception of places, together with other narratives, such as “career advancement”, “education”, “job satisfaction”, “want to see the world”, interact with and influence an individual’s decision about whether to stay or move abroad. However, it should be clear that such an approach is not meant to lead to a unitary set of patterns for any given migrants in a specific place. On the contrary, this approach is aimed at revealing different experiences in different cultural contexts. Indeed, in any one place it is likely to identify many different meanings coexisting, reflecting the complex, multiple and often overlapping cultural identities of people and places (Rose, 1995). Besides, ontological narratives and narrative identities are subject to change and adjustment over time. Therefore, identities are, as Rutherford (1990) argues, only provisional full stops. However, decisions and actions are taken mainly as a result of the time-space interaction and interweaving of these identities. Therefore, migration decisions in the case of individuals as well as families are usually the result of a careful balancing of the influences of dominant narratives, shaped in social contexts and through their biographies, with varying degrees of influence at different points in time (Gutting, 1996).

Obviously, one may observe the parallels between narratives and recurring themes in migration literature. But rather than take these themes, such as the “myth of return” (Dahya, 1974; Anwar, 1979) or the “family” (Rossi, 1955), as influencing migration in a normative way, if we see them as ontological narratives we position them in the totality of all narratives forming people’s identities. In this way they lose their normative connotation as fixed and externally-determined categories, and become a means for a

contextualisation of action at the level of the individual (Ricoeur, 1979, 1981; Freeman, 1984; Bruner, 1987; Taylor, 1989). Thus, their normative connotation is further reduced by a biographical approach which starts without the assumption of a limited number of factors but rather aims at discovering as many relevant factors as possible (Glazer and Strauss, 1975; Spradley, 1975; Agar, 1984). The reconceptualisation of “actions” as expressions of identity constituted of various ontological narratives means that the decision-making process involved in migration is a direct expression of people’s sense of being as socially constructed in space and time (Bourdieu and Coleman, 1991).

2.6 Narrative Identity and Job/Residential History

Having outlined the concept of narrative identity in relation to decision-making, this section will focus on another area of the research, with particular attention to the potential of the concept in job/residential histories. Researching residential histories through in-depth interviews is by no means new (Pryor, 1979; Forrest and Murie, 1987, 1991). Despite being biographical, these studies did not conceptualise “action” as constituted through biography. Nevertheless, they pointed out several issues concerning migration, housing, and the labour market (Johnson, Salt and Wood, 1974; Allen and Hamnett, 1991; Davies, 1991; Salt, 1991). A common feature of many studies based on housing histories has been the tendency to focus on recent residential movement, to neglect non-movement and long-term patterns, and to rely on data sets derived from questionnaires where individuals have few opportunities to express their views and experiences in their own words (Holmans, 1981; Holme, 1985; Thorns, 1985). However, others have attempted to construct detailed housing histories over

an individual's lifetime, putting the stress on their own accounts and the reasons why their housing situations have changed through their lives (Warnes, 1986; Forrest and Murie, 1987).

In applying the concept of narrative identity to job and residential histories, it is hoped that a better understanding of the connections between housing and labour markets and migration will be reached; and more importantly some of the mechanisms which underlie the shaping of housing and job histories will become more evident, for instance the role of the household in mediating the two markets will be explored, secondly the way they relate to migration will also be considered.

Studies of housing and labour market relations through the analysis of housing histories focus on the trajectories of households through the labour market while emphasising the links between mobility and class, labour market segmentation and spatial differentiation (Piore, 1971, 1982; Gordon, 1972; Edwards, Reich and Gordon, 1975; Gordon, Edwards and Reich, 1982; Kreckel, 1980; Cooke, 1983; Franklin, 1986; Saunders, 1990). However, the ways in which housing and labour markets are interrelated are complex (Hamnett and Randolph, 1986; Randolph, 1991). The connections between the two become even more complicated if, as is the case in this study, we look at migration, housing and labour markets in relation to the Irish, that is if we consider international labour migration but at the same time internal movement within the internal housing and labour markets (Salt and Kitching, 1992). Several problems arise. Generally, one of the main problems in this field of research has been the excessively general level of the studies produced and the scarce empirical

information on links between migration and the housing and labour markets (Barlow, 1992; Forrest and Murie, 1992). On the other hand, these links are most likely to be observed at the local level, in the specific context of a local housing and labour market (Randolph, 1991; Barlow, 1992).

As Champion et al. (1996) point out, most people move over relatively short distances, moving job without changing house and vice versa. Here, several issues become important, such as whether housing is a barrier to mobility (Forrest and Murie, 1987, 1992; Salt, 1991; Strassman, 1991); whether tenure occupation has any impact on migration (Kosinski and Prothero, 1975; Boehm, 1981; Hamnett, 1984; Long, 1988; Forrest and Murie, 1992; Munro, 1992); the role of house-price differentials, costs of migration and other factors (Allen and Hamnett, 1991). In addition, the role of employment and unemployment in relation to housing and any perspective of mobility must be taken into account. People without a job might be expected to move for a job, however, unemployed are the less mobile (Murie, 1986; Gordon and Molho, 1986; Forrest and Murie, 1992; Salt, 1992). Besides, new patterns of mobility are emerging, particularly career moves within the same company or organisation (Salt, 1984, 1991, 1992). In such cases, the role of financial assistance with the costs of migration also must be taken into account.

In this context, the main problem of an approach based on life histories might be the consequent problems of generalisation, even at a local level. Nevertheless, an approach focusing on life histories, ethnographies, or in-depth interviews certainly helps to investigate the issues mentioned above, and the structural relations central to

the links between housing and labour market and mobility. In this sense, it is a useful basis for a better theoretical and empirical analysis (Forrest and Murie, 1991; Barlow, 1992). In addition, the analysis of job and residential histories offers detailed information on the reasons and processes which lead to migration or non-migration (Gordon, 1985, 1989, 1992; Gordon and Molho, 1985; Salt, 1991; Gutting, 1996). Besides, important aspects of mobility emerge as linked to the household dimension and the way different stages in the formation, development, construction and dissolution of families relate to migration and housing and labour markets (Warnes, 1986, 1992; Murphy, 1987; Massey, 1990; Watson, 1991; Grundy, 1992).

Randolph (1991) puts the household at the centre of his conceptualisation of the interrelation between housing and labour markets. He argues that the aggregation of individual labour market members into households is crucial since it is through this nexus that the two markets are functionally linked. In this sense, the outcome of the interrelationship between the two markets is a “locationally and historically specific set of spatially discontinuous housing market segments, reflecting both the structure of housing opportunities in the locality and the characteristics of households consuming these opportunities” (ibidem, p.44).

As it is impossible automatically to identify the housing market position of an individual from his or her position in the labour market and vice versa, the role of a biographical approach through job/residential histories could be invaluable in highlighting the links between the two processes. However, it must be stressed that it is the subjective rather than the objective dimension to these processes which will be

given most attention. That is not to say, though, that it is not possible to read off the role of these structures at the level of the individual. Quite the contrary, a biographical approach challenges this common view and seeks to uncover precisely the ways these processes shape an individual's life course (Bertaux, 1981; Bertaux-Wiame, 1981; Bertaux and Kohli, 1984). Moreover, aspects such as constraints to mobility, the relevance of attachment to one's community, how house moves compare to job moves, are more likely to be fully understood through a detailed job/residential history rather than a large-scale survey. Therefore, the stress is put on trying to identify the key features which shape an individual's life course, rather than attempting to generalise over common trends or patterns.

In this context, we should stress that there is no simple relationship between housing and labour markets and therefore it is also difficult to assess their impact on the individual's history. Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that despite labour and housing markets existing in a reciprocal relationship, they are, nonetheless, to a large extent, relatively autonomously constituted processes (Randolph, 1991). Therefore, there is no necessary correspondence between the two markets. The relationship between them, thus, is spatially and historically contingent. Moreover, the two markets are not only relatively autonomous, but also relatively non-synchronous. For example, changes in housing policy which lead to greater home ownership may coincide with a period of high unemployment. Moreover, housing is the more stable of the two markets, therefore it applies a drag on labour market change. In this sense, when employment opportunities decline or move elsewhere, a pool of redundant labour is left behind, as it is the case with the North East (Hudson, 1982, 1986, 1991;

Beynon, Hudson and Sadler, 1986). Besides, the two markets operate at different levels: labour markets tend to operate at broader spatial scales, and in doing so they structure the broad pattern of housing demand; while housing markets are much more locationally specific (Randolph, 1991).

When referring to the impact of housing and labour markets on mobility, great emphasis is usually given to the tenure concept (Boehm, 1981; Hamnett and Randolph, 1986; Strassman, 1991). Tenure is usually seen as a limiting factor upon housing mobility, with only a marginal effect upon labour migration patterns (Salt, 1991). However, Forrest and Murie (1991) argue that differences within home ownership may be a more significant determinant of housing opportunity than differences between housing tenures. Moreover, they point out that the divergent opportunities of households within the same tenure are related to labour market segmentation in that differing migration patterns are related to the type of career held and the type of company a person is employed by. Therefore, it is not as much income per se which affects mobility, but the type of job involved.

It is important to stress that both Salt and Forrest and Murie seem to refer to job characteristics and job histories of the man's employment. In other words, as Watson (1991) points out, career paths are in their accounts male career paths, and often housing and job histories are shaped by the dictates of the man's employment. In this sense, more attention should be given to different household structures and different kinds of work within the household (Pahl, 1984).

It might be argued that certain occupations are associated with broader “ways of life” (Forrest and Murie, 1991). Therefore, different occupations create a set of needs and aspirations which can, in part, be realised through different uses of housing (Marcuse, 1991). In this sense, professional households which may be locked into global space rather than local space, have housing histories and (male) careers which span over national and international internal labour markets (Allen and Hamnett, 1991). One has to stress the contrast with the kinds of work associated with attachment to local networks and local markets. All this is only marginally related to the tenure concerns so often spoken about in the literature. Patterns of mobility are indeed related to housing and tenure, but other aspects are important: issues of access and ease of selling, ability to move, job vacancies, information flows, skill supply shortages and different packages provided to encourage mobility are only some of the aspects involved (Forrest and Murie, 1992). In this context, as Forrest and Murie (*ibidem*, p.100) point out, “it may be home owners who move but it may not be because they are home-owners. Equally, in relation to the privately rented sector, it may be more accurate to say that movers rent rather than renters move”.

As we have seen, the issues are indeed complex and tend to overlap within the analysis of job and residential histories. Therefore, we have to move a step forward in order to understand how action (migration/non-migration) is generated, and how it is, in turn, related to housing and labour markets. As for the decision-making process, also in job/residential histories, the concept of ontological narratives and narrative identity is essential in explaining agency as constituted through biography (Gutting, 1996). In a study of Turkish migrants in Munich, Germany, Gutting (*ibidem*) shows how it is

possible to extract dominant narratives from the families' identities over time, and how those ontological narratives acquire different relative significance in the field of housing at various points in time. He identifies three main narratives, a "return narrative", a "real life narrative", and a "family narrative". The family residential history (the decision to move or stay, the timing of moves and the destination of a move in terms of housing tenure) could to a large extent be explained by the varying significance of these three narratives of "presiding fictions" (Williams, 1991).

I shall argue that from the data collected while interviewing Irish migrants on Tyneside, these and other narratives were inductively derived, such as "better employment", "quality of life", together with intersecting narratives on "assimilation", "integration", and "perceptions of Ireland", which contributed to varying degrees to migrants' decisions to move or not to move both within the housing and labour markets. Therefore, both events and "non-events" are expressions of people's identities (White and Jackson, 1995).

The application of a theoretical framework based on the concept of narrative identity in empirical research may help to show how the explanation of migration and non-migration is firmly rooted in migrants' narrative identities (Somers, 1994; Li et al, 1995; Gutting, 1996). Therefore, "action", at different points in time, is unquestionably an expression of people's current sense of being in the world. Moreover, it is possible to demonstrate how identities that are constituted of various ontological narratives are shaped in social contexts by various, often conflicting,

structural factors. This leads us to the next section, which deals with identity formation and transformation.

2.7 Identity (Trans-)Formation

As we have seen, the narrative concept has been reconceptualised in quite a radical way, no longer as a representational form, rather as a concept of social epistemology and social ontology (Ricoeur, 1979; White, 1981; Somers, 1994). These concepts stress that it is through narrative that we come to know and understand the social world we live in, and, what is more relevant here, it is through narratives that we constitute our social identities. Somers (1994) points out that “all of us come to be who we are (however ephemeral, multiple and changing) by being located or locating ourselves (usually unconsciously) in social narratives of our own making” (ibidem, p.606). Therefore, to engage with ontological narratives provides an opportunity to enrich the study of identity formation with a relational and historical approach which escapes the rigid categories that are often used to give a priori definitions, and emphasises the nature of identity as embedded in overlapping networks of relations that shift in time and space. Identity, thus, refers to lived experiences and all the subjective feelings associated with everyday consciousness, but it also suggests that experiences and feelings are cast in wider sets of social relations (Rose, 1995). As Rutherford argues, “identity marks the conjuncture of our past with the social, cultural and economic relations, we live within” (1990, p.19). Somers further stresses the point in calling for a historically and empirically based research into social action and social agency that is at one time temporal, relational, and cultural, as well as institutional, material and macro-structural (1994, p.607).

But, how is a sense of belonging to a certain group or place formed and changed over time? And how, in this particular case, are migrant's, identities transformed by migration? And how do different levels overlap each other, since identity is more than just one person's feelings about him/herself as an individual, or about a place, a group, or a nation, or indeed some transnational formation; such feeling is not only individual but also social. It is clear, therefore, that any discourse on identity and identity formation is bound to be complex, often contradictory, and always unfinished, itself in the process of "becoming" rather than being (Hall, 1995).

As Massey (1995) observes about senses of place, also a sense of identity is articulated through the processes of representation. It is the way we project ourselves that constitute our social identities and narrative is the means we employ to form our identities. As we will see from the narratives that emerge from the migrants' accounts, identity works at different levels, according to what context the migrants refer to. In fact, identity is connected to a sense of belonging (or not belonging) to a particular place or indeed social context, and this is evident at various levels. A sense of belonging may occur at the local scale, where local people support local institutions (such as the Irish centre) or a particular local community that they can identify with. Also, it is possible to locate a sense of belonging at a regional scale, thus some Irish migrants might also claim to be Geordies. Besides, such a feeling may be even more marked at the national level. An example is the way the West of Ireland symbolises the whole of Ireland (Nash, 1993). As a matter of fact, its landscape contrasts so vividly with the way English landscape is imagined as to provide an important symbol of

Irishness (Rose, 1995). Finally, a sense of identity may be expressed in connection to a supranational scale with migrants wanting to be simply European, or even at a global scale where the Irish community is imagined as a world-wide formation as a historical result of the diaspora (Akenson, 1991).

The process of identity formation is complex and often takes place through a contrast with what one is not. This process of defining something in opposition to what is not, is a way of regulating meaning (Rose, 1995), and it constructs a certain understanding of difference. Said (1985) uses a particular term for this structure when he describes the Orient as the Other of the West. This is not only a problem of representation, though. Rutherford (1990) points to the power relations through which this process of constructing identity works. The way in which powerful institutions like the Catholic Church and Catholic schools have contributed to a great extent to the process of identity formation and transformation of the Irish in Britain is the case in point (Hickman, 1995). As identity works to establish differences or similitudes between groups of people, it is important to link it always with the social power relations in which individuals live in. On the other hand, as we have seen in 2.2, identity is deeply affected by migration and undergoes continuous transformation in the process of becoming which is involved in the interaction of different influences at different levels. It is the main scope of this study to try to identify the different aspects of identity formation and transformation experienced by the migrants in different context at different times. Particular attention will be given to all aspects of identity, including hybrid identities. In this sense, the use of a biographical approach which allows interviewees to express their experience in their own words, and the emphasis on the

narrative constitution of identity are a useful starting point in order to discover, interpret and analyse the interaction between two processes strictly linked: the migration process and the process of identity formation.

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter several issues have been addressed. First of all, the study has been put in the context of the relevant literature on international migration and identity formation. Secondly, an (auto)biographical approach to understanding the processes involved in migration and identity formation, has been suggested as useful and more efficient than other available methods. Finally, it is argued that as identity is constituted through narrative, and that it is at the core of every stage of the migration process: decision-making, job and residential mobility, identity transformation. It is hoped that through the employment of the concept of narrative identity, a useful theoretical and empirical set of findings will be offered in the following chapters of the thesis, which look in greater detail to the specific case of the Irish migration to Tyneside.

CHAPTER 3:

THE IRISH ON TYNESIDE: INTRODUCTORY PERSPECTIVES

3.0. Introduction

In the previous chapter migration and identity were discussed in theoretical terms and placed in the context of the literature on migration and identity formation. The purpose of this chapter is to move from a discussion of these theoretical concepts to a more detailed historical analysis of the specific experience of Irish migration to Britain. This is necessary for several reasons. Firstly, a discussion of the historical background of Irish migration to Britain will make clear the impact of the legacy of past migration. Secondly, it will provide explanations for the specific nature and characteristics of emigration in Ireland. Thirdly, it will make a connection between the theoretical questions raised in chapter 2 and the empirical research aims of the thesis that will be presented in the next chapter.

This discussion will also enable us to consider the importance of the links between migration and culture in Irish social life. Through an analysis of the literature on Irish migration it is hoped to show how these links have evolved and indeed reinforced themselves in time. Migration has become central to Irish society and its growing emotional and cultural importance must be taken into account. The issues emerging from the discussion will be explored in reference to perceptions of migration and the culture of exile (Miller, 1985), and this will provide a background for the following chapters of the thesis.

Finally, the specific themes of Irish migration to Tyneside will be presented and it is hoped that this will provide a useful background for understanding the present place of the Irish community in the area.

3.1. Historical Background

It would not be possible to understand the Irish migration to Tyneside without looking at Irish migration as a deeply rooted historical phenomenon. Traditionally, migration has been associated with nineteenth century Ireland and the two images which most powerfully have been given are the Great Famine and the emigrants fleeing overseas.

The tragedy of the Famine was widely interpreted as the consequence of too great a population growth together with a dependence on a subsistence economy. This interpretation was the result of Malthus' doctrine which offered a simple but convincing explanation of the poverty of Ireland. His theory of population growth implied that when population began to overwhelm the availability of resources, famine or disease would restore the natural equilibrium. However, though the chronology of the Famine and mass migration has been carefully connected one with the other by historians (see Woodham Smith, 1962); Edwards and Williams, 1956), at present the scale of mass migration and the economic and social context in which it took place are under review.

The population of Ireland in the period 1785 to 1841 expanded from 4 million to 8.2 million. It fell considerably between 1841 and 1851 and during the potato blight (1845-1852) about 1.5 million people left the country. However, this loss of

Emigration was already taking place before the famine, although the population increase contributed to its underestimation. Following the decline of population during the Famine, due to both emigration and death, emigration continued through to the end of the century, establishing a pattern of continuous emigration from Ireland.

Ireland's population at the beginning of the 20th Century was about half the figure preceding the Great Famine. O'Grada (1975) suggests that even such striking figures may underestimate the real extent of population loss through emigration. Since the official estimate by the Registrar General of emigration from Ireland to Britain and the numbers of Irish born in Britain do not match, he reaches two conclusions: that the total Irish emigration was probably 5 million (instead of 4); and that the proportion of Irish emigrants who came to Britain was probably higher than previously estimated. He argues that although America, and not Britain, was the main destination for the Irish outflow, the movement across the Irish sea was more important than the original estimate implied, accounting not for about one-eighth but to a share of between one-fifth and one quarter of the whole outflow.

Mokyr (1980;1983) dismantles the malthusian approach and its assumption that Ireland was overpopulated. He objects in four points: the Irish economy after the Famine does not behave according to Malthus' approach, in fact better standards of living were due to structural changes in the economy rather than the loss of population. Besides, it is not certain that Ireland was more densely populated than England and certainly there were other European countries whose population density were higher than Ireland's. He therefore concludes that there is not any statistical relation between poverty and

population density in pre-Famine Ireland, and that emigration was not a malthusian check since it appears that it was the richer countries of Ireland which came to experience a greater emigration, not the poorer ones. Contrary to the traditional image of the appalling squalor of Irish domestic life given by English travelers, he offers an alternative perspective into the subsistence way of life in Ireland. While rural Irish society could look like primitive poverty to Englishmen who based their opinion on the values and patterns of a different society, Mokyr (ibid. 1983) claims that the Irish actually enjoyed certain benefits from their subsistence economy. He claims the Irish diet was far better than it is commonly thought because, despite a clear dependence on the potato crop, potatoes were actually consumed together with dairy products, eggs, fish. Besides, he points to the availability of peat as fuel which was a great advantage for labourers who could not afford coal for their fires. He concludes:

The picture that emerges from these observations is not one of a poor society in the traditional sense. Rather it is one of a society which is comparatively well fed and well heated, but poorly housed and clad.
(Mokyr, 1983).

Handley (1943) rejects the view of the Famine as it was proposed by Malthus' theory and he suggests that it is necessary to analyse 'the economic effects of the union and of Catholic Emancipation on the people of Ireland' (ibid.) if we want to attempt to comprehend this 'paradox'. The paradox as he states, of 'a peasantry starving in the midst of plenty'. As a matter of fact he believes the 'Famine', which reached its direst form in the years 1845-1847 but spread its effects over the period 1845-1850, was not due to lack of food in the country. Ireland during the 'famine' years produced food in abundance. Between

September 1845, the first month of the 'famine' and New Year's Day, 1846, the country exported 3,250,000 quarters of grain in addition to the usual exports of cattle, butter, flour, eggs and poultry. An agricultural census showed that the value of the produce of Ireland in 1847 amounted to almost £45,000,000 and was sufficient to feed more than twice the population of the country (Handley, 1943, p. 1). He epitomises the whole phenomenon as the time when Almighty God sent a potato blight but the English created a famine (ibid.).

The image of Irish economic situation is quite simplified and a great stress is put on the impact of legal arrangements and the injustice of governmental regulations. The system of land tenure and the English handling of tariffs, it is argued, destroyed or badly hindered any impulses towards economic progress. As the mass of the population multiplied and farms were subdivided, people lived on potatoes until a natural disaster provoked both emigration and starvation (see Freeman, 1945). The picture of the potato famine, during which thousands fled from death and starvation, confirms a determinist Malthusian model. But, whilst most historians accept that British domination and exploitation lay at the root of Ireland's crisis, they also admit to the complex causes and origins of mass emigration as best explained in terms of the interaction of a combination of social and economic factors (see Lees, 1979; Fitzpatrick, 1984; Miller, 1985, 1990, Swift, 1992).

Overpopulation and poverty were obviously some of the causes which stimulated Irish emigration, but other factors are also to be considered. Above

all it must be borne in mind that a great part of Irish migration was the direct result of the fact that Ireland was less developed than other countries of the Atlantic economy. Also, cultural factors must be taken into account: not all Irish were ready to migrate and the motives of individuals varied considerably so not only the areas of origin and their structural characteristics, but also the perceptions of the would-be migrants, are to be evaluated (see Kennedy, 1973; Miller, 1980, 1985, 1990).

Undoubtedly, economic and cultural changes, both in Ireland and abroad produced the context within which migration became an attractive choice for many Irish and in fact it was often seen as the only option. In the early nineteenth century Ireland was, in comparison with England, poor and densely populated. Her agriculture was backward, industry was minimal and housing was primordial, particularly in the rural areas. Yet, despite economic underdevelopment, the Irish population grew very rapidly in the late eighteenth century, mostly because of the potato cultivation which provided them with the means of subsistence. Indeed, the passage from a diet based on grain to one based on the potato allowed the peasants to support themselves on about one-fifth of the land they used to need in the past. The habit of subdividing the farm among the sons, while permitting them to stay instead of migrating, also produced an extreme fragmentation of the land, which reached its highest level around 1850 when the potato blight broke off.

Lees (1979) refers to these aspects of rural poverty and overpopulation setting them in their regional context. Also Fitzpatrick (1980) points out that Ireland 'was far from homogeneous, and the economic processes which disrupted Irish life in the nineteenth century varied greatly in intensity from region to region'. At least two economies were present in Ireland in the 19th Century, in the north and east the economy was less traditional than in the west and southwest. The Dublin lowlands were made into relatively large farms producing grain and cattle, being connected to Dublin by transportation services. The central plain was the highest valued in the country. Leinster had generally larger farms than other regions together with a lower demographic pressure (see Lees, 1979; Kennedy, 1973). In Ulster, grain, flax and potatoes were cultivated, but the main manufacture was textiles. Therefore, the growth of textile factories in connection with other industries in Belfast gave the rural population good prospects of alternative employment in that tenants had an additional source of income. Modernisation was far less relevant in Munster and Connaught: in the west we could find the most densely-populated areas of Ireland but very few towns and very poor communication services, the area being dominated by subsistence agriculture. In these areas the majority of the population still spoke Irish in 1851, while in Leinster and Ulster the proportion of Irish speakers did not reach 25 percent. Given that Ireland in the 19th Century may have been underdeveloped and backward, it was not nevertheless static. The differences in regions denote in fact two dynamic systems where agricultural techniques, domestic labour, and production of grain, potatoes and cattle adapted to the

demand of urban markets and the site of the farming unit. As Lees (ibid.) observes:

It was less the backwardness of this dynamic system than changes in it and in the economies of other countries during the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century that provided the setting for migration.

Population increase, growing commercialization of agriculture and underdevelopment of industry were among the factors to put pressure on Irish society, for while this was the situation in Ireland, in England the process of industrialisation was steadily taking place. Whereas English demand for agricultural products increased, Ireland was providing them but at the same time Irish markets were flooded with English goods. As the market conditions changed, changes within the Irish economy were also necessary. This caused the collapse of Irish domestic industry, changes in agricultural techniques and an increase of farm consolidation. All of these factors required a decrease in the demand for labour in Ireland and paved the way for emigration. A dramatic event such as the potato famine gave emigration the character of a mass exodus but it would be misleading to see the potato blight as the basic cause of a very complex process. In a highly urbanised and industrialised society, the massive unemployment that accompanied the growing commercialisation of agriculture could have found a solution in the alternative sectors of the economy. In this case, Irish cities were few and not well connected. This may explain why the Irish avoided their own cities, given the fact that there were not jobs to be found there. At the same time, migration abroad became increasingly attractive, easy and relatively cheap during the first half of the 19th Century.

3.1.1. Emigration in History

In the first half of the nineteenth century migration became an increasingly feasible response to the strains of Irish social and economic life. However, this does not mean that emigration was a totally new experience or the result of the famine. Emigration from Ireland before the Great Famine has long been known and it is currently assuming more importance in the analysis of Irish migration. Miller (1985) estimates that 800,000 to one million emigrants moved to North America in the thirty years previous to the Great Famine. Fitzpatrick (1984, 1995) and Kerr (1943) refer to seasonal migrants regularly crossing the Irish sea during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They both acknowledge that early nineteenth century migration did not differ from earlier outflows and in fact anticipated the mass exodus associated with the late 1840s. O'Grada (1973) attaches great importance to seasonal migration in the subsistence economy, particularly of the west of Ireland. He argues that the extent of seasonal migration to Great Britain was greater than estimates and it increased between the 1840s and 1860s also because of the easier availability of special trains by the Midland Great Western Railways, which transported harvesters from the west to the east coast ports. O'Grada (ibid.) estimates that the annual seasonal outflow for the whole of Ireland was circa 100,000. In the 1860s some 60,000 seasonal workers moved by railway to the harvest fields of Scotland and north of England. He suggests that seasonal migration on this scale, mostly from the most distant counties in the west, could find an explanation in the poverty experience in the subsistence agriculture and the consequent need to find resources, namely the annual rent to maintain the family plot. As a matter

of fact, seasonal work could make for an important contribution to the family budget, adding about £10 (a third of the average income), a sum which was sufficient to pay the rent. He concludes that this dependence upon seasonal work played an important role in the shift from short-term migration to permanent migration.

In the late 1870s a series of disastrous harvests and the importation of cheap American wheat reduced the demand for seasonal labour from Ireland. Also, during the last decades of the century structural changes in British agriculture were brought up by mechanization and reduction of cereal growing, therefore further lowering the demand for seasonal workers. As a result of these changes the number of seasonal migrants from Ireland to Britain halved between the 1880s and the 1910s, leading to substantial migration from the western counties to the United States.

Differences in regional economies of nineteenth century Ireland was to be associated not only with different population structures (see Cousens, 1964) but also with the different destinations for Irish emigrants. (Fitzpatrick (1980) identifies four main destinations and he finds distinctive regional associations. Analysing the emigration figures from 1876 to 1895, he argues that the patterns identified may apply also to early decades and the period of the Great Famine, and concludes that about three-fifths of Irish emigrants went to the United States - mostly from the western counties. The reason why western emigrants chose the more expensive destination of America instead of Britain, he argues,

lies with the support of generous remittances received from America, which largely financed a chain migration, and the coincidence of the famine in Ireland with an industrial recession in Britain, which pushed emigrants to take advantage of cut-price passages from British ports and make their way across the Atlantic. In 1870 about one quarter of emigrants settled in Britain, the Irish-born population having its peak in 1861 with 805,717 (3.5% of total population). These figures, however, were subject to underestimation as the passengers on the ferries were too numerous to count (see Davies, 1991).

The majority of these migrants seem to have travelled from Ireland to Britain following well-established emigrant routes. Thus migrants from Ulster and north Connaught took the northern route, via Belfast, to Scotland, via Glasgow. Emigrants from Connaught and Leinster took the midland route, via Dublin to Liverpool. Emigrants from south Leinster and Munster followed the southern route, via Cork to Bristol and London. In Britain Irish settlement was most evident in the industrial midlands and the north with high concentrations in the big cities, London (108,548, 4.6%), Liverpool (83,813, 22.3%), Glasgow (59,801, 18.1%) and Manchester (52,504, 13.1%) (Census, 1851).

While the role of the Great Famine in the population history of Ireland is now considered less central given the assessment of mass-emigration in the pre-famine era and the outflow of emigrants in the second half of the century, other factors, such as the lack of homogeneity in the population structure, different patterns of agricultural development and the variety of domestic and

manufacturing industry, are fundamental in order to understand the economic pressures which led to emigration. Besides, the relationship between poverty and emigration in Ireland reveals some surprising results. Miller (1985) has shown that emigration among the poor was actually less relevant than among farmers and tradesmen between 1815 and 1845. Cousens (ibid.) demonstrates that the loss of population in the poorest areas was liable to high mortality rather than excessive emigration. The highest rates of emigration during the Great Famine as well as before, were from South Ulster, east Connaught and Mid-Leinster, where people were poor but not absolutely destitute, as they had the money needed to leave. On the other hand, emigration was at least in districts where people were not so poor and lacked the incentive to leave, or where people were very poor, in which case they lacked the means (Swift, 1992). The very poor and destitute, mostly in west Connaught and Munster, died during the Famine.

Migration flows from different areas in Ireland at different times in the 19th Century may be identified with also varied destinations abroad, such as Britain. The Irish migrated to Britain, probably in greater numbers than previously recognised and following three distinctive patterns. First of all the Irish came to Britain before 1870 as short-stay migrants on their way to the United States, Canada and Australia. As mentioned above, there was an annual migration of seasonal workers, mostly harvesters, but also navvies (see Coleman, 1965). Then there were those who settled permanently in Britain.

The role of the Famine, though perceived as a historical cornerstone for Irish people worldwide, is being questioned by recent findings and analysis of nineteenth century Irish history. Similarly, the association of the Great Famine with emigration has been carried out on a false premise. Nevertheless, given that between 1820 and 1910, nearly 5 million people migrated from Ireland, emigration is 'the great fact of Irish social history from the early nineteenth century' (Foster, 1988). As Miller (1990) points out, the idea of the Great Famine and the notion of emigration as exile are man-made. John Mitchell was the man who contributed more to the image of The Famine as 'starvation in the midst of plenty', a motif which proved extremely useful to the nationalist cause.

Another parallel view of the Great Famine was provided by a predominantly religious explanation of the potato blight, attributing to waste and therefore punishment from God for the carelessness of people towards their good fortune and God's bounty. But these interpretations, and particularly Mitchell's oppression model, which turned the famine events into a British conspiracy to exterminate the Irish people, find an alternative interpretation in the transformation which took place in the structure of Irish rural society. Social changes involved not only demographic trends which were the response to the famine years, but also the process of change which transformed rural Ireland. A trend was established which saw the number of labourers and cotters declining far more considerably than the numbers of farmers. This led to a strengthening of the position of farmers with larger holdings who were able to consolidate their farms at the expense of the small farmers. As a result of this trend, the

whole base of Irish rural society, that is its small farmers, was severely reduced, while the power of substantial holdings was enormously increased. The modernisation of Irish agriculture was accentuated by the Great Famine. The potato blight contributed to undermine the traditional relationship between farmers and labourers, brought starvation and eviction for labourers and cotters and meant economic ruin for many farmers and landlords.

Despite the strength of Mitchell's nationalist propaganda, his motif of starvation amidst plenty oversimplifies the actual state of the Irish economy. It is worth noting that during the famine years food exports from Ireland underwent drastic reduction. Moreover emigration during the famine and post-famine period cannot be seen simply as the result of a conspiracy by the British, although the ideological blindness demonstrated by the British government was undoubtedly relevant to the events. In his study of Irish emigration to North America, Miller (*ibid.*) stresses the 'push' factors which drove emigrants to leave: the changes in economic conditions, social structures, and cultural patterns. He finds three social forces which were determinant in the process of modernisation: the strong farmers as they embodied the 'rural Irish family' ideal; the Catholic Church; and Irish nationalism which was supported by strong farmers, the urban middle classes and village tradesmen. Such groups emerged more powerful from the devastation of the Great Famine. In a way though agents of a process of modernisation, all three of these groups were representatives of traditional attitudes which allowed a certain cultural continuity. The strong farmer families, where capital was concentrated through impartible inheritance,

preserved the traditional authoritarian family. This meant postponed marriages, due to less opportunities for inheritance. As regards smaller farms where non-inheriting children could not be provided either with a dowry or an education, emigration for both sexes became the only alternative.

The role of the Catholic Church was also very important since it achieved a considerable level of modernisation and at the same time it established a remarkable degree of clerical power. With the domination of the national school system, the Church could exert its influence widely. Its set of values was a valid support in protecting planned marriages and inheritance in strong farmer families. Moreover, the priest was an authoritative figure, having great influence not only in the spiritual domain, but also in political and domestic issues. In a way, the Catholic clergy replaced the landlords in terms of power and control.

Also in Irish nationalism the modern and the traditional coexist. Nationalist ideology had a strong support by farmers, businessmen and tradesmen who could use it in order to improve their already powerful position. It reinforced, however, the tradition-bound rhetoric that holds the British to blame for Ireland's problems and has left the Irish without any responsibility (see Lee, 1989). Miller (*ibid.*) calls this attitude the 'culture of exile' but, he argues, emigration was the product of often conflicting pressures and emigrants had ambivalent attitudes toward emigration itself. In reality, emigration reduced the danger of potential conflict and agrarian violence in relation to the consolidation

of holdings among the larger farmers. For small-farm families it meant less family conflict as it eased the way for the painful disinheritance of children.

The Catholic Church saw emigration as a great opportunity for the faith to be spread abroad. On a more practical level, Irish emigrants abroad provided generous remittances which were a vital financial support for the building of Catholic churches and schools in Ireland. Remittances also contributed to paying for farm rents and to financing the nationalist cause. On the other hand the fear that the country was losing a valuable portion of its human capital went along with the danger that Ireland would succumb to Protestantism and the loss of old values of family and faith. The unifying theme of emigration as exile provided a solution to these conflicting tensions and in explaining the phenomenon of migration as enforced banishment due to oppression, England became a scapegoat. This had a twofold advantage: it supplied an emotional support to the sense of loss that emigration induced; and at the same time it secured, conveniently, support and ideological justification for nationalism (Miller, *ibid.*). The conflicting pressures within families and communities and, on a more personal level, in the minds of emigrants themselves were given less attention, since the idea of enforced exile provided an external explanation to the phenomenon.

Press reports and growth of literacy in Ireland proved closely allied in the communication and information about emigration, therefore facilitating it. The establishment of the National Schools system in 1831 caused illiteracy to fall

consistently and encouraged widespread growth of English speaking. Thus, if the purpose of both press reporting and School education was to provide an opposition to emigration, it had in reality the opposite effect of equipping a substantial section of the Irish people with the information and the prerequisites for leaving the country.

Similarly, the development of transport during the Industrial revolution facilitated the physical passage of emigrants to Britain. As mentioned above, the cheap service offered by the Midland Great Western Railway in Ireland was extremely useful to the seasonal harvesters from the western counties who wanted to reach the north-east ports. When steam passenger services began to operate on a regular basis across the Irish sea (1820s), the competition between private companies and rival ports brought the fares down to economic levels to the benefit of the passengers. With fares on the Irish routes as low as 10d in steerage and 3d on deck, emigration became relatively easy and inexpensive (Swift, *ibid.*).

Handley (*ibid.*) treats the experience of Irish emigrants crossing by steamship from Belfast to Glasgow as wretched. Indeed, the state in which emigrants arrived in British ports during the famine years prompted hostile comments against both the pauperism of the emigrants and the conditions on board the ships. The tragic story of the Londonderry where 72 passengers lost their lives below deck became the symbol of the struggle emigrants had to endure during the crossing. Accidents like this were, however, extremely rare and should not

obscure the real benefits of the development of steamship transport across the Irish sea.

Two points should be stressed. Firstly, the Famine did not exert a uniform, homogeneous influence throughout the country, as it is demonstrated by the variations in mortality rates and levels of emigration (Cousens, *ibid.*; Fitzpatrick, *ibid.*), the reason being that Ireland in the nineteenth century was a country whose population structure and economic activities differed markedly at regional levels. As a matter of fact even a broad division between the more advanced northern and eastern areas on one side and the relatively backward west of Ireland does not take into account the coexistence of a commercial economy and a subsistence economy following different patterns throughout the country.

Secondly, two approaches may be identified: one which embraces the nationalist stance, originally formulated by J. Mitchell, which attributed the blame for starvation and emigration to the British government. The other one is a revisionist view which puts the stress on the conflicts within Ireland itself and the social forces behind emigration. Specific factors were at stake - the Catholic Church, nationalism, the consolidation of strong-farmers - in the process of social and economic change promoting emigration. Contributing to the phenomenon, press reporting, the rapid growth of literacy and the widespread use of the English language, together with the development of transport, assisted the Irish emigration.

3.2.1 Irish Settlement in Britain

In the nineteenth century large-scale Irish settlement became a permanent feature of urban life in Britain. It is not easy to outline the Irish urban experience, since it differed from one settlement to another. Whilst some studies have suggested that during the early and mid-Victorian periods the Irish migrants clustered in ghettos, some others reject the concept of 'Irish ghetto', suggesting that the Irish did not live in unintegrated areas of British towns to the exclusion of other ethnic groups (Swift, 1992). Davies (1991) gives a detailed analysis of such districts or slums in early Victorian towns, or as they were labeled 'little Irelands'. It is in this period that the association between Irish migrants and slum conditions became a stigma to be attached not just to a part of the Irish community, but to all the Irish population in Britain. The stereotyped image of the Irish in the ghetto proved to be a very powerful influence on English prejudice and Irish sense of injustice (Davis, *ibid.*). The 'Paddy' stereotype was confirmed and furthermore established by the contemporary view of the Irish as lawless, stupid, violent, heavy-drinking, and fatalist (see Curtis, 1984; Gilley, 1978). The attention focused on the squalor and examples of hostility and prejudice probably distorted the scale of the problem and increased anti-Irish prejudice. Yet the picture of the Irish in Britain lends little credence to the view that there was a problem of 'racism' against the Irish.

Irish migration developed in the first half of the century, reaching a peak in the famine year 1845-1852. In 1841 the number of Irish born had reached 400,000 and by 1861 the Irish residents in Britain numbered 806,000. In the following period there was a gradual decline with figures of 632,000 in 1901. In Scotland the percentage of Irish in 1861 was 6.7%, considerably higher than in England and Wales - 3.0%. The majority of Irish migrants were single people with males slightly outnumbering females in both Scotland and England at least until the beginning of the 20th century when the ratio in England shifted around.

Most Irish immigrants came from rural Ireland but that does not imply that only the poor and destitute settled in Britain. As Fitzpatrick (1984) points out, emigration, like Irish society, was not homogeneous and the composition of the outflow showed that very clearly. Besides, the Irish who were destitute as a result of the potato blight mostly moved to North America, while the Irish who came to Britain tended to come from the more industrialised north-east and generally from the more advanced areas. No uniform pattern of permanent settlement was identified and there was a wide dispersal and high mobility among the Irish in Britain. The main areas of concentration were the west of Scotland, the north-west of England and London. Although the Irish very largely settled in the larger industrial centres, nevertheless their experience in the cities reveals significant differences. As Davis (ibidem) puts it:

The character of Irish migrants attracted to particular towns and at particular periods varied in terms of their county of origin, social class and religious faith...In turn, the response of the host community varied in relation not only to the scale of immigration but to local conditions of employment and was shaped by the context of local religions and political allegiances.

In Victorian times, Irish immigration was perceived in alarmist terms which did not reflect the real scale and impact of the in-flow. As a matter of fact, the increase of population and the rapid growth of the great cities of Britain were more the result of local trends than the influx of Irish settlers. Not only was the number of immigrants balanced by Britons who moved abroad but above all the number of immigrants into the towns was less relevant than the migrants who moved from the rest of the United Kingdom (Lawton, 1959). Therefore, Irish migration has to be seen as 'part of the general, secular process of rural-urban drift within a more or less integrated Anglo-Irish or Atlantic economy' (Glynn, 1981). Indeed, according to Lees (1979):

The arrival of the Irish intensified the effects of English movement from country to town, at that time in full swing under the pressure of rapid industrialisation.

In 1841, London had the largest Irish-born population with circa 74,000 or 3.9 percent of the total population. By 1851, the Irish-born residents were 108,584 or 4.6 percent of London's population. By 1861, the Irish-born had declined to 106,879 or 3.8 percent of the total. This pattern was quite similar to those in Liverpool, Glasgow and Manchester. This leads to the conclusion that Irish immigration was responsible for only a minority of increased urban population. On the contrary, internal migration to the urban areas from the surrounding rural areas was at the basis of the increase in town population.

It was not the scale of immigration which alarmed the host community, but rather the levels of concentration of Irish settlement. Contemporary commentators referred to the Irish living in the worst slum districts of British

cities - which strongly contributed to the concept of 'Irish ghetto'. Davis (ibid.) highlights the impact of a pamphlet written by J.P. Kay in 1832 in relation to Little Ireland in Manchester when a cholera epidemic broke out:

Kay's tone was highly charged and his correlation of urban squalor with a lower form of life appealed to contemporary fears surrounding the 'condition of England question'. The belief in the existence of an abyss, a moral cesspit, below the level of respectable society, with the threat of a savage mass rising up to destroy the institutions of civilised society - church, monarchy, parliament and property - was the dominant fear in early Victorian Britain. Little Ireland, physically located below the river level, subject to frequent flooding and blackened by a pall of industrial smoke, provided a perfect symbol to represent this fear.

(Davis, 1991)

The fear of contamination, when cholera and typhoid developed, in terms of 'Irish fever', and in broader terms of a culturally inferior race which will contaminate the British population, was obviously attributable to ignorance and prejudice. The assumption that the Irish brought fever with them from Ireland which inflated the death rates of British cities was discredited by actual evidence in Liverpool, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (see Cooter, 1972), London etc. In reality, the people responsible for the appalling sanitary condition of the cities found it easier and by all means more convenient to blame the Irish immigrants rather than face the problems of their own policies. There is no doubt that some Irish migrants lived in some of the most squalid conditions in big British cities, but it was popular prejudice together with some influential writing like Kay's which lent credence to the association of the Irish and slum conditions. Kay (1832) referring to the 'contagious example which the Irish have exhibited of barbarous habits and savage want of economy', commented on Irish habits - the diet of potatoes, allowing pigs in their dwellings - and concluded that:

By their example and intercourse with others they are rapidly lowering the standard of comfort among their English neighbours, communicating their own vicious and apathetic habits and fast extinguishing all sense of moral dignity, independence, and self-respect...I am persuaded that so long as the native inhabitants are exposed to the inroads of numerous hordes of uneducated Irish, spreading physical and moral contamination around them, it will be in vain to expect that any sanitary code can cause fever to disappear from Liverpool.
(quoted in Dennis, 1984)

The concentration of the Irish in particular streets of particular districts made the Irish presence appear more pronounced than it actually was (Lawton, 1959). This may be explained in terms of native loyalty and kinship bonds but also as a feature of recent migration since newcomers would refer to Irish lodging-house keepers in order to settle themselves. While the concentration of Irish in particular streets in some of the worst areas of Victorian cities and their segregation has received excessive attention, a second pattern went almost overlooked - that is the Irish living alongside the English in conditions similar to their neighbours (Dennis, 1984). Besides, the transitory nature of Irish migration and settlement must be taken into account (see Finnegan, 1982). Lees (1979) in her study on the Irish in London, observes that Irish migrants were not locked into urban ghettos, but they lived close to the English and European immigrants retaining their separate physical and cultural identity and usually occupying the side streets and back alleys of their neighbourhoods. She stresses the link between urban geography and social structure in that geographic segregation reveals the nature of social segregation:

In mid-nineteenth century London, the pattern of ethnic residential settlement reflected a symbiotic but hierarchical relationship between English and Irish... Ethnicity, operating within constraints posed by London's economic and residential

geography, shaped patterns of Irish settlement. The result was a chain of Irish buildings and enclaves located within English working-class territory.

(Lees, *ibid.*, p. 63)

Interestingly, she found that the Irish were present not only in some of the worst slums in London, but also in ordinary working class areas, and a few middle-class professionals and teachers lived in predominantly English areas. Obviously, social class and differences in employment were more important factors than just ethnicity in determining the pattern of Irish settlement in Victorian cities. Differences concerned not only class and employment but religious allegiances and the well-known loyalty of Irish folk to their county of origin. Thus, no single Irish identity among the Irish population was recognised, on the contrary within Irish communities a whole variety of different origins, traditions, religious faiths was constantly present, occasionally generating conflict between Irish people in Britain. Moreover, the high mobility which characterised Irish communities implied a high turnover of different families (see Finnegan, *ibid.*). The changing composition of the Irish population and its constant mobility do not justify the permanent stigma attached to 'Irish' districts.

Contemporary response to the Irish immigration was affected by anxiety and fears which were extremely powerful and very well constructed by press reporting. Specifically, two themes emerge: the belief that the Irish would lower standards among the decent English class and the advent of cholera and typhoid epidemics in the 1830s and 1840s which made the Irish almost disseminators of killer diseases.

Handley (1943) and Jackson (1963) argue that Irish immigrants provided cheap labour at a time of rapid industrial expansion, therefore playing a crucial role in retarding workers' living standards, rising inequality and fostering industrialisation. Hunt (1981) challenges this view in that it presumes a labour shortage in industrial Britain at a time when increased emigration from Britain had been recorded. He also argues that much of the heavy work was achieved by the native labour force, concluding that the effect of the Irish immigration on the British industrialisation was less determinant than it is commonly assumed.

As for the response to what was often known as the 'Irish fever', it is interesting to compare the fervent hostility to the Irish in many cities with the altogether tolerant attitude to Irish immigrants in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Cooter (*ibid.*) points out that the only people who tried to implicate the Irish in the epidemic were the Commissioners of the Board of Health. Dr. Robinson, after making an investigation of the causes of the epidemic in 1846-7, placed no blame on the Irish and in fact did not even mention the Irish (*ibid.*, p. 54). Despite the fact that the number of deaths from the fever was highest in the Sandgate area, where the Irish were more present, the Irish were not singled out for public attack.

The work of Finnegan on York (1982) and Large on Bristol (1985) also dealt with the issue. The York Irish were represented in every social class and occupation. Inter-marriage between the Irish and the host population indicates

that there was no distinctive ethnic minority and that the Irish enjoyed a certain degree of assimilation. Prior to 1841 the small pre-famine Irish community did not distinguish itself from the rest of the population. However, with the arrival of the post-famine migrants, there was a change in the social structure of the Irish community as little occupational mobility took place (skilled occupations halved and partly-skilled occupations trebled) and the level of mixed marriages decreased. Large (1985) does not find a 'little Ireland' in Bristol and states that the Irish were well distributed throughout the city. Interestingly, in a town with the highest mortality rate in England, the Irish were not blamed for the cholera epidemic in 1849. The scale of emigration in these two cities together with the differences of the local labour markets determined the different responses to Irish settlement. While the rise of the numbers of Irish migrants was very sharp in York, it was very gradual in Bristol. Besides, most of the migrants in York were poor Irish from different counties in Ireland, whereas the Bristol Irish were mostly from Dublin and the south-west of Ireland, covering a variety of trades which helped them to be more easily absorbed into the labour market in Bristol. Local employment opportunities and the character and scale of migration may explain another issue at stake: the sporadic violence and disorder that occurred in some cities. Also political and religious factors were involved in the occurrences of riots and incidents in some cities but not in others. Within the Irish community, a characteristic feature was the sectarian conflict over loyalty to different Irish counties. Swift (1989) points to a variety of factors which may have contributed to the over-representation of Irish-born offenders in the statistics of nineteenth century crime, such as the growth and development of

provincial policing which had to be justified by the achievement of results - which made the Irish communities a main target for drunkenness, vagrancy, and petty theft. There may also have been police prejudice against the Irish per se or more probably against the Irish as representatives of the working class.

The English attitude towards the Irish was ambivalent. The classic view is very close to an attitude of racial superiority. The buoyant Victorian imperialism was drenched with contempt for the Irish. Yet, just as important was the sincere humanitarianism of Victorian England which found an expression in the relief work done for the starving population of the 'sister island'. Gilley (ibid.) stresses this ambivalence in English attitudes to the Irish and goes further to reject the racist charge since, he argues, the period of English concern about the Irish as a 'social problem' did not last after 1890, when increasingly the Irish merged into the host communities. He demonstrates that the very 'Paddy' stereotype was the result of a mixture of the Irish self-image and English attitudes. Religion was a vital ingredient in determining Anglo-Irish relations at a local level. 'Irish' and 'Catholic' were virtually synonymous to the British and, although anti-Irish feelings were more diffused than anti-Catholicism, the resurgence of popular Protestantism and the re-establishment of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in 1850 was a further strain on the Anglo-Irish tensions. Catholicism was by and large unpopular and Victorian 'No Popery' was much more than anti-Irish sentiment:

Catholic faith was seen by the Victorians to be foreign and dangerous, as it was the religion of France and Spain, that is Britain's most adverse traditional enemies. (Swift, 1992)

Yet, despite much evidence to suggest that the Irish were in many respects 'outcasts' in nineteenth century Britain on the basis of class, nationality, race and religion, there is also some evidence for a process of adaptation and assimilation, if not integration (O'Tuathaigh, 1985, McDermott, 1977)

3.2 Irish Migration to Tyneside

After presenting the historical background of Irish migration and settlement in Britain, it is now appropriate to turn to the specific experience of the Irish on Tyneside. This will allow us to define more precisely the place of Irish migration into the area and the role played by the Irish in different contexts, such as labour, politics and social life. It is hoped that this will, in turn, provide useful insight into the present place of Irish migration to Tyneside and the issues related.

3.2.1. Irish Labour

The majority of Irish immigrants were, according to most of the studies concerning the nineteenth century, unskilled labourers. The works they performed were usually the most fatiguing, the most degrading and lowest paid. Their primary work place was within the large manufacturing centres: in the woolen and linen industries, in the building trades, in chemical and soap works as helpers to smiths and mechanics. The Irish also had assumed a place in fields of employment outside the cities, as migratory agricultural labourers and in the railway construction (see Coleman, 1965).

In Tyneside the Irish present some differences as opposed to other British towns. The weaving industry with which the Irish came to identify in Lancashire and the Midlands as well as in Scotland (see Collins, 1981), was non-existent in the North East. Besides, the textile industry was small and specialised, therefore very few Irish actually gained entry. Though agriculture and chemical and glass manufacture were important areas of employment, the major industries in the North East were coal, iron, engineering and shipbuilding. As regards coal mining, the Irish were not skilled and their entry in the industry was therefore much delayed with Irish membership in the trade not very extensive before the 1860s. Cooter (1973) stresses the lack of a large Irish presence in the coal industry and claiming that 'the principal part of our labour is performed by the Irish' (p. 173). Again, the majority were delegated to hard labour such as lifting iron onto the decks, working in the dock excavations and as helpers to the platers. The extensive glass works in Sunderland, the chemical works in Gateshead, Jarrow and Sunderland made use of Irish labour. In the urban slums a wide range of occupations was to be found: shoemaker, rag-picker, tinker, weaver, hatter, tailor, musician, barber, knitter, cartman, pipemaker, dressmaker, vendor, lodging house keeper.

Railway construction employed many Irish and attracted Irish labourers from other parts of England. Coleman (1965) estimates that about one third of the railway navvies were Irish. Therefore, there would have been approximately 700 Irish navvies in Durham and Northumberland in 1851, 1,100 in 1861 and that they kept their position at the bottom of the labour hierarchy. In fact, few

Irish attained the rank of 'navvy' - which meant more skilled jobs such as tunneling and also highest pay - most of them worked as helpers to the bricklayers or the masons.

The singular lack of opportunities for women and children is worth mentioning. Whilst woolen and linen industries provided employment to the total family in other parts of the country, the north east lacked such industries which were usually good employers of women and children (Collins, 1981). Children had, in fact, been used as 'trappers' in the coal pits, but before the Irish entered the trade this practice had already been banned as a result of the Lord Ashley's Act of 1842 which forbade the employment of boys under 13 years of age.

Employment for women was also extremely scarce. Russell noted in 1913:

the extreme north is not an area in which the woman worker is in great request, differing in that respect from the Lancashire districts where she is so important a factor.
(Russell, 1913)

Employment for Irish women was confined principally to domestic services from scullery maids to laundresses. Some were to be found in the lower and dirtier departments of the factories on the Tyne, in nursery gardens, brick yards, etc., with average earnings from 4s to 12s per week (Cooter, *ibid.* p. 180). Many Irish girls turned to prostitution as the Irish quarters in Newcastle counted many brothels and harlots and in Sandgate :

the proportion of prostitutes to the whole female population is little more than one to seven, and the male population rather more than one to six....Prostitution is emphatically the traffic of the district. (Inquiry into Newcastle Poor, p. 33).

Thus, as employment opportunities for women and children were not plentiful, the Irish family's income was largely dependent on the male wage earner. On

the other hand, it must be stressed that the higher wages as a result of the demand for labour in the north east allowed the Irishman's wage to be comparatively better than that of a whole family elsewhere in Britain. The area's combination of the coal, iron and shipbuilding industries made the income of a labourer as high as 24s per week. (Cooter, p. 182).

The Crimean, the American and the Franco-Prussian wars all helped the development of the particular economy of the area and therefore a small margin of its profits went to the workers. Whilst an Irishman's wages at home were estimated in 1861 to average 6s per week, and in other areas of northern England rarely exceeded 15s per week, the advantage of the Irish labourers in the north east becomes clear.

3.2.2. Fenianism, Chartism and the Involvement of the Irish in Politics

The north east was one of the areas which gave a most relevant response to English, and in fact international politics in the nineteenth century. There had been a long history of political radicalism in the north east, concentrated especially in Tyneside. During the Reform Bill agitation of 1832 the Northern Political Union based in Newcastle followed in importance only the Birmingham and London unions. Nevertheless, for the majority of Irishmen direct involvement with politics in England represented a late progress of their experience as migrants. Moreover, despite repeated attempts to show a connection between the Irish immigrants and the early political movements of the working classes, the influence of the Irish immigrants was not explicit.

There were a few reasons which did not allow for a wider involvement of the Irish in contemporary political life. First of all, although Irish migrants shared the most fervent patriotism for the country, their basic needs of subsistence had to be fulfilled before any exploitation of their political sentiments could take place. Secondly, Irish attachment to politics almost never got beyond the limits set by the Catholic Church whose influence was practically overwhelming. Finally, some Irish, not to say most of them, found it more interesting to get involved in local issues than rally behind the national aspirations of quite abstract political banners. A local analysis of the Chartist movement supports this latest point (see Rowe, 1977). However, it is possible to speak of 'a general political emergence of the Irish which, in the last third of the century, grew to a national political conception (Cooter, *ibid.* p. 221).

Feargus O'Connor failed to attract any large number of Irish immigrants to Chartism as they stood closer to Daniel O'Connell's politics. His lack of success gives a good example of an Irish involvement with an English working-class movement, therefore not considered representative of the majority of immigrants. His nationality did not serve as a basis for Irish support. Michael Davitt was to provide, a quarter of a century later, a striking contrast with his huge popularity. On the other hand, the Ribbon Lodges in England did not make any large contribution to Chartism because of the Church's opposition and also because their concerns with the rents in Ireland had very little in common with the problems of English labourers. Therefore, whilst the communication gap between the Irish and Chartism was never effectively

overcome, any significant Irish involvement was most often to the disadvantage of the movement (Cooter, *ibid.*, p. 223; Davis, 1991, p. 175). As a matter of fact, as Belchem (1985) comments:

The Chartists had failed to exploit the full physical possibilities of their alliance with the Irish: the alliance, indeed, had exposed the fatal contradiction in radical strategy. Sensing the magnitude of the power confronting them, the Chartists insisted on legitimacy, organisation and preparation, and were critical of the bellicosity of their Irish allies. But such solicitude proved self-defeating, as the fixation with legitimacy and large-scale organisation caused delay and squandered the 'excitement of the hour...The alliance, then, did not strengthen the working class challenge in early Victorian England. In truth, it probably benefited the government far more than the Chartists.
(Belchem, 1985, p. 93)

The Irish were probably more interested in the political affairs of the homeland rather than Chartism. Nevertheless, the majority of Irish were precluded from organised political activity by their poverty. Also, in adhering to the politics of their church, which was only too keen on denying the sacraments to Hibernians, freemasons, Ribbonmen and Fenians, the Irish became separated from the mainstream of the period's social and political reforms. As a result they were further alienated from the working classes who were supposedly their moral supporters in the struggle for Ireland. In supporting the Pope against Garibaldi the Irish did not put themselves on the side of liberal reform. The Irish in Tyneside were not able to establish a relation between their feelings for Ireland and those of Garibaldi for Italy. Todd (1991) gives a vivid picture of the almost innate contradictions in Victorian Radicalism when commenting on Joseph Cowen.

In Cowen's case, the glorification of Empire also illustrated the extent to which English Radicalism became thoroughly permeated

with imperialism.... It was simply self-defeating to encourage the tide of imperialism, on the one hand, whilst identifying strongly with Irish issues at a time when Home Rule was portrayed in Britain as subversive to the Empire. (Todd, 1991)

To the English working classes, who regarded Garibaldi as a hero of social revolution, the Irish mixture of Fenianism and Catholicism probably sounded as absurd. Besides, Fenians were seen as an importation from America, people coming from America to Ireland hoping to overturn the English Government. The British press seemed to ignore the fact that the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood had been in existence since the 1850s and even when it achieved its greatest strength in 1865 it was treated as a 'more extravagant and chimerical idea.... of exotic growth' (Cooter, *ibid.* p. 233).

In Tyneside the press treated the issue at times with great concern as after the Clerkenwell explosion of 13th December, 1867 when the Fenian 'scare' became the Fenian 'panic'. Nevertheless, liberalism and toleration were usually reflected in the press reports and support was often offered to the Irish (see Todd, *ibid.*; Cooter, *ibid.*). Moreover, while the national press was devoting much attention to Fenianism, in Newcastle the issue was overshadowed by another disastrous explosion on the Town Moor. Therefore, public concern was shifted to a less threatening issue just at the time when the potential for an outbreak against the Irish was at its highest (Cooter, p. 237). The strongly liberal bias of the population also prevented the Tories from any promotion of anti-Irish feeling. Therefore, when in 1868 Fenianism began to fade away from

public view, in the north east it seemed to have missed a great chance to serve as a platform for political action.

However, among Tyneside Irish, Fenianism had probably a much greater permanence. In 1859 a branch of the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick was established in Newcastle and this probably served as a headquarters for the I.R.B. The Church reaction was in Tyneside milder than elsewhere in Britain. In the north east, though making its position clear against secret societies and violence, the church did not wish to attract the inflamed patriotism of the Irish. Catholic authorities in the north east realised that 'their best course was to maintain just the right amount of aloofness in Irish affairs' (Cooter, *ibid.* p. 243). This proved a very wise move, since in not forcing the Irish to make a decision between their fidelity to the Church or their loyalty to Ireland, the Church retained the confidence of the Irish at a crucial stage of their political maturity. Besides, the Irish remained within the fold without having to compromise their politics for those of the Church. Fenianism worked in the north east as a catalyst for an Irish political awakening. What used to be just a nationalistic pride became a political consciousness. The improved economic position of the Irish in the north east made political interest and involvement more feasible. At the same time Fenianism served as a political reference, removing much of the former apathy of the Irish and making them more aware of their strength and their role both at a local and national level. Thus, despite being a failure in the use of force as a means of winning national salvation,

Fenianism remained a positive result in that it contributed strongly to keeping alive the nationalist ideal and to alert the Irish to their political potential.

The rise of many Irish political clubs in the late 1860s and 1870s is a sign of the impact of Fenianism in the area. Both Newcastle and Consett established Irish Institutes and Gateshead and Hartlepool formed branches of the Irish Foresters. In an amnesty meeting for the release of the Fenian prisoners, which took place in Newcastle in October, 1872, between 20,000 and 30,000 Irish congregated on the Town Moor to listen to Bernard McAnulty calling for the ambitious goal of welding all the Irish into one political force. Whilst some believed that Irish politics had not outgrown Fenianism or 'intemperance', such an attitude was to be contradicted by the formation of the Home Rule Confederacy in 1873. The Irish in the north east, again, fully responded to the call and the first general meeting of Home Rulers was held in Newcastle in August 1873. Again, the role of the Church and the clergy must be stressed as they somehow gave the movement encouragement and leadership. Fenianism had taught the Church that opposition to Irish politics was futile if not negative for its goals. Thus, if the clergy might justify their involvement in order to maintain their position at the head of the Irish community, they were in fact effective in making Home Rule widely accepted among the Irish Catholics. From 1873 onwards St. Patrick's celebrations, while still remaining religious, became increasingly politicised. Cooter (ibid.) reports on Bishop Chadwick who, laying the foundation stone for SS John and Patrick's Church, Felling, in 1873, "was

forced to join in the 'vehement response' to a call for three cheers for 'the nation we belong to'" (p. 251-252).

The non-religious leadership in the north east is worth mention as well. Besides Bernard McAnulty, who was among the executive of the Home Rule Confederacy, there were other Nationalist leaders such as Lewis Barry of Newcastle, Timothy Healy who came to Newcastle in 1873, was secretary of the local branch of the Home Rule Association and of the Irish Institute, Henry Camlell, also of Newcastle and some English liberal politicians. As a matter of fact, by the mid-seventies the Liberal politicians of the area were almost unanimously in support of Home Rule while the area taken as a whole displayed a distinctively Liberal orientation. Cooter (ibid.) gives these reasons for such liberalism:

...the geographical isolation combined with the role of religious dissent, the few High Anglican -High Tory spokesmen and the large proportion of working class population as a result of the economic progress. (To these factors must be added the long-standing Whig tradition as epitomised by Lord Grey and Durham). Largely undisturbed by the major Victorian radical movements - Chartism, anti-poor law, factory reform and free trade - the north east was not provoked into reaction and thus quietly slipped into a role of Liberal Reform.
(Cooter, pp. 256-257)

Todd (1991) gives an altogether different picture of the political life in Tyneside, with Joseph Cowen at the very core of the debate over Home Rule and in fact all Irish issues. Cowen consistently supported Irish claims and opposed coercion with great vigour. Although he had no vested interests in Ireland or the Irish and he scarcely required their vote, he became for the Irish

in Tyneside their local spokesman in Westminster. As the owner of the *Newcastle Chronicle* which had a very high circulation, Cowen was able to promote the cause of Irish Nationalism and to bid for its support among the non-Irish.

In opposition to these attitudes, apathy, indifference and even annoyance at Irish politics could often be found among the working classes, therefore a communion of interests between the Irish Nationalists and the English workers was not easily translated. There was also a conservative element that openly repudiated Irish claims. Especially in times of depression conservative opinions gained an audience, not rarely putting forward racist stands against Scottish or indeed Irish workers (see Cooter, p. 265). Nevertheless, on the whole the lack of indigenous working-class support for Irish nationalism did not equate with high hostility against the Irish. A surprisingly high level of toleration is demonstrated by the very success of the local nationalist movement and its recognised strength by many leading Irish spokesmen. A large measure of the local toleration towards the Irish must in fact be credited to radical working-class spokesmen - such as Joseph Cowen and William Crawford - who shared the principles involved in the Irish cause and employed the publicising tools available to them in defense of those principles. As Cooter states:

...the political sentiments of the majority of the population and the stream of rhetoric that emphasised a radical tradition and spirit of liberalism made hostility to the Irish and inexorable contradiction. In the light of this almost enforced toleration, plus the strength of the Irish organisations and the support of several political and labour leaders, it is not surprising that the north east was one of the few areas that remained solidly behind Gladstone in 1886 after his endorsement of Home Rule. (ibid. p. 268).

Indeed, Home Rule was elevated to the forefront of the Liberal platform in Newcastle, in 1891 as to confirm the link between Tyneside and the cause of Irish nationalism.

3.2.3. Living Conditions and Social Life

The vast majority of reports on nineteenth century Irish in Britain portray deplorable living conditions and utter poverty. The available contemporary evidence suggests that the Irish had to face a stark reality of filth, disease and poor housing, both in the cities and the temporary shanty towns which used to be the dwellings for the navvies, though perhaps these conditions were less squalid in the pit villages (see Russell, 1913). Coleman (1965) refers to the description by Rev. D.W. Barrett, then curate in charge of the Bishop of Peterborough's railway mission:

Then there were those shacks with four walls of turf, made by piling sods of earth one on top of the other up to a height of about six feet, and by stretching across the top of a sagging roof of timber. It appeared to Mr. Barrett that all these huts needed was the hills of Connemara in the background and Paddy and his pig at the door to make the scene complete - and then you could have imagined yourself in what he called the wild regions of the Emerald Isle.
(Coleman, 1965)

The migrants who made their way to Tyneside in the famine years probably shared the same background of starvation, disease and death left behind by most of the migrants who moved to Britain. Whilst the harvesters who had been coming to Britain for seasonal labour during the previous centuries could offer work, these migrants arrived debilitated and frail, reduced to misery and sickness. Cooter (1973) identifies Mayo and Sligo as the counties of most

frequent origin for the Irish in Newcastle, while the Irish in Gateshead seemed to come predominantly from Ulster. He gives further evidence of origin for Sunderland with the Irish being from the inner areas of Ireland, not from Dublin and singles out Roscommon as a predominant county (p. 25). Irrespective of counties of origin, Lavery (1917) states:

Of the many asylums to which the Irish fled after the great exodus of the forties, there was none in which, owing to many circumstances, they were able ultimately to find more favourable surroundings than the Tyneside.

(Lavery 1917, p. 21)

Most of the Irish entering the area settled in Newcastle, especially in the poor districts such as the Sandgate area in All Saints. Middlebrook (1950) commenting that:

the great expansion of industry on the Tyne in the second half of the nineteenth century drew into Newcastle as into other towns a steady stream of labourers from Ireland and of land workers from the neighbouring countryside. Consequently, while banks, hotels, big blocks of offices and commercial premises of all kinds increased within the circuit of the ancient borough to meet the needs of the business community, a tremendous expansion of the suburbs proceeded at the same time to house a population which increased from 87,784 in 1851 to 271,523 in 1914.

(Middlebrook, 1950, p. 258)

writes that:

Even more notorious was the lower part of Pilgrim Street in the parish of All Saints. The dilapidated houses which lined each side of the thoroughfare, says another contemporary, "though retaining traces of ancient grandeur" were "crowded from basement to attic with a swarming population", the entries and lanes leading to "a wilderness of crowded and ruinous tenements".

(Middlebrook, 1950, p. 262)

Thus, the slums of Newcastle, though having existed for a long time, reached in the nineteenth century these levels of squalor, mostly because of the increase of the population which led to overcrowding.

Nevertheless, living conditions in general were very low in Newcastle. For many people in Tyneside towns in 1850, the general rule was bad sanitation, lack of water and life in tenements, usually not built for multi-occupancy, with families often living in single rooms (see McCord, 1977). Sandgate consisted of one main street, 370 yards long, of a single cart's width, the houses in evident decay. This street and its 25 entries contained 3000 people, an average of four to a room, between 26 and 30 to a house. Only Liverpool and Manchester recorded a higher death rate than Newcastle between 1869 and 1873. Among the causes of this high death rate (28.2 after dropping from 36.0 between 1851 and 1871) were certainly the housing conditions. A sanitary report presented to the Town Council in 1867 stated that

of 23,000 rooms representing the dwellings of 55,000 people, that is, of nearly half the population of the town, no less than one-eighth were without water supply or good ventilation or had any drainage at all, and only one-fifth had privy accommodation. (Middlebrook, *ibid.*)

Overcrowding was a serious problem, particularly in the older parts of the town, with a high average of 8.3 persons to a house in 1851, and 7.8 twenty years later (for the borough). However, not only the old areas of the town suffered from overcrowding, but also clusters of new tenement dwellings in the town could reach a death rate of 47.7 per 1000 in 1877 (see Cooter, *ibid.* p. 26).

The medical Officer of Health mentions two general causes of overcrowding in his first report of 1874: the high proportion of the “poorest kinds of workpeople” and of Irish (Middlebrook, *ibid.*). In opposition to this view Cooter (*ibid.*) forcibly stresses that:

Though the Irish by no means eased the slum conditions, they were not responsible for a situation that was already intolerable before their arrival. It was into a situation of unmitigated filth that the Irish brought their rural habits to contribute to the existing squalor and disease. Nor was the overcrowding at mid-century simply a manifestation of Irish poverty. The chronic housing shortage due to the influx of native and immigrant labourers forced the working classes to share the slums with the Irish.
(Cooter, p. 27).

Russell (*ibid.*) noted that:

Further, the cost of living in such places is by no means low. On the contrary, rents, considering the amount of accommodation provided, are positively extortionate.
(Russell, p. 85)

Since the rents were quite high, few workers could afford more than one room. Therefore, the area where most of the Irish workers were concentrated was also the same spot at which the sanitary reports reached their most polemic (see Cooter, *ibid.*). *The Newcastle Chronicle* (Inquiry ..., 1850) deplored the human consequences of inadequate sanitation in Sandgate as:

... notorious for scenes of low life, vile odours and disregard of everything sanitary on the part of the tenants of the quaint, threatening-looking houses which appear as if undecided whether they should forthwith resolve themselves into their original elements, or decide upon standing a little longer.

With a population of some 5,000 in 1851:

.. it was described as the most compact mass of the lowest and destitute to be found in England, with a very high proportion of recent Irish incomers.
(Smith, 1977)

Sandgate, a principal thoroughfare, gave its name to the district formed by the 25 entries on either side of its 370 yards of length. Each entry had about 8-10 house of 8 rooms each. 3,000 of the 5,000 population lived in these entries. The average density of occupation was four persons to a room and 26-30 per house. Overcrowding was worst in the harvest season when the population could reach 10,000. In Newcastle the number of Irish-born migrants increased from 2,857 in 1841 (5.73% of total population) to 7,152 (8.02%) in 1851. The Irish in Sandgate seemed to be living in the poorest of conditions, as demonstrated by the Census return concerning household and family characteristics, which allows a comparison between the Irish and the other residents of this densely-peopled area. Irish households were much larger than average for Sandgate with 6.64 persons per household against 4.16 for non-Irish households. This may be due to the occurrences of multi-occupied houses and the frequent presence of many lodgers. The Irish similarly to other migrant groups had an age-sex structure dominated by young single males and females in the economically active age with a consequent small proportion of young Irish-born children. The age structure of the rest of the population shows a pattern typical of areas with high birth and death rates, with 46% of the population under 20 years old (see Barke and Buswell, 1980).

The Irish presence was not uniformly found in Sandgate: in the ten sections of the Census returns the proportion of Irish-born inhabitants varied considerably: 46.73% in the Enumeration District 29; 15.16% in the nearby District 27. The highest proportion of households were found in the Enumeration District 29,

with more than 8 inhabitants (22%) and with lodgers and visitors (37%) This leads to a clear social distinction between the households situated in the Sandgate, St. Mary's Street and the milk market which housed mostly non-Irish tradesmen with nuclear family of less than 6 in number, and the overcrowded Irish households confined to the cheapest accommodation in the alleys and courts (see Barke and Buswell, *ibid.*). Finnegan (1982) and Lees (1979) also point to this pattern.

Cooter (*ibid.*) cites several factors either preceding the Irish influx or factors outside their control as determinants of the poor conditions:

Such things as the emergence of unions, which weakened the owner's paternalism or the instability of the coal market, which tightened expenditure, or the habit of annual migrations of labourers, all contributed to make social improvement more difficult. As "foreigners", the Irish were generally placed in the worst houses, a fact that often served to heighten the impression that they were the instigators of the poor conditions rather than the victims.

(Cooter, *ibid.*, p. 31)

As there was a quite rigid class structure in industrial towns like Jarrow, the allocation of the industrial houses reflected the gradations of labour. Therefore, because the Irish formed the lowest order of the working population, they were almost systematically housed in most inferior conditions. In Newcastle many Irish were unable to procure a subsistence income by their employment. Among them were the seasonal harvesters who remained behind and the lodgers, prostitutes and vendors of all kinds of goods who inhabited that part of Sandgate from the Trolley to the Blue Bell entry. This class of Irish poor seemed to be moving one kind of labour to another. Beside this group were,



however, the industrious labourers employed in all sorts of manufactories, foundries, glass houses etc.

The high number of Irish migrants in an area of Newcastle should not in itself account for the ghetto. First of all, the Irish in Newcastle never entirely dominated the whole area of the slum as they occupied numerous closes but were not to be found in others. Secondly, the assumption of religious and racial intolerance toward the Irish does not seem applicable in the case of Sandgate.

As Cooter puts it:

There does not appear to have been any deliberate or intended action by the indigenous population that would have initially pressed the Irish into a confined area, that would have made them draw closer together and thus accentuate their Irishness. The explanation for the ghetto would seem, rather, to lie more in a subtle combination of these and other factors, than in the exclusiveness of any single influences.
(*ibid.*, p. 35)

The general overcrowding of Newcastle and the poverty of most of the Irish led to their occupying the most inferior areas. Besides, the Irish themselves created a "pull" factor, thus attracting increasing numbers of fellow-countrymen into the same area. The fact that nowhere else the Irish could find the common bonds of language, cultural background, employment drove more and more Irish into the Sandgate area until some areas of the slum were almost completely dominated by Irish inhabitants and Irish business like public houses or lodging houses. Along Sandgate Street almost every house was a pub; there were 19 common lodging houses, 170 shops and prostitution was "carried on in the most systematic manner" (Smith, *ibid.*). The correspondent of *The Tablet* wrote in 1852:

Sandgate, the scene of crime, of misery and poverty, of filth and pestilence is the one spot, one locality in Newcastle, which may be emphatically termed the St. Giles' of the North.
(quoted in Cooter, p. 36)

In 1846 the Brotherhood of St. Vincent de Paul was introduced into the area and in 1851 a Catholic chapel was established on Wall Knoll Street. Thus, the Church also became a direct incentive for Irish settlement. Within the slum, the Church played another important role of further cohesion: especially through the activity of priests who came from Ireland and were able to speak Gaelic the church contributed to even stronger bonds among the Irish and their sense of identity. As the religion was inextricably linked with the nationality, the church strengthened the sense of solidarity, generating a section in the English community. The priest was an influential figure. Cooter reports on a two-hour riot involving over 50 Irishmen in Durham City in 1865. This riot, like others, began in the local public house and was terminated only by the intervention of the priest. Coleman (*ibid.*) gives us quite a different view:

The navvies were great sinners. They spoke of God, it was said, only to wonder why he had made them so poor and others so rich; and when they heard, from the lips of an evangelizing clergyman, of the coming state, it was only to hope that there they might cease to be railway labourers. The general view was that they were a godless lot.
(Coleman, p. 166)

In the industrial frontier of the north east, drink was very much part of the picture. It was not merely a fortification against the strains of labour, rather one of the few recreations available. In the slums of Newcastle there were no open places for recreation, no clubs, no means of amusement; but there were public houses and beer-houses in great abundance. Many of these public houses were

Irish not only by occupation but also by ownership. They served as clubs, immigrant information house and often venues for battles among the customers. The excesses of Irish drinking were, together with the keeping of pigs, the most peculiar habits that contemporary reports insisted upon. As regards the drinking, there were priests who strenuously contended with the problem. Father T. Matthew was an "Apostle of Temperance" in the north-east, though he was scarcely supported by the Catholic Church. Long before his death in 1856, temperance work was being neglected because of the more determined effort to build churches for the new congregations. Visiting priests often devoted their time to administering the abstinence pledge with results which were seldom lasting (Cooter, *ibid.* p. 41). Archbishop Manning also dedicated himself not only to reform moral habits, but to create a powerful body of total abstainers that would be able to exert political pressure. With this in mind he formed the League of the Cross in 1872, whose activity was principally directed at the Irish Catholics. In South Shields a temperance group called the Confraternity of the Holy Cross was operating by 1874 (*The Tablet*, XI, May 30, 1874). In March 1885 a branch of the League of the Cross was established in Newcastle (*The Tablet*, XXXIII, March 7, 1885).

Another aspect of Irish social life were the Irish clubs, particularly the Ribbon Lodges and the Hibernian Societies. In the North East there is no evidence to substantiate their existence, but the Catholic Church was keen to consider any group of Irishmen not directly under its control as Ribbonmen, or member of some "secret society". The Ancient Order of Hibernians played a very

important role as an organiser and leader of poor Irish Catholics in the industrial towns of England and Wales. A branch of the order was operating in Newcastle in 1844 but it had already been accused of being “secret” and therefore condemned by the Church (see Denvir, 1892, p. 128.) In order to “distract” the Catholics from any sort of “dangerous social activity” the Church promoted alternatives such as Holy Guilds, branches of the Catholic Institute, Catholic Friendly Societies, Catholic Young Men’s, Catholic Orders of Odd Fellows and other confraternities, in order to provide instruction and harmless amusements and above all to put the Church at the centre of Irish social life.

English responses to the Irish ranged from hostility to eulogy. These attitudes could be found in the north east as well. The investigator of Sandgate in 1850 was convinced that:

the influx of Irish into our large towns has had the most deteriorating influence both upon themselves and the native population with which they have come in contact.
(Inquiry into Newcastle Poor, 1850)

On the other hand, comments on the Irish in the north east tended to be less hostile than those which have been recorded in other parts of England. One aspect of this more tolerant attitude is the singular lack of references to the Irish. In other areas there was little hesitation in denouncing the Irish for anything which lightly suggested their culpability, while in the north east there was almost a reticence to implicate the Irish. Thus, during the virulent outbreaks of typhus and cholera between 1846 and 1849 it was common place to blame the generation and communication of these diseases on the Irish.

Typhus itself was an unknown disease which was referred to as "Irish fever". But in Newcastle, the Irish were not accused or blamed for the epidemic. The causes were instead identified in the overcrowding, the lack of ventilation and drainage and the general poor housing conditions. In other words, the local press did not attempt to use the Irish as a convenient scapegoat for the sanitary neglect of Newcastle.

The Irish did not cause, in the host community, a great deal of hostility (see Cooter, p. 60). They were not seen as an evil for the expiation of social shortcomings and within the context of other immigrant groups were treated with remarkable equanimity: equal attention was given to the Scottish or Cornish migrants. As Cooter states:

Indeed, the single most important factor to emerge from the examination of the conditions and social life of the Irish in the north east and which contributes to an understanding of their unique position relative to other areas was the solvent nature of the society into which they entered. The sheer amount of immigration and the mobility of the population made it difficult to isolate the Irish as the cause for any disorder. In other areas, where the industrial expansion was antecedent to the famine influx, the Irish, as the single greatest immigrant group, could more easily be singled out as the chief source of social ills and unrest
(*ibid.*, p. 60-61)

Nevertheless, the fluidity of north east society and the relative size of the Irish community can only provide some of the reasons for the toleration they enjoyed (Byrne, 1996). There were other factors determining the attitudes toward the Irish, namely the religious, economic and political fabric of the region and the Irish influence within and upon it.

3.4 Conclusions

In this chapter the historical background of Irish migration to Tyneside has been presented. It is hoped that these introductory perspectives will contribute towards understanding the role played by migration in Irish history. From this chapter two conclusions may be drawn. Firstly, there has been a long-standing history of migration from Ireland to Britain. The particular Irish experience of migration has contributed to the creation of a culture in which mobility has become increasingly relevant. Migration seems to be deeply embedded in Irish society, with major consequences on reinforcing the process itself. This concept will be explored in greater length later in the thesis in relation to the decision-making process and the migrants' perceptions of migration. Secondly, the specific historical characteristics of Irish migration to Tyneside help in explaining the evolving patterns of the movement and their impact on the processes under study.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter illustrates the methodological challenges and the research strategies adopted in the investigation. Its purpose is both to explain the choice of methods in relation to the issues involved, and to stress the objectives and limitations of the approach. This will provide me with the possibility of assessing what I was trying to achieve in the research on the one hand, and to make some criticisms of my work on the other. This is necessary in order to point to ways of improving research on migration and identity in the future.

4.1 Methodological Challenges and Problems Faced

In designing a methodology for researching migration and identity I became aware of a number of challenges. First of all, migration is a complex phenomenon and I knew that planning to study the process at all its stages would make the task even harder (Champion, 1992). A second challenge was that of investigating such a contested subject as identity (Fielding, 1992; Ganguly, 1992). I proposed to explore the interaction of the two processes and, therefore, I needed a methodology that would help me explore the various dimensions of the subject and open up possibilities (Srauss & Corbin, 1990; Ley, 1992; Thomas, 1993; Findlay & Li, 1997). I was interested in the subjective side of the migration experience and this meant that intensive qualitative research strategies were needed in my methodological approach (Little, 1980; Denzin, 1989; Dunaway, 1992; Okely & Callaway, 1992). Besides, I was an outsider. That gave me the possibility of starting the research without preconceptions about the topic

I was going to investigate (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, Spradley, 1979; Agar, 1980). However, it also meant that I had to obtain access and build the connections and that was going to take a lot of time. I chose Tyneside as my case study, which made geographical sense, given my intention to adopt an ethnographic approach (Conquergood, 1991; Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Cook & Crang, 1995). I planned to spend as much time as possible with the people I was going to work with and from Durham it would have been easy to build a network of contacts, meet a wide range of informants repeatedly over an extended period of time, stay in contact, travel to Newcastle and take part in several activities involving the Irish community. This was very important, given the nature of the work and my commitment to involve as many Irish people as possible in the research and encourage the migrants to fully engage in the project in a self-reflexive way (Ganguly, 1992; McDowell, 1992; Schneider, 1992). That proved a major challenge and the outcome of my reiterated attempts is difficult to assess. A number of informants have been constantly informed of the progress of the thesis, some of the people who took part in the work have expressed their interest in reading the final form of the study and a copy of the thesis will be kept in the Tyneside Irish centre once completed.

The initial phases of my research experience involved several problems in starting the research project, getting access, collecting the data, etc. First of all, access was not an easy, straightforward procedure. Different approaches had to be made to individuals at different levels and stages of the research. This involved negotiation and re-negotiation practically throughout the study. Besides, as Burgess (1984) points out, access influences the kind of investigation which can be done and the position that the

researcher can take. Another issue linked to access is the problem which such a process generates at the level of field research, namely selecting informants and observing situations (McCall and Simmons, 1969; Ostrander, 1993; Delaney, 1988). Therefore, access is not simply an essential phase in the research process, but a very influential factor in that it can affect the reliability and validity of the data obtained. The points of contact which researchers have with an organisation or group can influence the collection of data and the subsequent results of the investigation. During this phase of the research process the researcher's activities may influence the ways in which the people being studied relate to the research project and the researcher herself (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975; Bulmer, 1984).

At the very early stage of my research I encountered considerable difficulties in gaining access, the main one being the suspicious, reluctant attitude I was faced with. Far from being pleased, most of the first informants I contacted seemed to be almost annoyed by my research project. In several cases, particularly when key informants were involved, I had to negotiate access repeatedly and in a few cases I simply failed to get access. This was probably due to my failure to clarify my identity (nationality, religion etc.) fully and clearly from the very first approach. As I learned to change the way in which I was introducing myself - a research student from Durham University - into a self-description which could appear perhaps less threatening: an Italian student, their attitude also changed. Somehow being Italian (therefore not British) put me almost immediately in a more acceptable position: first because as an outsider I could discuss more freely issues such as political, religious or ethnic matters; secondly

because they felt I could share most of their problems, opinions or attitudes as I was myself a migrant, a Catholic, an islander.

Some of the key informants granted me access only on the condition that they would not be quoted and above all their identity should not be disclosed. Among well-known, influential representatives of the community, many stated very clearly their intention not to answer specific political questions, therefore putting relevant limitations to the extent and depth of the interview. Also, most of them preferred being interviewed without the aid of a tape recorder.

My presence at social occasions was at first welcomed with curiosity and suspicion. As the study progressed and time proceeded I was more and more integrated within the community: people were no longer uncomfortable about my being at religious services or festivals, or social evenings or cultural events. This allowed me to benefit considerably from observations carried out during these occasions (Delaney, 1988; Cook and Crang, 1995). Being a female researcher was sometimes problematic. As Golde (1970), Warren & Rasmussen (1977), Bulmer (1982) and others have pointed out, sex and gender can influence field research. Furthermore, age and marital status can also influence the role to which a woman is assigned. When taking the role of a participant observer I had to consider the extent to which the role I was ascribed through age, sex and gender could provide and above all restrict access to field data (Nast, 1974; Cotterill and Letherby, 1993).

It was sometimes difficult to find a balance between involvement and detachment. As a participant observer I had to embrace the dual role of outsider and insider. On the other hand this offered me a great opportunity to step in and out of the setting under study. It allowed me to participate but at the same time to reflect on the data that I was gathering during participation. This dual role was extremely valuable as it prevented me from overidentification with the people I was studying but it also involved a clash of roles: the role of a stranger and that of a friend (Agar, 1980; Gmelch, 1992)

A major problem that I had to face in doing research on the Irish in Tyneside is the lack of statistics. The problem has a historical reason as Coleman (1987) points out. As Ireland was part of the United Kingdom before 1922 no statistics on immigration could apply. The only source of information on the Irish in Britain relative to the 19th Century is the question on birthplace in the Census.

Despite the Independence of 1922 and the decision to leave the Commonwealth in 1948, therefore becoming a foreign country, the situation regarding statistics did not improve. As a matter of fact, the Ireland Act in 1949 placed Irish nationals in a unique position declaring that the Republic of Ireland was not to be regarded as a foreign country and no checks were placed on Irish immigration. "The Irish Republic forms a common Travel Area together with Britain, and the two government cooperate in a joint system of frontier control" (Zig-Layton-Henry, 1985).

The fact that Irish citizens move unchecked and uncounted into the UK (even more freely than EC citizens) is an anomaly in the logic of immigration enumeration. The result is that no complete migration figures are available from any source. Therefore, the scarcity of quantitative data on Irish migration to Tyneside was one of the main obstacles and it should be stressed as it constitutes a major limitation to the thesis.

4.2 What I planned to do

Before undertaking fieldwork I thought about the possibilities that the research offered. I wanted to use and build on the work that already existed in the field of migration and cultural studies. I also wanted to be able to draw on my previous experience, as I wrote a dissertation on migration as part of my first degree in Italy. Therefore, I started by examining the theoretical base and the literature on Irish migration to Britain and on the process of identity formation, of which Chapter Two is the review. I made a list of possible areas of research and grouped into sub-topics for investigation. This helped me to refine what I was looking for. Then, I compiled a few lists of questions that might help me in focusing on those subject areas and from that list a draft interview was produced (see Appendix Two).

Before starting fieldwork, I planned to interview people from different backgrounds, class, age, sex. I wanted to approach key individuals in the community, as well as ordinary members of the Irish population. My intention was to use unstructured and semistructured interviews as the main tool for investigation, supplemented by life history interviews and participant observation. Staying in the field for a long period of time would provide me with the possibility to interview informants at different times, in

different contexts over an extended period of time. I therefore planned to spend the first part of my fieldwork on Tyneside getting to know the setting of the investigation, in order to build a network of contacts for the in-depth study I proposed to carry out.

4 3 Structure of the Fieldwork

Given the nature of the investigation and the methods adopted, I did not conceive the fieldwork as simply a means to check on the validity of theoretical assumptions. On the contrary, I wanted to keep the two fronts of the research open so that useful and productive interactions would take place. Therefore, the main stage of the fieldwork took place from 1990 to 1992 with alternating periods of time out to reflect and do some preliminary analysis. This allowed me to build upon stages of the fieldwork: getting to know the field, preliminary interviewing, continually modifying and adapting the methodology according to the needs of the investigation, and putting useful feedback into the main bulk of the interviewing process. Having completed most of the interviews, I then returned home to Italy and planned to come back to Durham and continue the analysis of the material collected after a brief trip to Libya. Unfortunately, that 'brief' visit was to become a three years' struggle to get an exit visa and come back to Durham. My exile in Cyrenaica had a serious impact on the progress of the thesis. However, it proved very effective in enabling me to complete the transcripts and progress in the analysis of the data collected. Moreover, my personal experience of migration brought an altogether new insight into the very issues I was investigating in relation to migration and identity. All of a sudden, being translated into a different cultural universe, trying to integrate, suffer racism and discrimination, reformulating my sense of self and constructing layers of often

conflictual and contradictory identities, was not simply a topic for a PhD; it was a reality of my existence, there and then. Moreover, I was then able to 'read' shades of meaning previously overlooked, and the material I had collected had assumed new and deeper significance. 'Taking time out' was, therefore, very useful to me - though not without its costs. There was disruption in continuity and when I was finally able to make my way to Durham I needed a period of time to re-settle.

4.4 In the Field

Since my research specifically related to the interaction of migration and identity, I decided to focus my energies on contacting as many Irish migrants living on Tyneside in an attempt to explore as wide a range of possibilities as possible.. I could not possibly get in touch with all of them and there was an element of chance in the contacts I made, whom could I get through to on the phone, or could I find, or who did I get referred to. Besides, I did not want to rely on just one or few sources for contacts, as this would prevent me from getting to know relevant informants. For instance, the Irish Centre functions as a focus for the Irish community on Tyneside, but some of the informants who spoke to me do not actually relate to it. Besides, I was aware of the need to be careful if I was to avoid being labelled in relation to a particular section of the community and therefore to cut off my access to some groups.

However, time and practical problems (endemic shortage of money, lack of a car) meant that I had to limit the number of informants I could contact and be in touch with. Ideally, I would have spent a much longer period of time in the field so to exploit the full potential of the biographical approach I adopted. I decided I did not

have enough resources to do this kind of job, therefore, the extent of the investigation is not as wide as I would have liked it to be.

I would have liked to have had the resources to enable a process of dialogue to come out of my work, so that the migrants who were the focus of the research could directly contribute to the outcome of the project. However, the constraints of many practical problems that emerged during the work determined the extent of the research and limited my initial intentions. Nevertheless, some migrants contributed with useful suggestions and were eager to hear what I have been finding.

Studying the Irish population in Tyneside involved a first consideration, that is, the lack of definite lists of Irish migrants and the scarcity of official records regarding them. As a result of this lack of reliable, objective data, the setting was at first known only in a fragmentary way which prevented me from using the conventional sampling techniques involved in probability sampling. Consequently, sampling strategies needed to be based on the social characteristics of the population to be studied. In this respect, opportunistic sampling and snowball sampling better served the purpose of the research. This involved the use of a small group of informants who were asked to put me in contact with other informants who were then interviewed, then asking them about other informants and interviewing them, and so on, until a chain of informants was selected. This sampling procedure reflects the pattern of social relations in a particular setting, therefore the sample involves not only the individuals but also the relations between individuals.

The first object of research to be selected was the research site. The role of the long-established Irish community in Tyneside, its cultural activities, social integration, political and economical impact on the area are at the very core of the research project. The site chosen allowed me to move from studying simple situations to more complex; the degree of access and entry, although not always excellent was nonetheless possible; the situation allowed me to take an unobtrusive role; it was possible to participate in a series of ongoing activities. These conditions together with the availability of individuals willing to cooperate made the research site considered suitable for investigation. Although this field study appeared to be located on a single site, it includes several sub-sites, in that a number of sub-locations are involved but also different social situations are linked together by physical proximity and because the same people participate in different locations.

Events sampling was the second feature to be considered. The behaviour of the people who were observed may be examined and sub-divided into three groups: routine events, that is activities that are part of daily life; special events such as anticipated religious events (e.g. St. Patrick's Day) or social events (e.g. festivals, concerts, cultural events, etc.); unexpected events. Perhaps the most important selection strategy to mention is the selection of people. In this study the approach of "intensive work with informants" has been adopted, this involved also the selection of key informants. In this respect a selection of key informants from the Church, the schools, and social organisations provided a valuable starting research base. These different kinds of sampling have been adopted in order to address qualitative issues concerning what occurs and its implications for social relations.

The time spent with the informants in different situations and contexts was paramount to the research. Participant observation is, I believe, a very useful strategy in this specific investigation. However, there are some considerations to be stressed here. Participant observation allows real study of social processes in social systems, and this was very important since I was investigating identity, integration and assimilation.. Therefore, data based on participant observation are richer and more direct. This blend of methods and techniques involves repeated, genuine social interaction on the scene with the subjects themselves as a part of the data-gathering process. There is also an opportunity to collect the different versions of events that are available. Therefore, I was often able to compare these accounts with each other and also with other observations made in the field of study (Denzin, 1970; McCall & Simmons, 1969). An objection is usually raised against this research method. As participant observers are involved with those who are researched and become part of the context that is being observed, they could modify and influence the research context as well as being influenced themselves. As a matter of fact, especially at the early stages of the research, my presence on various research setting was enough to influence the context I was trying to observe. This was due mainly to the reluctance and hostility of some of the participants or the curiosity around an outsider. However, it is precisely through this interaction and the conflicts arising from it that constructive insight emerges.

Using exploratory interviews allowed me not only to dismiss certain hypotheses originally formulated but also to expand the research project to issues which at first I tended to overlook. I found it helpful to establish areas of discussion having a certain focus and a more or less defined scope. This allowed me to exercise a good topic

control, taking the initiative either shifting the central focus of the discussion or changing the scope of the topic. It was a matter of allowing the respondent to lead while I merely listened, showing interest in anything s/he said but also bringing the discussion onto the topic of interest without changing abruptly the course of the conversation and without interrupting the respondent. The interview guide prepared help me in directing the respondent's answers toward the objectives of the interview. This fulfilled two basic functions: it simply reminded me of the areas to be covered in my investigation, but also became a form for recording the answers under certain topical areas which allowed me to have a fairly clear picture of what had been covered and what had not. It also gave me the flexibility to adapt the original tentative interview guide through several revisions to the different objectives of the interview according to the particular respondent to be interviewed, the context. Therefore, through changes in the wording, sequence, context, content the interview guide becomes more detailed, more structured, more efficient and clearly relevant to the objectives of the research (Agar, 1984; Spradley, 1979). During the last stage of fieldwork I conducted over 100 in-depth interviews. Almost everyone I interviewed consented to the interview being recorded. Once I had completed the interviewing I moved to the next stage, that is transcribing and analysing the interviews.

4.5 Analysis

Analysing the contents of 102 recorded interviews is a daunting and time-consuming task. I had most of the interviews transcribed in Libya. I spent countless hours listening to interviews, often several times and, at the same time, comparing the tape and transcript with notes taken at the time of each interview. I then listened to the

tapes again and transcribed the interviews. I went through the transcriptions several times before highlighting words and sentences that could be 'coded' for areas of meaning in relation to the issues I was investigating. Although I covered in detail all the interviews, not all the transcriptions were analysed in the same detail since I reached a point of saturation where a significant amount of repetition was evident and no 'new' insight was extracted (Bertaux, 1981).

Through the process of repeatedly returning to the interview material I gradually build a picture of the processes at work. From my coding the most relevant aspects were identified and possible passages for quotation were selected. I then went through the material again, trying to assess in which context those aspects were raised. I compared the aspects mentioned by migrants. I also compared them with my observations from the field in an attempt to bring an element of triangulation into the analysis (Riley, 1990).

4.6 Conclusion

Some considerations must be made in relation to the methodology here presented. Firstly, my main criticisms of the research derives from the pragmatic decisions I had to make. Because of the limited time and resources available to me I was not able to develop the research as I wanted to.

Secondly, my fieldwork material is based essentially on the perspective of my informants. Although this is in the nature of the investigation, I must stress that I often felt I did not have control over the outcome of the data collected. Ultimately the

informants had the choice as to what to tell me and what to conceal; what they thought as relevant or irrelevant; when to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear or mislead me altogether.

Thirdly, I did not do as much observation as I would have wished, particularly because of the lack of time. Finally, some of the interviews presented a particular difficulty in terms of recording. As a matter of fact, particularly for the interviews conducted at the Irish Centre the field conditions were such that, given the background noise (loud music, people shouting orders across the lounge, several people talking at once) it was not always possible to understand who said what. Those interviews were probably the most useful, but I was not able to extract all the information buried under the noise, which is very frustrating.

The following chapters will present the findings of the research. Chapter 5 will deal with the economic context of the Irish migration to Tyneside while Chapters 6 and 7 will focus on the qualitative analysis of the material collected during the fieldwork. Most of the informants are referred to by pseudonyms to avoid violations of privacy. Their experiences will hopefully contribute to a better understanding of the processes under study.

CHAPTER 5:

THE ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF IRISH MIGRATION TO TYNESIDE

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will present some economic themes of Irish migration to Tyneside and illustrate the evolution of the Irish community in the area of the study. It is hoped that the data presented will define more precisely the economic aspects of the migratory flow and help to explain the structural forces that shape Irish migration to Tyneside. Census data enable the evolving pattern to be described and some explanatory factors behind the current place of the Irish community are here explored. The figures from the Census Country of Birth tables illustrate the size of the Irish population on Tyneside and its evolution in time. Using data from the census allows us to analyse labour market trends at both ends of the migratory flow and highlights the impact of unemployment on emigration. Other statistical sources, such as National Health Service data provide a gross estimate of the movement of Irish-born for inter-census years, although they do not provide information on the out-movement. European Community figures are also employed in order to investigate crucial factors behind Irish migration to Tyneside, namely employment and unemployment for both Ireland and Tyneside. However, it should be noted that statistical data on migration to and from Ireland are indeed scarce, as no records are kept of Irish nationals entering or leaving Britain (Coleman, 1987). This unique situation is the result of the special historical relations between the countries and of practical difficulties in monitoring the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic (Salt, 1989). Given the lack of statistical data the picture we have of the flow into Tyneside can only be approximate;

however, it will help in highlighting some of the trends and will contribute to an understanding of the magnitude of the flow and the role of economic factors influencing it.

5.1 Economic Themes of Irish Migration to Tyneside

Although this is a qualitative study of Irish migration which entails the analysis of much subjective data, it would be a mistake to ignore emigration's structural roots and functional roles. On the contrary, this work aims at highlighting the links between individual aspirations, decisions, and behaviour on the one hand, and the social and economic structures on the other. In other words, it is hoped that it will serve to show the interrelation of two different levels of analysis, micro-level and macro-level, in the shaping of the migration experience.

Irish migration is usually attributed to the continued failure of Ireland's economy to provide acceptable employment opportunities in sufficient quantities, together with the geographical and cultural proximity of regions where better opportunities are available (Walsh, 1989; Choille, 1989; Breathnach & Jackson, 1991). Ireland's emigration is profoundly related to the island's integration, from the 19th Century onwards, into an international economic system based initially on commercial, but increasingly on industrial, capitalism (Breathnach, 1988; Perrons, 1986).

This system is mainly based on the generation of inter-regional and international economic relationships based on functional complementarity which leads to an international division of labour (IDL) involving a set of underdeveloped peripheral

economies with limited economic functions serving the needs of a set of developed, diversified and dominant core economies (Frobel et al, 1980; Sayer & Walker, 1992; Schoenberger, 1992; Dickens, 1992). Thus the global periphery has acted as a reservoir of primary materials and of cheap labour for industries based in the global core (Breathnach, 1988; Shuttleworth, 1993). The emergence of industrial capitalism in the late 18th Century led to the creation of a new global order which saw the economic relations between Britain and Ireland fitting neatly into this model of dominance-dependence (Breathnach & Jackson, 1991).

Political independence in 1922 had little impact on Ireland's status as a peripheral economy and a source of emigrants. The failure to come to grips with the basic structural disadvantages which had grown out of Ireland's colonial experience led to permanently high levels of emigration described. Therefore, Ireland was to re-engage fully in the international capitalist economy, but on a different basis than previously. The new approach to economic development was based on the attraction of foreign manufacturing investment to Ireland and aimed at bringing capital, modern technology and access to export markets to the Irish economy (Shuttleworth, 1993). This IDL implied a fully integrated space economy, through the planned intra-organisational spatial separation of tasks (Fielding, 1993). This led to the transfer of personnel from one country to another as these people progressed in their individual careers (Kritz et al, 1981; Salt, 1988; Salt, 1992; White, 1988; Gould, 1988; Salt & Ford, 1993). Ireland continues to occupy a dependent peripheral position within the new international division of labour (NIDL), just as under the "old" IDL. Her principle function within the system is a low-tax base for multinational firms which maximise their profit by manipulating transfer prices.

However, Gould and Findlay (1994) warn of the limits of NIDL theory as it fails to account fully for skilled international migration. Shirlow and Shuttleworth (1994) show how an analysis based entirely on the NIDL would be an over-simplification of the processes responsible for economic change in Ireland. They argue that the role of the state has been significant both in fostering foreign investment, and in training of the local labour force. Therefore, changes in the structure of Ireland's labour market are not merely a response to its position within the internationalisation of production, but also a result of the Irish state's ideology on education, training and migration. By encouraging the further training of skilled workers in areas where there was not a demand for them, Irish state's policies are effectively creating an "emigrant nursery" (ibidem p.97).

5.1.1 The Demand/Supply in Ireland: Role of Unemployment and Workforce Structure

In order to understand the role of migration it is necessary to consider how population and labour force trends are interrelated, and, in turn how migration both affects and is affected by them.

Table 5.1
Ireland: Labour Market Trends, 1981-1995 (thousands)

	1981	1986	1991	1993	1995
At Work	1,145.9	1,080.9	1,134.0	1,146.0	1,233.6
Unemployed	125.7	227.5	208.0	230.0	189.9
Labour Force	1,271.6	1,308.4	1,342.0	1,376.0	1,423.5
Net Migration	2	-28	-2	-6	-6
Unemployment rate (%)	9.9	17.4	15.5	16.7	13.3

Source: Sexton J.J. & O Connell P.J. (eds.), 1997, Labour Market Studies: Ireland. Luxembourg: Office for official Publications of the European Communities

Changes in the Irish labour force over the past fifteen years have alternate periods of rapid growth such as the present one and times of decline, as during the 1980s when emigration levels were particularly high. Although the long term trend has been upwards, labour force growth was reduced by the effects of migration. However, other underlying developments were also important. The increase in the labour force is attributable mainly to the female labour force which has risen sharply as a result of both population growth and, above all, rising female participation in the work force. Tables 5.2 and 5.3 illustrate population changes in Ireland between 1981 and 1995.

Table 5.2
Total Population of Ireland 1981-1995

	Males	Females	Total
1981	1,729.4	1,713.5	3,442.9
1986	1,769.7	1,770.7	3,540.4
1991	1,753.5	1,772.3	3,525.8
1995	1,776.0	1,806.0	3,582.0

Source: Census of Population and Labour Force Survey

Table 5.3
Population Change 1981-1995
Annual Averages (000)

	Natural Increase	Net Migration	Population Change
Males			
1981-86	16	-8	8
1986-91	12	-15	-3
1991-95	10	-4	-3
Females			
1981-86	17	-6	11
1986-91	12	-12	0
1991-95	9	-1	8
Persons			
1981-86	34	-14	19
1986-91	24	-27	-3
1991-95	19	-5	14

Source: Census of Population and Labour Force Survey

As we can see from Table 5.2 and 5.3 population changes between 1981 and 1995 were the result partly of declining natural increase, but mainly of net external migration. As a matter of fact in the later half of the 1980s the migratory outflows reached levels similar to the massive emigration registered in the 1950s (Garvey, 1989). Emigration during this period exceeded the natural increase and resulted in the total population falling. After 1991 net migration fell sharply and overall population growth resumed. As the pattern of migration appears to be extremely volatile, it is paramount to investigate the causes behind these trends. In this sense, we could argue that the changes in migration flows are closely related to changes in labour market conditions at both ends of the migration flow. Table 5.4 shows the employed by occupational group in 1981 and 1991 and allows us to observe the structural changes which took place.

Table 5.4
Persons at Work by Occupational Group 1981 and 1991

Occupation	1981		1991	
	(000)	%	(000)	%
Agricultural	191.1	16.8	156.3	13.8
Managers	94.3	8.3	114.6	10.1
Professional	152.4	13.4	183.7	16.2
Clerical	157.9	13.9	158.0	13.9
Service Occupations	167.1	14.7	194.5	17.2
Skilled Manual	215.8	19.0	198.3	17.5
Semi-skilled, Unskilled	159.3	14.0	128.2	11.3
Total	1,137.8	100.0	1,133.6	100.0

Source: Canny, A., Hughes, G. and Sexton, J.J. (1995): Occupational Employment Forecasts 1998. FAS/ESRI Manpower Forecasting Studies, Report No. 3. Dublin: ESRI

As we can see there has been a marked decrease in employment in agriculture and among the semi-skilled and unskilled. On the other hand, employment in the service sector has increased significantly. This brief analysis of the labour force is important when put in relation to trends in employment and unemployment. The first half of the 1980s was marked by recession and increase in unemployment. In fact, total employment between 1981 and 1986 fell by about 65,000, while unemployment rose from a level of 125,700 in 1981 to 227,500 in 1986 which is a rise from 9.9 to 17.4% of the labour force. This situation was mainly the result of sharp decreases in employment in the manufacturing and building sectors. As in other parts of Europe and also on Tyneside, the 1980s saw a severe structural change in manufacturing which produced drastic cuts in jobs. Tables 5.5 and 5.6 show unemployment figures in detail in relation to age and sex.

Table 5.5
Unemployment by age, 1981-1995

Year	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total
(000)					
Males					
1981	35.2	45.3	22.3	1.0	103.8
1986	55.7	79.7	37.1	1.2	173.7
1991	43.0	74.6	37.6	0.8	156.0
1994	41.7	75.0	43.6	1.5	161.8
1995	34.0	66.3	40.8	0.8	142.0
Females					
1981	15.2	5.1	1.7	0.0	21.9
1986	31.6	16.9	5.0	0.3	53.8
1991	28.6	18.2	4.8	0.4	52.0
1994	27.4	22.4	5.9	0.1	55.9
1995	22.3	20.1	5.4	0.1	47.9
Persons					
1981	50.4	50.4	24.0	1.0	125.7
1986	87.3	96.6	42.1	1.5	227.5
1991	71.6	92.8	42.4	1.2	208.0
1994	69.1	97.4	49.5	1.6	217.7
1995	56.4	86.4	46.2	0.9	189.9

Source: Census of Population and Labour Force Survey

Table 5.6
Unemployment Rates by age, 1981-1995

Year	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total
%					
Males					
1981	17.0	11.0	8.8	2.6	11.4
1986	29.5	17.7	15.0	3.9	19.0
1991	25.8	16.5	14.6	2.9	17.3
1994	27.8	16.3	15.8	5.5	17.7
1995	22.7	14.3	14.5	3.1	15.4
Females					
1981	9.7	4.0	2.6	-0.2	6.1
1986	20.6	10.0	7.9	3.9	13.7
1991	21.2	8.3	6.2	5.5	11.8
1994	22.2	8.4	6.5	2.0	11.5
1995	18.7	7.1	5.6	1.7	9.5
Total					
1981	13.8	9.3	7.6	2.0	9.9
1986	25.5	15.6	13.6	3.9	17.4
1991	23.7	13.8	12.7	3.5	15.5
1994	25.3	13.4	13.5	5.0	15.6
1995	21.0	11.6	12.2	2.8	13.3

Source: Census of Population and labour force Survey

However, the global recession of the 1980s was particularly hard in Ireland and it continued well into the second half of the 1980s, when other western economies were recovering and expanding again. It was only in 1989-1990 that employment growth occurred. This produced a divergence in labour market conditions between Ireland and other countries like Britain, which was responsible for a resumption in emigration. Therefore, as employment opportunities in Britain improved the migratory movement began to appear in full. In 1988-1989 the net outflow reached 44,000 which represents a very high level of emigration considering the overall small size of the total population.

A striking feature of these figures is the rise in youth unemployment since 1981. The unemployment rate for the age group 15-24 increased from 13.8% in 1981 to 25.3 in

1994. Despite the rate decreasing in 1995, this rise is quite alarming given the increasing numbers of people in education and the high level of emigration during that period. This seems to point to greater difficulties in entering the labour force and to a mismatch in skills and qualifications required and training received (Shuttleworth, 1996). Besides, the fall in male unemployment rates for this age group in the late 1980s is to be attributed to the heavy male emigration.

As Table 5.7 shows, the relationship between employment, unemployment and migration is evident from the trends that emerge. The economic factors seem to be the main cause behind Irish emigration. Besides, historical and cultural factors play also a role in perpetuating the central role of migration in Irish society. However, as the data collected during fieldwork demonstrate, the impossibility of finding suitable employment was crucial to the decision to emigrate.

Table 5.7
Employed, Unemployed and Net Migration 1981-1995

Year	At work	Unemployed	Labour Force	Unemployment Rate	Net Migration
	(000)			(%)	(000)
1981	1,145.9	125.7	1,271.6	9.9	2
1982	1,146.0	147.1	1,293.1	11.4	-1
1983	1,124.0	183.3	1,307.3	14.0	-14
1984	1,103.4	203.5	1,306.9	15.6	-9
1985	1,078.5	226.0	1,304.6	17.3	-20
1986	1,080.9	227.5	1,308.4	17.4	-28
1987	1,090.0	233.0	1,323.0	17.6	-23
1988	1,090.0	218.0	1,308.0	16.7	-42
1989	1,088.0	201.0	1,289.0	15.6	-44
1990	1,134.0	176.0	1,310.0	13.4	-23
1991	1,134.0	208.0	1,342.0	15.5	-2
1992	1,139.0	221.0	1,360.0	16.3	2
1993	1,146.0	230.0	1,376.0	16.7	-6
1994	1,182.0	218.0	1,400.0	15.6	-10
1995	1,233.6	189.9	1,423.5	13.3	-6

Source: Census of Population and Labour Force Survey

The link between employment, unemployment and migration is even more clear when we look at the 1990s. Employment rose by some 46,000 in 1989-1990 and even when the re-emergence of global recession in 1990 stopped this expansion, it did not cause a contraction in employment. In fact, when economic conditions improved after 1993 another phase of rapid employment growth started. At the same time migration has mirrored the economic situation with net migration falling sharply after 1990.

Another aspect to emerge is that Ireland and Britain form in fact an integrated migration system which responds to the economic conditions of both countries. As a matter of fact, the recession of the early 1990s caused serious problems to the British labour market that had a profound effect on the levels of Irish net migration. The migration trends described above tend to reaffirm the cyclical aspect of Irish emigration, periodically rising when the Irish labour market is relatively depressed and falling or becoming a net inflow when the economy is performing well. This indicates that the level of emigration is related to changes in labour market conditions as the net migration increases as the Irish/British wage differential and Irish unemployment rates increase in relation to those in Britain.

5.1.2 The Demand/Supply on Tyneside: Labour Market Structure and the Role of the Irish.

This section will analyse the Tyneside economic structure, its labour market trends, and the role of unemployment. This will provide useful information on the economic context of Irish migration into the area and it is hoped it will allow to offer some explanations of the phenomenon under study. The role of the Irish will then be taken

into consideration together with the economic factors behind their decisions to seek employment in this area.

As we have seen in the preceding section, Irish migration is undoubtedly linked to the country's economic performance and net emigration is directly related to levels of unemployment. Similarly, Tyneside labour market structure with its time series variation in unemployment levels largely determines the demand for in-coming workers. In this sense, it is important to keep in mind the changes in the economic structure of the area and their impact on the labour market.

The Tyneside economy early in this century in was mainly based on three industries: mining, shipbuilding and heavy engineering (Mess, 1928; McCord, 1979). These industries employed about one-third of the total workforce and therefore constituted the core of the economy. Women represented only 20% of the workforce in sharp contrast with the current pattern (Robinson, 1988). The Tyneside economic structure is now much more complex and diversified. As Table 5.8 and 5.9 show the relevance of the different sectors has also changed.

Table 5.8
Tyne & Wear: Persons at Work by Sector 1971-1981*

	1971	1975	1981
Primary Production	24,300	17,700	11,000
Manufacturing Industry	189,400	178,000	129,500
Construction	33,200	37,300	26,600
Service Industries	260,700	287,900	279,700
Unclassified	0	2	541
Totals	507,600	521,000	447,300

Source: Census of Employment (68 Classification)

* Based on Employment Office Areas

Table 5.9
Tyne & Wear: Persons at Work by Sector 1981-1991*

Sector ¹	1981	1984	1987	1989	1991
0	600	500	400	500	500
1	20,000	19,600	13,800	11,200	9,800
2	16,000	12,000	10,600	9,900	9,200
3	69,500	52,300	46,500	44,400	44,990
4	40,500	34,600	34,700	33,800	33,400
5	25,200	24,100	24,300	26,000	24,900
6	90,700	82,100	83,300	85,800	87,100
7	25,300	21,800	20,500	24,000	22,500
8	17,100	31,100	33,300	37,700	39,600
9	125,500	140,600	155,500	149,500	154,800
Totals	440,500	418,700	422,900	422,800	426,600

Source: Census of Employment (80 Classification)

*** Based on Local Authority boundaries**

While manufacturing industry is considerably more diverse, the traditional industries are now altogether less important in the local economy as service industries, and public sector services in particular, are now the major sources of employment (Hudson, 1991). Women make for about 45% of the employed workforce, their occupation being mainly in private sector services such as retailing. The impact of state policies on the local labour market has been great. It has been argued that the region has become a state-managed region (Hudson, *ibid.*) with consequences far from positive. State involvement aimed at diversifying employment opportunities introducing new industries and employers into the area, as from 1936. However, the state was, at the same time, involved in the dismantling of existing patterns of production and

¹ Sector Description : 0 Agriculture, forestry and fishing
1 Energy, water supply industries
2 Extraction, manufacture: minerals, metals
3 Metal goods, vehicle industries
4 Other manufacturing industries
5 Construction
6 Distribution, hotels, catering, repairs
7 Transport, communication
8 Banking, finance, insurance, leasing
9 Other services

employment, especially in coal and in steel after its nationalisation in 1967 and shipbuilding in 1977 (Robinson, 1988; Hudson, 1991). The resulting decline in employment was to have a major impact on local communities (Beynon, Hudson and Sadler, 1986) and lead to the creation of a substantial unemployed population in the area. Therefore, although the region has diversified its manufacturing industries and has attracted inward investment from foreign companies such as Nissan, its levels of unemployment have remained high. Table 5.10 illustrates levels of unemployment rising from 6.3 in 1972 to 18.1 in 1985. This was the result of both global recession and state policies in the region (Hudson, 1991).

Table 5.10
Tyne & Wear: Unemployment Rates 1972-1993

	Male	Female	Persons
1972	8.4	2.6	6.3
1973	6.7	2.1	5.0
1974	6.6	1.8	4.8
1975	8.4	2.6	6.2
1976	10.6	5.4	8.6
1977	11.3	6.7	9.5
1978	11.7	7.3	9.9
1979	11.1	7.0	9.5
1980	13.0	8.3	11.1
1981	18.1	10.1	14.9
1982	19.9	11.0	16.3
1983	21.2	10.8	17.1
1984	21.6	11.2	17.4
1985	22.2	12.2	18.1
1986	22.4	11.9	18.0
1987	21.4	9.8	16.5
1988	18.5	8.3	14.1
1989	15.9	6.2	11.7
1990	13.5	4.9	9.7
1991	16.1	5.6	11.5
1992	16.9	5.5	11.8
1993	19.0	5.7	13.1
1994	19.4	5.6	12.5
1995	18.7	5.5	12.1
1996	18.2	5.6	11.9

Source: Employment Gazette

The region's economic performance has meant that fewer and fewer migrants have moved to Tyneside in search for employment over the past decades. However, in periods of high unemployment in Ireland such as during the 1980s, the movement of Irish migrants into the area increased. Table 5.11 compares the unemployment rates for both the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Table 5.11
United Kingdom and Ireland: Unemployment Rates, 1977-1996

Year	UK	Ireland	Differential
1977	4.9	8.8	+3.9
1979	4.5	6.8	+2.3
1981	8.9	10.5	+1.6
1983	11.1	14.0	+2.9
1984	11.8	15.6	+3.8
1985	11.2	17.3	+6.1
1986	11.2	17.4	+6.2
1987	10.7	16.9	+6.2
1988	8.8	16.3	+7.5
1989	7.2	15.0	+7.8
1990	6.8	13.0	+6.2
1991	8.3	14.6	+6.3
1992	9.7	15.1	+5.4
1993	10.3	15.7	+5.4
1994	9.6	14.7	+5.1
1995	8.6	12.2	+2.6
1996	8.2	11.9	+3.7

Source: 1) Labour Force Statistics, OECD, 1997
2) Eurostat, Luxembourg

As we can see, a rising trend of unemployment in Ireland during the 1980s corresponded with a fall in the unemployment levels in Britain. Moreover, the overall differential in unemployment rates (see table) has contributed to the traditional roles assumed by the two countries in the migration system they form. As a matter of fact, the Irish move within this unified labour market constituted by Britain and Ireland

largely as a result of market forces. As Table 5.10 has shown the unemployment rates dropped in Tyne & Wear as well as in the rest of Britain in the late 1980s.

Although the number of Irish immigrants in the last fifteen years has been rather small, the pattern reflects the trends of Irish migration as a whole. As Table 5.12 shows, the number of new arrivals increased in 1988 when emigration from Ireland reached very high levels. The rise shown for 1993 appears to correspond to rising levels of emigration. As a matter of fact, Table 5.7 showed that, after a sharp decline in the first years of this decade, net emigration has increased once again.

Table 5.12
Irish New Arrivals to Tyneside 1984-1996

	Gates head	New castle	North Tyneside	South Tyneside	Sunder land	Total
1984	1	19	9	3	16	48
1985	2	14	6	4	6	32
1986	5	29	9	6	2	51
1987	5	29	6	2	4	46
1988	10	27	18	3	6	64
1989	12	46	6	5	6	75
1990	9	29	5	4	11	58
1991	5	36	6	4	15	66
1992	13	37	8	11	14	83
1993	14	61	6	5	33	119
1994	13	76	14	3	56	162
1995	9	52	7	0	25	93
1996	12	73	6	8	56	155
Total	110	528	106	58	250	1052

Source: Family Health Service Authority

The question to be addressed is as to the role of the Irish in Tyneside's labour market.

Woolford (1994), points out that while the activity rate for the whole adult population is 66%, for the Irish it is only 59%. One explanation for the lower activity rate of the

Irish is their age distribution. Over 50% of the Irish nationals living in Britain are over 50 years old, while the figure for the whole population is below 40%. In fact, over a quarter of all Irish and more than one fifth of Irish males are over the state retirement age (Woolford, *ibid.*).

That holds true for the Irish on Tyneside as well, as Table 5.13 illustrates. However, it should be stressed that these figures from the Ethnic Group Tables of the Census include both those born in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. As a result, we are not able to extract the actual figures for the population under study. However, the pattern is likely to be even more marked for Tyneside, as most of the migrants are long-standing settlers.

Table 5.13
Irish-born on Tyneside by age, 1991

Age group	Male	Female	Total
0-4	23	21	44
5-9	47	50	97
10-14	56	47	103
15	18	14	32
16-17	33	23	56
18-19	42	40	82
20-24	180	153	333
25-29	176	187	363
30-34	182	160	342
35-39	225	210	435
40-44	214	250	464
45-49	247	200	447
50-54	172	188	360
55-59	199	202	401
60-64	197	211	408
65-69	201	217	418
70-74	167	178	345
75-79	117	124	241
80-84	35	77	112
85 and over	19	51	70
Total	2550	2603	5153

Source: Census of England and Wales, 1991

This pattern becomes even more evident when we look at the economic activity and economic position of the Irish on Tyneside. The low economic activity rate is unquestionably related to the ageing Irish population. In Table 5.14 the high numbers of retired and permanently sick indicate that clearly.

Table 5.14
Economic Position of Irish-born on Tyneside 1991

	Male	Female
16 and over	2406	2471
Economically active	1528	1123
of which aged under 25	171	125
Employees full time	1014	575
part time	54	381
Self-employed with employees	76	23
without employees	120	35
On a Government scheme	31	20
Unemployed	233	89
of which aged under 25	37	20
Economically active students (included above)	9	5
Economically inactive	878	1348
Students	93	76
Permanently sick	247	133
Retired	516	607
Other inactive	22	532

Source: Census of England and Wales

It should be stressed that these available data are by no means comprehensive and can only give a very approximate picture of the Irish on Tyneside. This is regrettable, given the long history of Irish migration to Britain. However, these statistical sources provide at least a magnitude of the Irish on Tyneside and they are helpful in explaining the migratory flow. We now briefly turn to the next section which will give an overall view of the evolution of the Irish community on Tyneside.

5.2 Evolution of the Irish Community on Tyneside

Chapter 3 has illustrated how significant was the first wave of Irish immigration to Tyneside. This movement of Irish workers into the area during the nineteenth century established a sizeable Irish community. Although the number of Irish-born residents on Tyneside since then has decreased, the community has seen a constant if not high movement of Irish migrants into the area. Table 5.15 shows how the Irish population has evolved from 1931 to 1991:

Table 5.15
Irish-born Residents on Tyneside 1931-1991

Year	Total Population	Born in Irish Republic
1931	705.624	3211
1951	761.449	2424
1961	742.257	2469
1971, Def.1	703.760	2000
1971, Def.2	1.188.239	3086
1981	1.135.492	2737
1991	1.095.152	2551

Source: Census of England and Wales

Definition: Component Areas²

Irish-born includes those born in the Republic of Ireland and those born in a part of Ireland not stated. It does not include those born in Northern Ireland. Tables 5.16 and 5.17 give a more detailed picture of the Irish community on Tyneside.

² Definition 1: Gateshead, Newcastle, South Shields, Tynemouth, Sunderland.

Definition 2: Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland.

Table 5.16
Irish-born residents on Tyneside 1931-1961

	1931		1951		1961	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Gateshead	270	189	154	111	144	142
South Shields	200	134	117	94	135	134
Sunderland	258	291	243	243	206	222
Newcastle	911	761	706	620	728	628
Tynemouth	124	74	83	53	72	58
Total	3,211		2424		2,469	

Source: Census of England and Wales, Definition 1

Table 5.17
Irish-born residents on Tyneside 1971-1991

	1971		1981		1991	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Gateshead	243	245	231	218	191	194
Newcastle	612	607	546	549	531	502
North Tyneside	229	233	187	234	187	219
South Tyneside	192	194	163	163	137	149
Sunderland	259	273	224	224	227	214
Total	3,086		2,737		2,551	

Source: Census of England and Wales, Definition 2

It should be noted that figures related to the period previous to 1971 are probably an under estimate of the real number of the Irish population on Tyneside. As a matter of fact, as a result of changes in the boundaries, data on Irish residents for urban areas such as Jarrow, Felling, Whickham, Hebburn, Boldon, Benton and others, are not available under Definition 1. Moreover, those are areas of high concentration of Irish-born migrants. Thus, as Table 5.18 shows the total number of Irish-born in Northumberland and Co. Durham including Tyneside under definition 1 was much higher.

Table 5.18
Total Irish population in Northumberland and Co. Durham 1931-1961

	1931	1951	1961
Northumberland	3340	2982	2894
Co. Durham	5253	3786	3936
Total	8593	6768	6830

Source: Census of England and Wales

This was in part the result of changes in patterns of occupation within the Irish workforce. Irish workers had found employment in mining and heavy industry. With the gradual but relentless closing of pits and other work sites, places of previous high concentration of Irish population saw a drastic decline of the number of Irish residents. The years 1971-1981 witnessed a sharp decline of Irish-born in the area in part similar to patterns of return migration seen in the whole country, as can be seen in Table 5.19.

Table 5.19
Irish-born on Tyneside as a Percentage of the Total Population, 1931-1991

	Total Population	Irish-born	%
1931	705624	3211	0.45
1951	761449	2424	0.32
1961	742257	2469	0.33
1971, Def.1	703760	2000	0.28
1971, Def.2	1188239	3086	0.26
1981	1135492	2737	0.24
1991	1095152	2551	0.23

Source: Census of England and Wales

However, while in the rest of Britain Irish immigration was to rise once again in the 1980s as the Irish economy went into recession, on Tyneside the overall number of Irish residents continued to fall. As we have seen in the previous section, this is undoubtedly to be related to the local economic situation which has seen high levels of unemployment throughout the 1980s and indeed the 1990s (Robinson, 1988; Hudson,

1991). Therefore, the area has not been able to attract large numbers of Irish migrants as in the past.

It should be stressed that there are several limitations concerning this data set. Firstly, although census data represent an invaluable source of information, they simply provide a snapshot of the population characteristics of this particular area at intervals of ten years. Therefore, certain developments that have occurred between two successive censuses are simply not recorded.

Secondly, the information available is only indicative, as it restricts data on migration movements to place of birth and one-year migrants, that is Irish-born who lived at a different address the previous year. In fact, birthplace does not necessarily indicate nationality. Thus, despite forming today the largest single ethnic minority group in the country, the Irish are, as Chance (1996) calls them, 'invisible settlers'. The fact that there was no clear provision to record one's ethnic identity as Irish in the 1991 census is a significant omission, given the long history of Irish migration to the country. Besides, the lack of on-going data on migrants entering or leaving the area represent a serious shortcoming.

Thirdly, changes in the boundaries which took place in 1971 render the data inconsistent and prevent us knowing how many Irish-born were resident in all the specific areas of what is now Tyne & Wear. Moreover, It does not allow the monitoring of movements of Irish migrants subsequent to their first move into the area. As part of changes in the industrial structure of the region, it is possible that a

considerable number of Irish workers moved either from the mining villages of Northumberland and Durham or within the town districts in search for alternative occupation. It emerges from the accounts of several migrants that many left the pits and found work in other sectors. A migrant who moved to Scotswood in the first years of her life recalls:

My father came over here when he was very young and he went up to work in one of the pits over there and he said in the 1940s they took all the miners down to Doncaster and he said she didn't want to go down because there were five of us in the family, she didn't want to move. By some miracle he got a job in the railway until he retired.

A significant number of migrants preferred to stay in Britain rather than return to Ireland even when facing unemployment. Others, as we have seen from the quotation above, sought occupation in growing industries and services within the area.

However, it should be noted how after a significant in-flow of the nineteenth century, Tyneside has not experienced a major immigration of Irish workers in the following waves of Irish immigration to Britain. Although Irish have continued to come to Tyneside, the decline has been steady and constant.

The number of Irish-born in the area fell during the 1930s and 1940s and only minimally rose in the 1950s while in other parts of the country, particularly the South and the Midlands, there was a sharp increase of the Irish population. This was mainly due to the expansion of the economy during and after the war (King, Shuttleworth and Strachan, 1989). The number of Irish residents fell even lower during the 1970s when a significant return flow was prompted by a favourable economic situation in Ireland and a British recession.

Since the post-war period when shortage of labour attracted large numbers of construction workers to expand the industrial sector, the region has seen a dramatic change in employment patterns. As we have seen in 5.2.2, manufacturing jobs have fallen sharply and the region has failed to broaden its economy through the full development of the service sector. Tyneside has been one of the most seriously affected areas in Britain recessions and at the same time is one of the areas where the structural changes in the economy have had the most damaging impact (Hudson, 1991).

From Tables 5.16 and 5.17 it is evident how Irish migration into Tyneside is not predominantly male. In fact, the number of female migrants has always been fairly similar to that of males and in the case of Sunderland the gender split of the census totals indicates a persistent, albeit small excess of female over male migrants. However, the most striking feature is the numerical decrease of the Irish population which is a consequence of primarily two factors, the small number of new arrivals, as Table 5.20 shows and the mortality of the population. Thus, the past twenty years have seen a steady decline because of the lack of in-migration, rather than a rise in out-migration.

Table 5.20
Irish new arrivals to Tyneside January 1984-March 1997

	Male	Female	All Persons
Gateshead	65	49	114
Newcastle	269	272	541
North Tyneside	56	55	111
South Tyneside	32	27	59
Sunderland	148	111	259
Total	570	514	1084

Source: Family Health Service Authority

The census data presented show that the evolution of the Irish community on Tyneside since 1931 follows quite closely a classic migration sequence. After the initial arrivals in the late nineteenth century and early this century, a period of family reunion followed as women and children joined men. A period of expansion came next as both immigration and natural increase sustained the overall number of Irish-born in the area (Cooter, 1974; Byrne, 1997). Finally, a long period of decline settled in, with ever falling numbers of Irish residents in the area.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the economic context of Irish migration to Tyneside. It is argued, from the evidence presented, that Irish migration to Tyneside is determined to a large extent by the economic conditions at both ends of the migratory movement. However, it would be naïve to attempt to ascribe Irish migration to any single cause, such as unemployment. Rather, it seems that the environment in which emigration occurs is a result of a combination of demographic, social and economic factors. Firstly, Ireland has a relatively young population and a growing labour force that are not met by an adequate supply in employment. Secondly, the Irish labour market is closely integrated with that of the UK and differentials in employment have a direct impact on net migration. Thirdly, given the historical nature of Irish migration to Tyneside, it should be appropriate to address the issues of tradition and culture as influences on the migration flow under study. I shall return to these issues more specifically in the next chapter. We now turn to Chapter 6 and to analysing further the subject of Irish migration to Tyneside in order to build a more precise picture of a complex phenomenon.

CHAPTER 6:

IRISH MIGRATION TO TYNESIDE: FINDINGS OF AN IN-DEPTH STUDY

6.0 Introduction

Chapter 5 has presented the economic context of the Irish migration to Tyneside. We now turn to the qualitative section of the thesis. This includes Chapters 6 and 7. Whilst Chapter 7 deals with the cultural themes of integration and assimilation and analyses the process of identity formation, the present chapter investigates the decision-making process and the job and residential histories of the informants.

Firstly two life stories are presented in order to illustrate the biographical approach adopted. Secondly, the reasons behind emigration will be explored. Finally, through the analysis of the intersection of labour and housing histories, relevant issues concerning mobility will be addressed using the concept of narrative identity as a tool of investigation.

6.1 Migrants' Life Stories

The two following sections present two of the migrants' life stories which are part of this study. They will give the reader an idea of the data collected and help understand some of the issues discussed in this and the next chapters.

6.1.1 Betty's Story

Betty was born in Co. Louth in 1926. She now lives in Whitley Bay with her husband Jim. He is Irish too, from Co. Kildare. They have experienced emigration as a

painful, forced decision, almost driven away from home by the lack of employment and the difficult financial circumstances. Although when I interviewed them I aimed at getting both stories, Betty seemed more willing to recall all the steps which lead to migration and at the same time she always expressed clearly how she felt about the particular events she was recalling and the relationships with the people involved. Jim, on the other hand, showed more interest in talking about his work. His story revolves around the sequence of occupations he has had. However, Betty was eager to point out aspects of his work life that he had not mentioned at all. Therefore, she assumed through the interview an obvious leading role which, I shall argue, mirrors her active involvement in the decision-making process throughout their life. Thus, whilst I was thinking of re-telling Jim's story, I actually set out to present Betty's.

Q: Why did you come to Britain?

Well, I was young so, I came over to Irel... to England because of the very poor aspects of Ireland at that time and ... I wanted to see what was life, so I came here and I did five years in England.

Q: Were you married at that time?

No, my future husband and I had met but we parted and I came out then. Jim was working in Donegal and I wrote to him, I said 'I'd like to see you', so... the first time we met... it was at a dance, it was just a band used to come in for an amount of period of time for the night, few hours dancing and then it was the same with pictures. They used to show pictures, there was no cinema or anything like that; but they used to come in , in different areas and just show a picture. And then everybody went up to see it and did the same with the dance, so he used to come over from his place which was seven miles away from me, to the dance. He used to come by bicycle or whatever... there was no bus much, there were buses to Dublin twice a week and only the rich had cars. In the small places there was no cars at all, you know, not one. Then, after all, we were farmers... we used to be going to mass on a Sunday and they used to pass us by and we were all

under dust [laughs], you couldn't see us through the dust of the road, and they wouldn't give you a lift...

Q: So, where did you get married?

We got married in Ireland... you see, Jim was working in Donegal, in a power station. He worked there for five years and then after we got married we came down, there was a big hospital's job in Galway and he was there for seven years building that hospital. But he started working when he was... he went to school until he was thirteen years of age, then he was working on a farm. But his first job was before the war in an asbestos factory there in Kildare, but when the war started they couldn't get the materials... they wouldn't bring that kind of thing, only basic foodstuff like, so they closed down, they wouldn't carry on. So, he did all these jobs around Ireland and we were in Galway when he decided to come to England. The job he was on was finishing and there was no prospect, that was in ...1956, and he just came over... my sister was getting married somewhere in a tiny village so I was a bit... but anyway he came over and he was looking for a job and he said he had seen a sign and he said he didn't hope of getting a job but he went in and asked the agent and he said 'when do you start?', and he started next day [laughs] just like that, he found that job straight away.

Q: And you joined him straight away?

No, I was in Ireland and Jim was working here and I was looking after the children and one day I said I would come for a holiday. He couldn't come 'cause he had the job to do so I came over on holiday... and I liked it, and Mrs Fraser... she's an Australian, you see he was her lodger... And you see his mother died of something and he couldn't come home and obviously I felt a bit... so he said 'but you come over for a holiday'; and you know, because he wasn't coming home so I left the children with a neighbour, she was a widow, she said 'I'll look after them, you go'.

Q: So you came here...

Yes, you see, he worked and he was keeping two homes... he was sending money to Ireland and spending money here and I was over with him, so two persons. He would have to pay the landlady for my keep and he would give me money for my keep when I go back, you see... So, the landlady said to me 'would you not like to be with him?' and I said 'yes, I would, but

nobody takes children'; so she said 'well, would you like to come out with me and we look for a place'? So we went out and we only found one lady, she was in Gateshead, she had half a house and she wanted a little girl for her little daughter 'cause she was the same age of one of my little girls which was nine... So she said to go over and see her. I went down to Gateshead to see that lady and she was very nice, she said 'we had a lot of callers coming for this half house, we had a new married couple, so I can't promise you but I'll let you know if you are accepted. So I went down to the church, St. Edward's and I prayed for about three hours in it because it was open then, hoping that I would get this half house, but when I came in Mrs Fraser said to me 'that lady's thrown it, she's giving it to a night-club owner and he had a girl same age of hers'.

Q: What did you do then?

I came back there, to Ireland; and when I was going that morning Mrs Fraser said 'don't worry, I'll keep my eyes open'. So I went back to Ireland and I was only a month in Ireland and she went to look for a house. You see, Mrs Fraser was a good business head, she dealt in properties, it wasn't her property like, but she was good at business. So Mrs Fraser and Jim went to see that house and the man said he was only renting for six months. Jim asked for a year but he was giving it for six months, so he got that house. He rang me up and he says 'now you've got a home, come back if you want'. But he says 'sell everything', 'cause we only had a council house and we only had our furniture, so we sold everything, and people came to buy the furniture and pans, cutlery, all my things .

Q: What happened?

You see, what happened was he always said he didn't mind to stay in England but he's coming back as soon as he gets a job. So I said 'well, I'll get me house furnished out', 'cause, you know, the money wasn't good in Ireland, the wages are not good, so I said 'if I get my house furnished out , when he's back we live on his wage'; but as you know we never come back, I mean he never come back 'cause he only was offered with a job by a man he knew very well and I went down to an interview at that man and I asked him for work for Jim. He says 'oh yes, I'll give him a job', and I say 'what will be the ratio of pay?', and he said ' leave that to me and him, when he comes back we'll discuss it'. And Jim says 'I'm not buying a pig in a poke'. You see, he didn't mind working over eight hours but tell me what the wage is... he said ' I'm not coming home', then they could say

'well, we are not going to give you more than this', so he never come back.

Q: Were your kids born in Ireland?

Most of them, two were born here... and I had one little baby who died before four months when I came to this country first, and two years after that I had another baby girl, which after that I thought I never would have any more and she is twenty-six now. So, I had seven children but one died so they're six, four boys and two girls.

Q: Tell me, what was it like when you were in Ireland?

It was hard for me when he was in England, because when there was a bank holiday around I might get the money, because I was trying to get it on a Saturday, so if I didn't get the money I'll be really... and I remember Jimmy was making his first communion and his money didn't come through and I had been putting down so much money on the suit and so when I went down to the suit man he wouldn't give to us but he was a good Catholic so when I told him he would have his money on Monday he let me have the suit. You see, it was only living on the wages and he always tried to get them down on a Thursday so that I'd get them on Saturday

Q: So, when you came to Britain...

Oh, I loved it, you wouldn't believe it when I came first and I was only on a holiday and I said 'I like it here'...so when we bought a house, mind you, there was no mortgage at that time and we began to get our furniture and we wanted to get a grant and make a lot of works, the floors, extend the kitchen, and new windows but they asked us for a percentage so we couldn't do it. But we got most of the things and Jim could take a bit of money out from his company, monthly... so we got our new windows, and we went to Ireland for a holiday and the kids were pleased...

Q: What comes to your mind when you think about Ireland?

I love Ireland... I'm Irish, certainly and Jim...oh, he's totally Irish... I mean if there was Ireland playing he would shout his head off, you know. I'm Irish too, but I just look where I have to live in... I mean, I remember when I was young and going around and a lot of friends and school mates... but I don't miss it all that much 'cause I like it over here, and I like myself because

I'm Irish but I waited a long time in Ireland , I was waiting for him to come home but he never go home because he couldn't then. When I came over here I couldn't bear to break up a home and go back again... because I had a lot of stress 'cause selling my things at home and coming with my little baby that was very ill and you see, all my family are here and they all say to me 'what's the point? going back again? all these years here... what's the point going back to Ireland now?'. You know I have only one sister in Ireland... I have sisters all over: one in Texas, One in Australia, one in Norfolk and one in Leicester, one in New Zealand... all of us are abroad, all of them doing very well.

Q: Have you got any brothers?

I had two brothers who died, one when he was nineteen and the other brother was in Dublin, he died one year ago, so I have only one brother now, he sent me all their addresses so we all write one another but I've never seen them since I left. Now, I might see my sister, the one in Texas. She writes to me recently that only now she's tasted in success, you know, they bought their own house and everything and they seem to be very well off now so I'm having a feeling that she'll come this way.

Q: What did you think when you arrived in Whitley Bay?

I used to think about the people in Ireland, I mean, they are very easy going, very charming. I remember when I came here I used to go to mass with the children, Jim was working around, I used to be here three years before he was to join me, up in a rented house three years before he could come home and be settled... so I used to go to St. Edward's... I didn't know anybody and I used to wonder even when I up to the street 'nobody going to mass' [laughs]... In Ireland the whole church was packed, you know, it was the most beautiful thing when I was a young child and there was this big long road and we come down and then we got into this road to the little church and you see the women and the men, bicycles, horsetrucks, ponytrucks, all coming into mass...

Q: Have you ever felt that people were more friendly in Ireland?

Oh yes, I mean for me I don't feel isolated, but I always keep to myself. I'm not as outgoing as I would like to be... I may talk to some people and get on very well with them but other people I can't. A lot of English don't like Irish... maybe not now, but when I used to go in when I came first and I go in to the baker's and I was served and I ask for a loaf of bread and they used to

ask 'thick or thin?' and I used to say 'tin' (sic), and they say 'what did you say?', you see they knew what I was saying but they just wanted to hear me say it again... but then that makes a difference now, present day. There is a lady now in the same place and she says 'oh, I love to hear your accent' , but in the beginning I thought they were having me on. And there was a friend of mine whenever I say 'tink, or tick, or tin' (sic) she would say 'do you hear her?' and we laugh... but that's the way we speak in Ireland, and here you say 'you're canny' and I used to say 'oh, poor thing, oh poor you' and she said 'I'm not poor!', and I say to her 'it's just the way we say in Ireland' [laughs].

When I first spoke to Betty, I wrongly assumed that her role had been a passive one: the spouse who joins her husband and follows him while he works abroad. What emerged from her story is, in fact, quite a different picture. Most of the important decisions and actions were taken by Betty, such as looking for a house in England, selling her things in Ireland, looking for a job for her husband, deciding to settle in Whitley Bay.

She conveys a sense of pain and sorrow for the difficulties that she had to endure, particularly when she was on her own in Ireland 'waiting for him', and then when she lost her baby. Besides, the loss of her belongings when she had to leave Ireland tells all the efforts put in trying to have her own house (Cohler, 1991). She identifies security with owning a house and being settled. Her feelings about Ireland are ambivalent, as on one side she misses having friends and sharing going to church with them, but on the other hand all her family has emigrated and she has nobody in Ireland apart from one sister. Moreover, her memories are quite sad given her circumstances. Therefore, despite not having many friends here, she seems to be quite happy mainly because her family are here.

It was rather striking the way she related to the interview itself. At the end of it she asked me: "Was it of any help to you? I mean, it's a life story, you know, it's my life". The idea of witnessing appears to be important, but not as a passive container of memories, rather as an active agent. This allows us to attempt a reconceptualisation of Betty's role and her motivation for engaging in the research project. She not only witnesses what once was, but she emerges as an individual with a profound need to be witnessed. This may partly be explained in terms of a generational positioning and also in the light of the transformations seen happening around her. In this sense, when she refers to the rich driving cars while she had to walk to mass, she is referring almost to a remote era, a distant past that present generations could not imagine. Moreover, because of her age, she felt that recalling her life story was a way to pass on her experience to others.

6.1.2 Sean's Life Story

Sean is a bank manager at Irish Allied. He has lived on Tyneside for about a year. He is not married. He represents a different experience of migration when compared with Betty's. Sean does not miss Ireland, and feels perfectly able to fully express his identity as Irish and, at the same time feel integrated in Britain. He shows great confidence and lives across different cultural universes, reinterpreting his role with an ease common to many transnational migrants (Bamyeh, 1993). His perceptions of migration and his self-image as an Irish in Britain are very positive.

Q: Where were you born?

I was born in Co. Kerry, South-West of Ireland, on 1st November 1960. I am single. I have one brother in Cork, one in Limerick and one in Dublin, and a sister living in Wales.

Q: Why did you decided to come to Britain?

I joined the Irish Bank in 1979 and I started in Cork, then Limerick... then about eleven years ago I moved to London... again it was an opportunity that came up at work. I applied to work overseas so that you have increased salary whatever, so I started off in Hammersmith in West London, then I applied for a promotion and that's what brought me to Newcastle. I came here as a progress in my career, really.

Q: So, it was only for financial reasons?

Yes, for financial reasons, basically... it was the salary and... I scuffed in London maybe twice a year, I liked London and I've always toyed with the idea so... Kerry was a small town, that's why I liked it in London , it's anonymous, you can do what you like, nobody cares. It's freedom and independence and with the financial independence you could enjoy yourself. I looked for a chance to get an overseas job with allowance on top of your salary, so I came over with the intention, like , few years then I'll be back again, but I'm still here...I mean ... equally it is nice to go home for Christmas and meet everybody. It's the best of both worlds I think. I'm only fifty minutes away so I don't feel that far away at all, I mean I have a friend in Dublin and I can get down to Kerry quicker from Newcastle than he can from Dublin, you see he's in Ireland, but I can be home before him.

Q: Then you left London...

Yes, I was not sorry to leave London, I left while I still liked it, I know so many who have left it because they hated it and they just wanted to get out. I still like London, but it's much easier to settle here than in London . I was settled after ten years , it was second nature to me , but certainly it was an easy move , you know. It's the company I work for, I mean, when you like your work then you're happy because you spend most of your time at work anyway... It's important because it's my contacts... you know you arrive, you need your friends, you get invited here and there or what have you so...it's made very easy for you, there's a network there and it helps a lot.

Q: Tell me about your education...

I went to primary school in Tralee and then to a boarding school in the centre of Ireland,... one year at university, then I joined the bank. There was a lot going about a so called safe, pensionable job and that's where I ended up . The whole family followed

that... my brother is a teacher, my sister is a nurse, they are all traditional roles. It was like everybody dreaming about a secure job while nowadays you look more for jobs in companies, but my family really liked to get a secure job and that was it.

Q: Would have been possible to get the same job in Ireland ?

Yes, I had a job when I was there, I was seconded as it were, my main contract... if I ask to go back, they have to take me back in six months, that's part of my contract. I thought about going back, but I'm in no urgency to do so... if I did it would be Dublin but the problem is if I go back and I don't particularly like it, I'll never get back here again, or if I do it wouldn't be with the same package... so I'll probably retire over there. If I get another promotion I'll go tomorrow, anywhere... I mean I'm only here one year, ideally I would spend three years in Newcastle, I hate to move but if the right job comes up I'm gone tomorrow. I'm staff officer at moment... it's demanding but at the same time I enjoy it, I wouldn't be here otherwise.

Q: Where do you live in Newcastle ?

I bought a house in Jesmond. When I came here I rented a house in Black Friars for six months while I was looking for a house to buy and my house in London was being sold. I like Jesmond and it sounds ...it sells easily, which is important, it's central as well...What struck most in coming up here is that I can do a lot more with my time, like if I was going to the theatre in London with my friends, by the time you get there and see it over then get the last tube, you've barely spoken to them, whereas ..here you can go home, can change, can go for a pint, go to theatre, and still be in bed by midnight. You get a lot more done because you don't have to commute here, you know.

Q: Do you go to Ireland often?

I lost touch with Ireland, really. I mean, I go home the odd time, but I don't keep in touch much, I suppose since my parents passed away,... before you try to go over every year, faithfully, you go every Christmas, every Easter, every Summer, three or four times a year. I suppose as you get older and my brothers have their own families... we are on the phone every weekend, they come here, I visit them. Ireland will always be home, I'll never... I'll always be an Irish, that's it, there's no compromise

there. It's home, it's historically it's everything, it's home but it's more than that. I mean, beautiful area in Ireland, it wouldn't take much to be impressed by it, it's so beautiful there and as for people I don't think it has changed that much. Yes, the youth are having better opportunities than we had and the education is better, standards of living have gone up, but the general nature of people hasn't changed.

Q: What was your childhood like?

Well, you see I'm a catholic, I mean I was baptised, but I'm not practising, not at all. My father was religious, my mother was superstitious. I think he really believed, I don't think she really did, but she did just in case it was true. And when I went to boarding school I was in a monastery, I mean I've enough prayers said for the rest of my life. That really put me off. The last occasion they got the monastery draw one from the school it was 1946, nobody has jumped over the wall since. You had morning prayers, night prayers, you had benedictions on Sundays, then, once out of school for the monastery, they chant the mass in Latin, went on for two hours... so, you know, once I left there I've only been for baptisms, deaths and marriages, that's the only times I've been to church since, except of course over here I spend more time in Hindu temples and mosques than I do in catholic churches, as a tourist I mean. I saw recently a play: "Once a catholic", it brought back a lot of memories.

Q: What does come to your mind when you think about Ireland?

I automatically say home, but what does it mean? It's just kind of...I once get a lump in my throat... I mean it's something that unites so many of us. There's so many Irish living abroad, it's the only thing we have in common, whereas in Ireland you may be from Cork or Kerry and you pick it up when it is football, but if take those Irish people out of that environment and put them abroad, no matter where to come from, you're Irish you're Irish, that's it, you've that in common, you are both from that sod, it doesn't matter where from... I mean, I travel extensively and I always bump into the Irish who live there, you always find someone Irish out there.

Q: Do you usually see Irish people?

Yes, but there isn't the same sense of community, I mean you know your neighbours, you know the people around you. I don't have this here, I'm only here eleven months so I wouldn't have it as in London...I've never seen a network, but I've my couple of local pubs, I go to the Irish Centre a lot, the pub across the road,... that's my base, that's my focus, because I know a lot of people who go there, I just tend to go there because I know somebody is going to be there. I generally hang around more or less the same circle, but they're very mixed, I mean you go to the Irish Centre spot the Irish, they're very few in there, maybe Geordies. I meet a lot of people there on match days. When I came here I didn't know anybody, not a soul, but it just kind of happens, there's always some social evening, you just go down to those, it's up to you to make the effort, so it has been easy. But I wouldn't say there's a community in Newcastle, it's more like a loose framework. There's nowhere here like an Irish area, like Kilburn in London it's 90% Irish or like Indian areas or what have you, which is good because otherwise it becomes a ghetto rather than... it's better like this.

Q: So, you don't miss an Irish community?

Well, I always bump into the Irish ... you always find someone out there, some member from the family is Irish... but we are not as organised here as in the States, I was in New York for St. Patrick's Day and it's amazing the network they have, they literally walk down 5th Avenue, takes 5 or 6 hours and great, everything goes green. We don't have the same opportunity here, mainly because of terrorism. There's never been a St. Patrick's Day like that when I was in London. In fact, there was quite a good celebration here and the Irish Centre ... it was quite good, but I suppose terrorism has given the Irish such a bad name.

Q: How does this affect your life?

I am careful, I'm sensitive... you never know who you're talking to, there are people who have brothers serving there, being shot in Northern Ireland, it could be a sister or brother that I'm talking to and I say the wrong thing and I don't mean it. Yes... it affect us. I missed Victoria bomb by minutes. I actually saw it I was crossing the bridge and off it went... and then if you go around the shops with an Irish accent and it's empty and nobody comes around you... it reflects on us all.

Q: Are you married?

No, I am not. Being single makes such a big difference, I mean, I'm mobile. If I have to move tomorrow, fine... like another guy arrived around the same time when he had to move, it took him ages because of his wife and kids it's not easy. I got my flat straight away but he has to think about schools for his kids, that kind of thing. He's only bought now, after nearly a year and a half and if he had to move in a month I don't think he could face it, whereas I can see that happen, jump on a train and go, I'm free in a way, I don't have ties, I don't have to consider others, I can do it in my own time.

Q: Are you thinking of moving, then?

I may wake up next week and say "right, I've had enough" and go back home. I'm keeping an eye on Dublin, I was over there recently... it's at the peak at the moment but you never know how it's going to last. I have to be sure before going back and I couldn't go back to rural Ireland, it'll have to be a city, I don't want to live in the country, it has to be Dublin... but if I have a job tomorrow anywhere in the world I'll go for it.

Q: How would you define yourself?

I like the idea of being European, I don't like this business of being Irish, French or... Ireland has always had to look abroad, we are not self sufficient we are very much dependent on other countries. Before we used to be very dependent on Britain back in the 1960s. If Britain had said "right, because of terrorism we are going to ban Irish goods", the country would have gone bust, so luckily never did. So Ireland has always been aware that the dependence was there, that's why they don't want to depend on Britain and they are so keen on Europe.

Q: Do you see yourself as a migrant?

No, I'm not a migrant... where I live it's my home, I suppose when you travel so much... Migration is part of history in Ireland, before if you had a job you didn't have to go abroad, it was always those people they had to go because they weren't good enough to get a job at home, there was like a stigma about it perhaps. That's why they cannot comprehend why you live. Now it's different, we have excellent universities in Ireland and people who go abroad to get some jobs they use it as a career option, going and getting experience and come back. It's immigration at times and it's happening, the flow is going the opposite way. I may join them, you never know.

As many other migrants, Sean expresses ambivalent attitudes and conflicting feelings about Ireland and his reflections on his own migration experience highlight the various issues involved in the process. His perception of the Irish environment gives a clear picture of the social factors often mentioned as a reason to emigrate. However, his sense of identity is firmly rooted in Irish cultural values and the experience of migration has a positive, enriching influence on his sense of self.

6.2 Emigrating from Ireland: The Decision-Making Process

This section will explore the different reasons behind the decision to leave Ireland. These are indeed complex and most often it is not one single motive, rather a combination of factors which lead individuals to emigrate. Undoubtedly unemployment, lack of career opportunities, lack of suitable jobs and a variety of social reasons remain the most frequently mentioned factors producing migration. However, simply to list the so-called 'push' factors does not allow a deeper understanding of the nature of these population movements.

Furthermore, if we look only at the personal motivations leading to migration we fail to provide a full understanding of the social dimension of the issue. Given that people are actors caught in webs of social relations, the aim of this research is to uncover the structures of these webs and the changes in these structures which have produced the migration flow (Bertaux-Wiame, 1981). The role of ontological narratives emerges as determinant in the decision-making process and an analysis of it helps to highlight the ways individual migrants experience this stage of the migration process as well as others.

My interest here is to attempt to identify the social relations which lie behind emigration or, to be more precise, behind the different currents of emigration observed among the Irish on Tyneside. In this context, to collect and interpret biographical data from Irish migrants is essential in order to reveal these relations and, on another level, to give voice to the migrants themselves. As a matter of fact, this work represents an effort to rewrite a portion of the study of Irish migration 'from below', using the insights of qualitative research (Miles and Crush, 1993).

The experience of migration emerges from the interviews with all the variety and richness of the different approaches and attitudes provided by the interviewees. Several patterns appeared to be relevant according to age, sex, class, education, personal background. What I propose to do is to present the overall themes while at the same time focus on the particular experiences of the migrants. It should be made clear, however, that the life histories I collected are not to be treated as unproblematic 'sources' in order to produce a reconstruction of 'real' events and experiences. Rather, I have tried to redefine the transcripts of the interviews and all the written material originating from the fieldwork as the product of a complex series of interactions between the migrants and myself and also as the result of their reflection on their own experiences.

Therefore, we should seek to understand and interpret migrants' accounts of their past experiences as orientated by the present. In fact, in giving their reasons and motivations to emigrate, migrants aim at reconstructing the meaning of the past from the present point of view and, more deeply, at giving meaning to the past in order to

give meaning to the present (Bertaux-Wiame, 1981). This cannot be the same for all migrants, regardless age, sex, class, and in fact it is a useful insight when we look at the differences and/or similarities of the accounts provided by the informants.

Employment, or the lack of it, is always of paramount importance in migrants' recounting the events which lead to their decision to emigrate. Keith, from Donegal, arrived in the late 1950s. He is one of the many workers who could not find a job in Ireland and turned to emigrating as the only way to earn a living. Unemployment in Ireland was followed by a number of low-paid jobs in Tyneside. He does not attribute any other motivation to his decision apart from lack of employment:

I just didn't have a job you know? I had to look for it somewhere else. I wouldn't be here now you know, but everybody needs to work... so I came over to Britain and now... that's it... but it was because of that work, you know?

Mike, from Co. Mayo echoes him:

I was looking for a job and I went to Dublin. I couldn't find any work in Dublin and there was no point in staying home, you know what I mean? You can't live on grass, can you?... so I left.

Terry from Cork, was 82 when I interviewed him and about to go back to Ireland after having spent most of his life abroad. he came to Britain in 1963 after having worked in Brooklin and Chicago as a decorator. His wife , also from Cork, used to run her bakery in Whitley Bay and he set up, his own business in Newcastle. This is how he recalls his decision to leave:

When I think about the days when I left Ireland I... well I remember leaving was sad for the time being but all my friends with me we put our money together and set our own business in America. I was very happy in Ireland but I had no job, I couldn't

find work there was no work and my friends were leaving to go to America, I mean I didn't have the money I mean if it was just me so I went with them, then after I made the money I came to Liverpool and then up here.

This response provides a clear picture of the influence of emulation in the decision-making process. Joe who arrived in Newcastle in 1959 from Co. Mayo is not keen on admitting that unemployment was the main reason behind his leaving and he denies having been unemployed while here in Britain. In fact, talking to friends he had known for decades, it emerged that lack of employment was indeed a crucial factor for him too:

I worked in the buildings. I came straight to Newcastle I had a relation here so I came here with him... because I wanted to change, I mean the work and... but I had a job in Ireland, it's just that I wanted to see other parts of the world then you see what's like with work.

Ireland has had persistently high levels of emigration over the past and economic factors, of which unemployment seems clearly to be the main one, are important determinants (Kennedy, 1989; Walsh, 1989; Lee, 1990; Choille, 1989, 1995). Moreover, emigrant Irish labour was largely unskilled, from predominantly rural areas (Hannan, 1970). It is this picture which appears prominent in the migrants' life stories with indications, descriptions and explanations revealing that the 'push' factors, mainly unemployment, were crucial, more important than the 'pull' factors such as the potentials of the region of arrival with its jobs and other opportunities. Thus, what seemed essential to them is not where they were going but what they were leaving behind: farm life, low-paid jobs, lack of work and therefore impossibility of marriage.

Moreover, even when feelings of sadness in leaving Ireland are put forward so as to depict life in Ireland as happy, the decision to emigrate seems inevitable as there were no opportunities to get a job, and also other people were leaving creating a contagion effect around them (Shuttleworth, 1991; 1993). Besides, there has been a significant number of skilled, educated professionals who left Ireland because of lack of suitable employment and career opportunities at home and higher salaries and better lifestyles abroad (Miller, 1985; King, Shuttleworth and Strachan, 1989; Hazelkorn, 1990).

Therefore, the notion that all emigrant labour is manual working class is inaccurate (Miles, 1982). Among the middle-class interviewees, the frequent mention of the same reason for emigrating, such as lack of job satisfaction and career opportunities, was striking. The relevance of job satisfaction emerges in Connor 's account of why he came to Tyneside:

I was working in Galway. I suppose it was my frustration with my job, really. I was a manager in a small company, I mean it was all right, but after four years it seemed to me as if nothing was ever going to change. I wanted something different and the whole thing didn't look too bright at work. So... I asked a friend of mine to keep an eye on any chance really. One day he called me and this company wanted an engineer with managerial experience which is what I am. I said right, I'm off.

At the time of the interview Connor was joint director of the company after just three years he had been working in Jarrow and he showed great confidence in his own ability and pride on his achievements. His comments demonstrate how the impossibility of getting suitable employment even at managerial level together with dissatisfaction and lack of prospects lead to emigration. Besides, informal channels seem to be important even among professional migrants as they often move through kinship and friendship networks. Daniel give another example of how job satisfaction lead to him leaving his

job in Ireland and looking for a job abroad. A sense of regret filters through his words as he claims he would have liked to have the same opportunities at home:

I wasn't getting job satisfaction at all over there. And that's an awful lot in your life. I started with a job in a small village, Skerries near Dublin. Then I worked in Drogheda but I couldn't see myself just continuing the way I was going over there. I think I just said to myself I'm not going to do this for the rest of my life. I was dealing with customers on a day to day basis, which was great, I loved that, but I couldn't see myself getting out of it over there and I thought I'm twenty-six years of age, I want to see more of life, so I just took off really. I'd probably had the opportunity I would be married with some kids over there, or maybe not. When I came to Britain it wasn't that I didn't like Ireland, I'll always like Ireland and I'll always like the people, but, as I said, it was the job. It's kind of wobbled on from there, the job brought me here. I just felt that I have a bit of ability maybe to use my initiative a bit more and try to bring business for the firm I work for now, that type of thing, which I thought it was my "forte", well meeting people anyway. I wouldn't say I was born ever a clerk so it moved on from there. I just saw an ad coming through the office where I worked in Drogheda and I said right I'm going for that and I was over in two weeks, it was that quick. I've been all over the north of England: Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester and now Newcastle. I like moving, I'm single so I don't have to worry about wife or kids at school, I found I was set in Newcastle, I latched on to it straight away, I liked it and I think it's a town where I see myself. I probably think of Ireland all the time but going back it's a different story. The job, you know, it's a lot more limited and you don't have the initiative, work there doesn't have much scope as for initiative and making your decisions.

Daniel points out his lack of job satisfaction and he stresses the impact of personal circumstances such as being single on his migration decisions. In the following quotation Brian too speaks of lack of opportunities and compares the opportunities that he was able to get in Britain:

I was twenty-one years old, still leaving at home with my parents in Dublin. I was looking for an opportunity to go somewhere, I was growing up and going away was a bit exciting. But I don't think had the job opportunities been there that I would have gone to England. I probably would have stayed in Ireland. When I

applied to come to London, I suppose I saw it as an opportunity, really. I was very keen, very ambitious so the bank was encouraging for what they saw as young, ambitious people to come to Britain where there were much better promotional opportunities.

Yet, the reconstruction of the meaning of their decision to emigrate differs considerably. Migrants who have succeeded in their careers tend to talk at length about their work experience and also about the difficulties encountered while unemployed in Ireland, mainly because they have left all behind them and they are proud of what they have achieved. On the contrary, those who faced unemployment and low-paid jobs even in Britain tend not to talk about that because it is still a feature of their present life (Miles and Crush, 1993).

Many of the migrants interviewed pointed out other reasons behind emigration. Some left for what could be termed 'social reasons'. This meant a variety of reasons connected with the type of society which Ireland represent. They included migrants leaving to seek alternative life-styles which could not be adopted because of the particular social and moral climate. This was perceived as being excessively repressive, intolerant and dominated by the Catholic Church (Lee, 1985). Many, particularly women migrants, had reached a breaking point, so they left. Sarah did a degree in Fine Arts and she was working in an Irish pub when I met her. She says:

I didn't like the atmosphere, also I have a lot of family there and I wanted more independence.

Mary is a sales assistant. She came over when she was about 20 years old and has been living on Tyneside for five years. She explains why she left Ireland:

I just needed a break. I've lived with my parents for all my life and I said 'I want more freedom', I don't want to be told what to do with me life and when I was at home I just didn't have any choice.

Therefore, the uneasy relationship to Ireland's social environment is a recurring theme. However, other social influences appear to play an important role. Migration is deeply rooted in Irish social life. The tradition of Irish migration has contributed to the creation of a 'migration culture' that has a major impact on decision-making.. The Irish tend to be exposed to overseas influences since early in life. As a matter of fact, most of the migrants I talked to have relatives and friends who live abroad. This might lead to an increase in intentions to emigrate. Moreover, it indicates that migration is often perceived as an option because of the information flow about opportunities abroad. Margaret came to Newcastle in 1955. She was born in Co. Mayo in 1935. Part of her family live now abroad, some in North America, others in Britain. This was the main reason why she left Ireland:

I came here because two sisters and a brother were here. My sister Mary said it was good fun over here and she said there was jobs and I thought 'what am I going to do here', I mean, we lived in the country and we had to walk to town, it was about four miles and we walked across the fields. So, my sisters were here and some of my friends were about to leave, so I came over.

Gina's experience of migration shows how the decision to leave is rooted in the individual's biography and influenced by the familiarity with migration (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993; Findlay and Li, 1997). She stressed how most of her family had emigrated or was about to leave when she left Ireland herself:

My uncle was in New York and another two went to Canada and I remember they used to write and I used to think 'I wish I could go abroad'. So when I finished school I didn't have a job. I had

a brother and two sisters living in Britain so I just thought 'if I can get a job there that would be nice to be with my people again'.

Thus, behind the dealings recalled one can see the essential structure of the migratory paths. Among the networks of relationship family and friends took a principal role in providing information and contacts. Among the middle-class interviewed, some pointed out that this might still be the case today, although clearly to a much lesser extent. They also highlighted the differences in the migration flow, stressing the number of qualified and educated people emigrating (Sexton, 1987; King and Shuttleworth, 1988; Murray and Whickam, 1990). However, their comments also served to distance themselves from the traditional figure of the migrant as this carries with it all the negative connotations embedded in the traditional perception of emigration (Miller, 1985, 1990). In fact, although recent Irish migration to Britain seems to reflect past trends (MacLaughlin, 1991), the flow into Tyneside is much more diverse than past migration. As a matter of fact, among the Irish lately arrived in Tyneside, many are educated migrants holding managerial positions. It must be stressed that the number of unskilled migrants is decreasing also as a result of changes in the labour market, as seen in chapter 5. Therefore, on Tyneside traditional patterns of occupation have taken over by a more diversified profile of employment.

6.3 The Intersection of Labour Market Position and Housing Histories: a Reconstruction of Individual Case Histories

This section aims at exploring aspects of differentiation in the job and residential histories of Irish migrants in Tyneside. It is based on in-depth interviews which reconstruct and compare the housing and employment histories of the interviewees,

with particular attention to the role of narrative identity in the shaping of these histories. As a full presentation of all the interview transcripts would be far too lengthy and in some cases repetitive, I have tried to focus on individual cases which better illustrate important features common to different groups of migrants. It is useful at this stage to identify some key themes emerging from both the literature which refers to housing markets, labour markets and their relationship to migration; and from the insights gained from the wide-ranging interviews that provided migrants' own accounts rather than research-imposed categories. The main issues that emerge are:

a) the relation between the bargaining power in the labour market and the different housing opportunities which might derive from it.

b) the different patterns of access and opportunity in housing in relation to different stages of the family life-cycle.

c) the impact of specific narratives linked to migration (such as the "return narrative") on the job/housing histories.

d) the different pattern of rented/owned tenure according to income, type of occupation, prospects of relocation, return migration, etc.

It should be stressed that case histories would not claim to be representative in absolute terms, nevertheless they highlight points which are common to other

interviewees and above all help to focus on relevant issues that might otherwise go unnoticed.

First of all, a relevant number of informants had linear housing histories which revealed a weak bargaining power in the labour market. That resulted in very few moves within rented accommodation or owner-occupation in council housing areas. In contrast a smaller number of affluent respondents had careers and housing histories which were highly mobile and even international; these contrast with a significant portion of the informants who fall somewhere in between these two ends of the labour markets; these informants have housing histories which revolve around one or two moves or a change in tenure from rented to owner occupation as a result of "right-to-buy" sales in the council housing market.

In 1994 the Employment Gazette showed that the Irish are more likely to be unemployed or in manual work as related to lower levels of qualification; and that they are less likely to own their own homes (Woolford, 1994). This could be part of a more general trend observable in Tyneside in that the public sector has traditionally played a much more important role compared to the private sector (Robinson, 1988). Therefore, the tenure structure is quite different from other areas of England, and more similar to that of Scotland. In fact, up to 1981 the rate of owner- rented occupation was 38.9 (58.0 in England and Wales), while council rented occupation rate was 47.2 (28.9 in England and Wales) (Census, 1981).

Several of the informants have lived most of their lives in the same area upon arrival in Tyneside. Therefore, they relate to the area in which they live as to a community with close friendship links. Benwell, Fenham, Byker are among the areas of densest residence. Quite often it is mostly working class areas with very few middle class informants living in the same areas. Again, when informants with higher income and occupational status chose to stay in these areas, it was mainly because of the sense of community.

Fred is a decorator who has lived in Fenham ever since he arrived in Tyneside back in 1949. He did not buy a house, and he still lives in a rented two bedrooms council house : “ when I think of the times I was unemployed and with seven children...my wife always tried to help, she would work as a cleaner while I looked after the kids and then I’d find another job... but no way to buy a house like that”. The reality of unemployment was often a determinant reason for rent a house instead of buying, but that was not always the case (Kitching, 1990). In some cases, and contrary to common belief, a stable and secure job was not necessarily the only precondition for house purchase. James recalled the time when they bought their house in the early 1950s:

We struggled to buy this house, because I was out of work...it’s always been for very short periods, but I’ve been out of work at least six or seven times . I remember we had to borrow £230 from my brother-in-law, which at that time was a lot, then I started working with Murphy and that was it.

Therefore, the possibility of help from relatives, friends and the community was quite an important factor and unemployment was seen rather as a short-term problem (Forrest and Murie, 1987).

Kathleen has had a more mobile housing history, although always within working class areas:

I was only thirteen when I first came to Tyneside from Co. Mayo. We used to live in Scotswood, my father worked in one of the pits in the area, then all the miners were going down to Doncaster, but he said, well she said that is my mother, that she didn't want to move down because there were five of us in the family...by some miracle he got a job in the railway until retired. When I got married we rented a small house in Benwell, that was for four years and then we got this house in Whickam, just across Gateshead and thank God we never had any bother, it's a nice place.

The fact that she has always worked greatly improved their chances of buying a house:

I worked practically all me life. I wanted to be a nurse, so I put my name down at the General Hospital and also at the same time to be a help at Long Benton at the Ministry of Pensions. But the ministry one came first so I took that. Good wages, good holidays and it wasn't a hard job. I worked there 18 years and I left there and by that time we had two children...but we needed the money to pay the mortgage so I wanted a job near the school where the kids were, well I got this little job across the road ... the school for the blinds were looking for a lady to serve the blind chappies with their tea you know, so because it was near it was good for me and I worked there for 15 years." In this sense, we can see in this case the housing history as the result of the household strategies, rather than the usual pattern following the man's employment (Snaith, 1990; Grundy, 1992). The other important factor seems to be the different stages in the family life-cycle and the need to accommodate jobs and housing to the children needs.

Patterns of greater mobility become more common among middle class migrants. Jocie is from Mayo and is married to John, a civil servant from Cork. As in many other cases, what we follow here is a man's career and housing history, but also we should note the influence of other factors:

When we married, it was in London, in 1962...my husband didn't like London he wanted to move so we went up to Yorkshire. That was our first house, a three bedroom semi. We stayed there ten years, we had the children, three children. It was nice that house, because although we had to struggle to buy it, it was our first real home after that flat in London. Then we moved, you see John is in the civil service so we moved quite a lot. After ten years in Yorkshire we were in the South again and ...different places until 1979, different houses as well, but we never really went up market until we bought this house in Reading, it was nice and big, a four bedroom detached and we loved it, the kids loved it. but they were growing up going to university, one went to Belfast, Queen's, another to Leicester, and the youngest got a job in London... so we sold the house and bought a lovely bungalow. Now... I could cry if I think about it... when my husband decided to take this job in Newcastle I didn't want to leave the bungalow... for many reasons really, it was a beautiful home, actually it was the house we always wanted, with a large garden and a pond in it, I used to spend a lot of time gardening and I loved it... and I just didn't want to sell it. So John was here and I was down in Reading... but I got really depressed with the kids away and John coming down at weekends so we sold it eventually. But we lost money, you see... we bought it for £68.000 and when we sold house prices were going down so we got only £80.000 for it, now it would be worth at least £140.000... and we lost because with £80.000 we couldn't buy that kind of house in Newcastle. I didn't want to live in Benwell or places like that... I quite liked Whitley Bay but prices were much higher there. So in the end we bought a house there, but it's only a terraced house. You see, we went from a lovely bungalow to a terraced house so..."

Jocie's housing history reflects both her husband's career and the family life-cycle (Warnes, 1992). Besides, as John could not benefit from large mobility allowances, the moves resulted in financial losses because the value of the last house is considerably lower than the previous one as a result also of specific factors related to

the local housing markets (Salt, 1987; Forrest and Murie, 1992). In this case all the moves were used not so much as a strategy to go up market, as a means to adapt to family size. In no instance does Jocie mention an intention to return to Ireland. Once married to John, himself Irish, they planned moves without referring to Ireland. The main reasons for this are her reluctance to return to a place where she no longer has relations, as most of her family- her sisters and brothers, and aunts and uncles from both sides have themselves emigrated; and his resentment for not having been given his place at university thanks to nepotism. The narratives, therefore, centre on "family" and "quality of life". Also, the move from Reading is presented as a very difficult experience to Jocie: leaving "the house she always wanted" ("quality of life" narrative) went against her sense of identity at that particular time. She explained that she thought her husband was going to retire then and that the bungalow would have been their last house. He decided instead to go on working for five more years and to move from Reading because he was not satisfied with the job there. In a time when she was facing depression and loneliness as all the children had left home, the move to Newcastle was first rejected, then reluctantly accepted. Besides, the choice of an area other than Benwell and other working class areas where large numbers of Irish migrants are to be found was a conscious strategy in order to gain privacy and maintain status. As a matter of fact, she repeatedly referred to being in a terraced house as a negative feature of their current life style.

Kevin, a retired teacher, has a similar housing history. He is from Kilkenny. His mother had entered him at the Salesian Agricultural College in Pallanskenry:

the other half of the college was a seminary and at the end of the agricultural course I entered the seminary, what was called at the time 'a mother's vocation'. Having passed "O" levels and "A" levels I was sent to the noviciate in Sussex. After six months they decided that I had no vocation and I was sent home ... to the great dismay of my mother. Within another two months I was in uniform, not the soutane this time: I was called to do my national service. This was in 1952. After that I did a series of labouring and factory jobs in London until 1957 when, at my mother's insistence, I went to teacher training college. After completing training I taught in Kent, Surrey and finally Sussex. By that time I had met my wife in London, she is German. The reason for the annual moves from county to county was the need to find housing. I was lucky in Crawley in Sussex where they provided housing for teachers. The teachers' cert. wasn't enough to gain promotion and improve my pay, desperately needed now that I had five children. So I applied for a year's secondment to study technical drawing and design. When I gained this certificate I got a post as head of design and technical drawing at a large comprehensive school, with a raise in salary. Then I applied for a higher post up in Sunderland at a Catholic comprehensive school. And we bought this house and the children went to catholic schools here. I was offered a teaching job in my old college in Ireland but I decided not to go over to work despite teachers' pay been better than that in England. the reason why I didn't go back to Ireland was that my kids were now growing , university education was free in England whereas it was prohibitively expensive in Ireland. Again, for the same reason my wife and I gave up hopes of promotion in teaching because moving would have upset the children's education... we stayed put and all our children went to university.

The thought of Ireland and return is constant in Kevin's history; thus the "return narrative" is quite dominant until the " family narrative" becomes more significant as the children reach school age. It has to be stressed that despite his wife being German, the "return narrative" never concerned Germany, but always aimed at going back to Ireland. Despite his qualifications, housing had constantly been a problem and the early stages of his job history relate to rented or tied accommodation. The marked improvement in their housing condition, therefore, was the change to owner occupation. But as the buying of their house coincided with life-cycle stages where

the “family narrative” was predominant, that house remained the only house they had ever owned. In fact, the couple has now moved to the South in order to be near to their children who have found work there. Thus, once again, the “family narrative” is the structuring factor behind their moves.

This may well be the case also with professional and high income migrants, although often other factors might be more powerful. Therefore, together with the “family narrative”, always relevant, other shaping influences are at work, namely mobility as a way to move upwards in structured careers, and change of house as an economic strategy to go up market or to maximise financial investment (Forrest and Murie, 1987; 1992).

Connor, quoted above, explains his housing history as the result of both “family” and “economic” influences:

when we came to Newcastle we decided we didn't want to live in the city. My wife always talked of living in the countryside but I wasn't that keen... I guess I was worried about the financial side of it and I wanted to invest in a house which sells easily... anyway we bought this cottage in (...) (a village he asks to omit the name) north of Newcastle. The good thing is that the kids love it and... it is a lovely place actually, but it means that both my wife and I have to travel to work... I mean she doesn't work at the moment but she has to take the eldest to school and because we want a Catholic school, that means she has to drive to Newcastle”.

This is the first and only house he bought after moving from Galway. In Ireland they had owned a new three bedroom detached house. Once in Tyneside they had rented a house in Jesmond while looking for a house to buy. They made a big leap in housing because a period cottage was considerably more expensive than the previous

house. This was justified by his then position as director of a company based in Jarrow. Also home ownership was identified with security, with financial calculations aimed at maximising investment and took into account prospects of relocation in the future, but also with concern about "quality of life". The "family narrative" is given great importance in that it determined the choice of a house suitable to children and arrangements were made in order to meet school commitments. On the other hand, the "return narrative" was not a predominant one: return was not contemplated in the near future, therefore projects and plans for the future were more strictly linked with "quality of life" and "economic improvement". Furthermore, anticipation of future moves is paramount as with other high income professional migrants who buy types of houses, e.g. easy to sell houses, in view of the fact that they are likely to be relocated (Forrest and Murie, 1987; Salt, 1987, 1992).

Other high income migrants who decided to live in the city faced several problems. First of all, one of the features of the Tyneside housing market is the higher proportion of semi-detached and terraced houses compared to the U. K. as a whole: 11% detached houses compared to 17% in the UK. This could confirm a shortage of high-quality executive housing in the area (Cameron and Crompton, 1988). Among the professional informants, many live in areas such as Gosforth or Jesmond, which are high status residential areas offering advantages such as centrality, attractiveness, and easiness to sell. However, part of the executive housing is to be found beyond the boundaries of the Tyneside conurbation itself, for instance to the north and west, where Ponteland attracts most of the incoming executive house buyers. Northumberland, with 20% of detached houses in its housing stock is favoured for

such housing and other locations, such as rural locations as seen in Connor's case, may serve the purpose. Nevertheless, other factors may increase the attraction of areas such as Ponteland, namely access to good schools. In this sense, different stages in migrants' family life-cycle become determinant in the final choice (Kendig, 1984; Grundy, 1992). Besides, dual career households may have to consider other aspects, like travel-to-work distance for both house-heads (Champion et al., 1996), and arrangements and access to educational and child-care facilities (Snaith, 1990).

Rowan is a 45-years-old executive who first came to Britain in 1986. After a few years in Wales he moved to Newcastle as part of his career progress in 1990. He was regional manager of a high-street bank when I interviewed him. Having recently lost his wife made him look at his life in a way which put his children before anything else, therefore his decisions both in relation to his job and housing very much reflected his personal circumstances. He recalls:

Cardiff was my first destination. We bought a three bedroom detached house. Then we came here and we were looking for a bigger house. This is the fourth house since 1990. When we sold the house in Cardiff we had to put it up with two agents, I was worried but it actually went with no problems, which was lucky because we had to move quickly because of the children having to start school in September. And I had a good package which paid us moving expenses and on top of that I got another allowance for carpets and curtains, so... all our expenses or nearly all our expenses were covered. The good thing was that part of the allowance was non-taxable so if you look at the financial side the costs of moving weren't... I mean I think it was more difficult with the children, because by this time they were getting upset about moving. And last time we moved it was ... very difficult because now I am on my own, you see, I have four kids and I'm on my own, my wife died a year ago so... my only specific plans are to look after my children...it's really hard for me and even more so for them . When we moved up to Newcastle the eldest was eleven, the second was ten and the twins were only seven. We had to look for schools and we wanted a good Catholic school and we didn't know the area. We

first rented a house in Jesmond then we bought a house in the same area. Now, that wasn't difficult because prices here are much lower anyway, but we weren't happy with the schools that's why we moved to Ponteland. It's schools really, the schools that we are in now, it's a better school and had it been a better school and Catholic I think I would have liked it, but unfortunately the schools that they're having is better than the catholic school so... I like to go for a school with the best results, the best academic achievements".

Clearly, in Rowan's case several narratives confront each other and they prevail at different times of his job career and family life-cycle. As the case with other executives, his migration, although international, is internal to his company (Salt and Kitching, 1992). Housing then, and relocation of personnel are taken into account by the policies of the company, which minimise the costs of moving with several allowances aimed at encourage mobility (Forrest and Murie, 1992). Nevertheless, other costs are involved, and these are emphasised in the "family" narrative which becomes dominant as the children face repeated moves to different schools and particularly at their mother's death when the "family" narrative emerges as the leading shaping influence in Rowan's decisions. Therefore, whilst in the early stages of his job history the "career" narrative is the main factor behind Rowan's migration and indeed housing choices, in the latter phases all the other narratives, including "return" and "economic" narratives give way to his now predominant decision-making concerns.

Brian came to London in 1976. He had previously worked for three years for a bank in Dublin:

At that time the bank was starting to open branches in Britain so I applied to come to London on a three years contract with the opportunity to go back to Ireland anytime I wanted, but I was selected and I was promoted very quickly. Then I married a girl

in London and we've been in London for seven years, in different parts of London and it was very difficult. Our life was built much more around my work and my wife's work and so was our social life. In London we had a limited number of non-Irish friends because you tend to stick to your own community, that's the way there... London is so big, you spent so much time commuting that you didn't really have a social life outside your work, at weekends you'd end up seeing the people you work with and we didn't like it. When we decided to buy a house we got in touch with estate agents and obviously we couldn't afford a big house, not in London anyway; so we had to work our way out of London, and we moved further and further down the railway lines well into Sussex until we found prices that we could afford. That was very difficult, prices were very high, it was when gazumping was going on, then just as we bought, house prices in the South East dropped at least in some parts and we were worried that the price of the house would go down... We didn't expect to be there very long so we had to think about that, but in fact we stayed there for quite a while. When we started having kids we asked to get out of London and we ended up here. We made a decision, I said to the bank I want to move up country. It's quite interesting actually, most of the managers want to go to London and it is quite difficult to get people in London to move outside London. Most people say 'you did wrong', they see it as being the place to be, but once you have children... living in London with children just didn't seem right, we didn't feel that was a place to bring our children up, we think this is a good place. The kids go to a state school. We live in an area in the north of Newcastle, Ponteland. We chose that area because everybody we met told us that the state schools were particularly good and we find them excellent, so we are quite happy about that. I mean we liked the area, but also it was a conscious decision to send them to the best school that we could find in the area. And here my social life is primarily outside of my banking contacts, if you like. We made a lot of friends through the schools the kids go to and through the area we live in, so our social life is built around that... I'll say I'm perfectly integrated in the business community and certainly in my social life''.

As in the previous examples, the individual and family's residential history with all its aspects, the decision to move or to stay, the timing of moves and to some extent the destination of a move in terms of housing tenure and type of house, can be explained by the varying significance of ontological narratives which highlight the connections

between labour and housing markets. It is the impact of these narratives that should be seen as the focus of the intersection of the two.

While the first change in tenure was influenced above all by economic concerns and therefore seen mostly as a financial investment, the following moves are determined by altogether different reasons: it is the willingness to give the children a proper environment to lead the couple to move from London. In that case the “family” narrative overtakes the previously dominant “career” narrative and, together with the “social life” narrative which seems to be rather important since the early stages of the family life-cycle, shapes their current housing history. Besides, as is often the case with dual earning households, the decision-making process has to take into account both careers and needs in terms of travel to work arrangements, schools and so on. Therefore, it is more a “we”-kind of account rather than an “I”-dominated narrative. Again the “return” narrative appears to be suspended or neglected, presumably in account of the fact that Brian’s wife is not Irish and he is himself not keen on returning to Ireland.

In many respects, Michael’s story differs from the preceding ones. He is a long-standing migrant who came from Drumshambo, Co. Leitrim back in 1948 when he was only eighteen. His story tells of a remarkable achievement, if we consider that he was practically illiterate when he first arrived in Manchester looking for a job. It is also indicative of the extent to which emigration has continuously been part of Irish society and affected entire generations. Furthermore, it illustrates how personal experiences become powerful drives in the shaping of identity and, consequently, in

the resulting decisions that stem from accepting or rejecting past events. Michael's childhood and his conflictual relationship with his father were to have a lasting impact on his job and housing history, as some of his decisions were taken, partly as a reaction to his experience in Ireland.

He recalls:

I was brought up on a farm. I remember when I first went to school I didn't think I liked it, so I wanted to go home again and the teacher grabbed me at the door but I bit his hand trying to get out. And again the following morning I ran for it but he caught up to me and I said 'I want to go home and see as me mother got the spuds boiled'... So I didn't like going to school... and I had a lot of time off school because I had osteomyelitis and I was in hospital and they never bothered about educating me or telling me to read anything. We weren't a big family, just two, but it was very unusual. My father was born in America and come back to live with his grandmother. I never really got on well with me dad, he had a strange way of going on. My mother was such a hard worker, but I couldn't say the same of me dad, he was a lazy, rather lazy. We could have been comfortable, because we had quite a good piece of land and we weren't what you call well-off, but we were better off than the people in the town because we always had milk and eggs and beef and vegetables and being only two on a farm I suppose we could have been really comfortable. I often thought long time after that he didn't seem to gather us together so I've more or less held it against him. That's why I left, I didn't like working on the farm. I like animals and cattle and that, but there wasn't enough money to live on and I couldn't see a scope. I remember me dad putting some drains in and he said "I'm doing this for you", I said "you'd better stop now" and left. I'll never forget the way he looked at me, but I had no future there and I came here.

This was the background to his following moves. He goes on to stress how the choice of housing was strictly related to both his past experiences and his current strategies:

When I first came over I worked in Manchester for a while in a pressure piling company. I had a sister there, so I stayed with her. I meant to go to America because me dad was from America and I didn't need to have immigration papers because you were of American descent if your father was an American and I'd have no bother going to America. But I didn't have enough money and I wanted to come to Britain and get enough money and then go to America, so I stayed with my sister and I wanted to save money; but I didn't think I was getting enough money so I went to Northamptonshire, I worked for a while for Shankland & McEwan there and I used to share accommodation with some other fellows. And then I went and worked for a farmer in Yorkshire and you got eighty-a hundred pounds for a month and a place where to stay and you're fed and cigarettes, you had everything for a month and you could save money. I was not married at that time and I wanted to go to America , but I met this lady and she collared me and I never got there”.

During this first part of his job and residential history the “America” narrative appears to dominate as all his efforts are aimed at saving money in order to move over there. In this phase the “family” narrative does not have a relevance since he had not got married yet, and the “quality of life” narrative is kept to a minimum so that the “America” narrative becomes priority. The development in the household structure is the feature that brings in changes in housing tenure and in the overall strategy related to both labour and housing markets.

He explains:

We moved to Newcastle about fifty years ago, because of the job. I was working with Murphy's at that time . I've worked for them for twenty four years. Before that I had worked in London, then Birmingham, Peterborough, for different contractors. At the beginning I went with MacAlpines for a while and they sent us to school to Middlessex and they gave us a good go over in civil engineering and I learned because I was very inquisitive and I could do the job. But then I started working with Murphy's and we worked in Bishop Auckland, Stanley, Consett, all over the place and I got to be agent for them, they give me a car and I'd to go around all the jobs and stuff. So my family was in Newcastle and I used to come home at the weekends, because I

was always provided with a car. When I started with Murphy's we bought a house in Bill Quay, going towards Hebburn. Our house looks on to a big field of corn, you see, I don't like living in the town, so it was this quite large house with a field of corn at the back and blackbirds and rabbits about... so I always had a tendency to prefer the countryside, I guess I miss Ireland for the nature.

Thus, it was a change in the quality of employment, namely the passage from insecure jobs with different contractors to a more reliable and stable job, which allowed him not only to buy a house, but to be able to chose an area in Newcastle attractive to him because reminds him of the countryside in Ireland. Besides, it is quite a large house as he had five children. His economic achievements are mentioned several times as the changes he was able to make in his job history.

He says :

I left Murphy's because a company here in Jarrow offered me more money. So since I left them I've worked for Kenton Utilities for the rest of my working life. I worked for them for about twenty years and I was an agent for them, I worked in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen and I retired when I was in Aberdeen. I had enough of work...

In Michael's case strategies both in the labour as well as in the housing markets reflect his determination to provide for himself and his family the kind of environment that he did not have as a child. Precise housing choices were made at certain times of his job history in order to reach goals such as going to America or having a big house for his children. His housing history in a sense does not follow his changes of jobs as he bought only one house and never moved, even when his financial situation changed as a result of being promoted. In this sense, moving or not moving is linked to his

identity as a person who prefers living in the countryside and the desire not to live in the town is activated in the decision not to move from Bill Quay.

Dermot gives another example of how different narratives combine in the shaping of housing histories. He is from Kilkenny, but he was brought up in Wolverhampton, within an Irish community. He worked for his father, a subcontractor, for a short time. Having been sacked, he applied for a job in a bank, and left home to live in Croydon. After a short time renting a flat, he got married and bought his first house. Since then his moves have followed his career: “ my first job with the bank was in Croydon, then Wimbledon, Hammersmith, Birmingham and finally Newcastle. And I progressed in the meantime from junior bank official, to senior bank official and now assistant manager.

My wife is from Kilkenny too, she’s a nurse, but she doesn’t work at the moment. She is looking after the kids. I was renting a house in Jesmond, which is probably one of the best areas, but now I own a house, a big house in Ponteland. Again, it’s a nice area, and the schools are very good and it sells well. But we are not sending the kids to Catholic schools because the education isn’t as good which again it’s a sad thing, because the Catholic schools in this town are in areas which I wouldn’t want to live in, and the priority are the kids. They will probably be mixed with the community more than I would, while I always mix with Irish Catholics. We like Newcastle, but I find difficult to settle in because of the lack of community, so I wouldn’t like to end up here... I mean it’s a nice place to live, and a nice place for the kids, but in the future I would like a place where I can enjoy being Irish and share it with other people who feel the same about our culture. So, I’ll follow my career,... but I’ll like to move to Manchester or London, places like that, really”.

Obviously, Dermot’s story is built around his work. Nevertheless, other factors are mentioned, too. First of all, the “family” narrative is always very important, in fact is given priority. Secondly, the lack of an Irish community makes the “return” narrative

also relevant. Therefore, housing decisions are taken according to his career, but they take into consideration the needs of the entire household, such as school choices and his plans to go back to an Irish community, hence his choice to buy a big, easy-to-sell house in an attractive area .

Other migrants also pointed to their housing decisions in terms of access and temporariness of their stay. Several students, seasonal workers and training nurses stressed their preference for cheap, rented accommodation within an informal housing market. Heaton is one of the most popular areas for this type of migrant. Quite frequently accommodation is found through informal channels and reflects the predominance of the “return” or “moving on” narratives. Georgina was working in a pub when I interviewed her. A consumed traveller, she had been in the States the previous Summer , and intended to spend several years travelling around the world:

I came for a short time, that was the intention. I've been here for eight months so... I think I'll be going soon. I want to go to Australia with my friend Ann. I live with her and two other Irish girls in Heaton, and it's great, it's just fine. I need to have Irish friends around, to build my network of people around me, that helps when you're looking for a place or a job. So I just walked in this Irish pub and I asked the manager if he had any vacancies, so that's the way I got this job .

Despite being in town only for a short time, the “social life” narrative is given great importance and stresses the use of informal channels in choosing accommodation. The stage in her life course is also determinant in her choices. Being unattached allows her to move freely without having to worry about partner's job or children and their school commitments, as we have also seen with Sean, quoted above, and other single migrants. Mobility, thus, seems to be strictly linked both with aspects of work

as well as personal circumstances. In this sense, the often over-stressed claim that housing is a barrier to labour mobility gives way to more complex patterns of motivations in the decision to emigrate or to move (Salt, 1987; Salt and Kitching, 1992; Forrest and Murie, 1992). Similarly, different patterns emerge when considering housing histories, and often neglected aspects appear in fact to be rather important, as we will discuss in detail in the following section.

6.4 Discussion

In Chapter Two we set out to investigate Irish migration to Tyneside as a process which entails several stages and embraces different aspects, such as decision-making, job and residential mobility, assimilation, identity transformation, return migration. This chapter, has aimed at illustrating the issues involved in two main areas of the research, namely the decision to emigrate and job/residential histories which highlight the connections between labour and housing markets.

The typology of migrants presented shows the sharp differences in employment, and the sectoral and occupational nature of employment of the migrants. Whilst it could be accepted that a relevant change in the composition of the recent migration flow has taken place (Sexton, 1987; Walsh, 1989), the empirical results of the research show that Irish migrants in Tyneside are predominantly unskilled. This is due to the fact that the majority of Irish migrants in Tyneside are long-standing settlers, having arrived during the 1950s, when large numbers of Irish workers found employment in the construction industry and other heavy work sectors (MacDermott, 1977). Therefore, although nowadays a rising number of educated and skilled migrants are

moving into the area compared to the past, the overall composition of the Irish population in Tyneside still reflects old patterns.

In the analysis of the decision-making process several issues emerged as relevant. First of all, the main factors leading to the decision to migrate were put in economical factors, cultural attitudes, and personal circumstances. Secondly, through the analysis of the migrants' ontological narratives the decisions which led to migration appear deeply embedded in the experiences of early life and not simply the result of the events immediately preceding migration (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993).

Among the reasons why migrants leave Ireland, the economic factors had great relevance. The vast majority of the informants spoke of their failure in gaining satisfying employment at home and defined their decision to emigrate in terms of searching for a job. Clearly, the history of Irish migration demonstrates that the country has repeatedly failed to provide suitable employment for its workforce and this had produced constant high levels of emigration (King, Shuttleworth, Strachan, 1989, Walsh, 1990). Moreover, Irish labour market has not been able in the past to offer the kind of employment requested by an increasingly well qualified workforce. This has led to large numbers of graduates and qualified migrants leaving Ireland and looking for suitable occupation abroad (Shirlow and Shuttleworth, 1996).

Furthermore, the growing importance of multinationals has meant higher mobility within internal markets which imply international moves as a progress in structured careers (Salt, 1990; 1991; Shuttleworth, 1993). In this sense, Ireland has provided

what Shuttleworth (1996) has called 'the labour warehouse of Europe', since it educates and trains workforce which is inevitably being 'exported' abroad, particularly to Great Britain. As a matter of fact, historically the two countries have formed an integrated labour market, and therefore a migration system which acts as a background for many migration decisions.

However, other factors emerge from migrants' accounts, such as social factors and cultural attitudes which greatly contribute to the persistence of migration. As Lee (1987) points out, the restrictions of a very provincial, insular ethics have played a paramount role in promoting migration. One of the most often quoted reasons for emigrating was religion and its impact on social life. Curiosity and the desire to see other parts of the world also seemed to be relevant. Thus, the combination of economic and social factors appears to be the main reason behind migration. This seems to hold true for both male and female migrants (Kelly and Choille, 1989; 1996; Pauvers, 1996); unskilled migrants (Hazelkorn, 1990), as well as professionals such as nurses (Daniels, 1996), teachers, executives, etc.

Besides, as many migrants had lived in an environment where migration was a constant feature, we can say that the cultural dimension involved in the decision to migrate was indeed remarkable (Hayes, 1990; Kearney, 1990). As a matter of fact, several informants came from families which had already experienced migration and seemed to have more or less consciously taken into consideration the possibility of migrating at some stage of their life. In this sense, the 'seeds of migration' appear

deeply rooted in the personal experience and cultural environment which the migrants come from (Findlay and Li, 1996).

In looking at migrants' residential and employment histories some interesting features of Irish migration to Tyneside became clearer. The relation between migration process and labour and housing markets was made clear through the analysis of the impact of different, often contrasting, narratives which shape the migrants' histories. Several issues emerged as peculiar to Tyneside labour and housing markets. Others highlighted the specific role of the Irish and the ways they compare with more general trends. Tyneside labour market has traditionally been associated with heavy industry and the many long-standing Irish migrants played a relevant role during the expansion of these sectors in the post-war years. However, as the local economy has shifted towards a predominance of the tertiary, the labour market assumed different features in which many Irish could not find a place. This was part of a general change which has had major consequences on the region (Hudson, 1991). However, traditional occupations, such as teaching and nursing, continued to play an important role for the Irish (Daniels, 1996; Gray, 1997). This confirms also the important role of female Irish migration, which has traditionally seen more women than men migrating.

The importance of the bargaining power in the labour market was often linked to different housing opportunities (Kitching, 1990; Allen and Hamnett, 1991). Nevertheless, different stages of the family life-cycle and varying patterns in life course greatly contributed to the shaping of job/residential histories (Grundy, 1992; Warnes, 1992). Besides, the "return" narrative was sometimes, but not as often as I

would have expected, a strong factor in the decision to move or indeed not to move within the local housing market (Gutting, 1996).

Moreover, the different patterns of rented or owned tenure served to confirm the role of housing in promoting or hindering migration. Housing in the case of the Irish, as well as other groups does not seem to act as a barrier to mobility; while other factors, such as family ties, appear to be more influential (Forrest and Murie, 1987). The role of the Irish in the labour and housing markets in Tyneside reflects the specific structure and sectors of both (Cameron and Crompton, 1988; Robinson, 1988).

However, the most important characteristic to be acknowledged was the variety of experiences put forward by the migrants, and their ability to adapt to the circumstances of a different labour and housing market. In this sense, we could say that in many respects the Irish have quickly moved within both markets in very similar ways to the British population.

6.5 Conclusion

In these sections we have looked into the two first main aspects of the migration process, the decision-making process and migrants' job and residential histories. This provides us with important data which will be useful in the analysis of subsequent phases of the migration process. Therefore, we now turn to other stages, in examining migrants attitudes to migration and the relevant features in the process of identity formation.

CHAPTER 7:

CULTURAL THEMES OF IRISH MIGRATION TO TYNESIDE

7.0 Introduction

This chapter investigates the wide cultural themes of integration and assimilation from the migrants' point of view. Therefore, it presents their own accounts of the migration experience and its impact on their lives. First, a look at migrants' attitudes to migration and their perception of Ireland will help us better to understand the cultural factors involved in the process, both before migration takes place and after (Miller, 1985, 1990; Lee, 1989; Hayes, 1990). Secondly, migrants' self-descriptions of integration and assimilation will be presented and hopefully they will illustrate the processes at stake in the final stage of migration. In this sense, several aspects concerning the settlement of Irish in Tyneside will be considered, such as the impact of discrimination in shaping identity, the influence of the Catholic legacy, and historical factors which have influenced the incorporation of the Irish community into the local one.

In order to understand the change of the place of the Irish in Tyneside, it is important to bear in mind a whole series of factors, both at the level of the Irish community and the host population. Therefore, the process of identity formation will be analysed as the dynamic arena of different forces at work. New identity formations, including multiple identities and hybrid identities will emerge as the result of distinct, often contrasting factors, such as economic influences, the merging into the local population

through intermarriage and progressive assimilation, the role of the Catholic Church and schools in incorporating the Irish, and resistance to discrimination.

Different levels of self-identification will be investigated: the local and regional level with its distinct features (Coffield, Borrill, Marshall, 1986; Colls and Lancaster, 1992); the national level (Lee, 1984; Daniels, 1993), and the transnational or global level (Kearney, 1990; Akenson, 1993). The intersection of these different layers of identity is demonstrated by the personal accounts offered by the migrants themselves, and shows the complex patterns behind the process of identity formation and transformation.

7.1 The Cultural Themes: The Migrants' View

The principal aim of this chapter is to investigate how migrants construct their ethnic identities and how, in turn, migration is experienced by migrants in relation to interpretations of their ethnic identities and their perceptions of places. Therefore, the migrants' view is presented here with the intention not only of providing personal accounts of migration, but also to show how identity emerges as a social construction based on numerous factors which define a person's access to places and above all opportunities (Li et al., 1995). In this sense, great importance is given to the subjective meaning of migration and how people who become migrants experience and perceive their surroundings.

Migration, thus, is a process through which the individual, but also the group, express the different aspects of the relation between self and the two social worlds: the place

of origin which the migrant leaves by emigrating and the new social world and new self-images which migration to another place implies. It is important to stress that although the study focuses on migrants' personal discourses about their migration experience and sense of identity, the implications become much wider. In fact, despite examining these processes from the perspective of individuals and migration, the process of identity formation inevitably mirror the broader context in which individuals live and act (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993). In this sense, as Fielding (1992) points out, migration is a cultural event which reflects an individual's personality and her/his world view.

Identity, or rather different identities, are central to these processes and strictly linked with migration. As a matter of fact, migration from one place to another often produces a transformation in identity due to the assimilation of cultural elements of the destination area (Glazer and Moynihan, 1975). On the other hand, migration also involves people embodying their identity and cultural features related to their place of origin. It is the interrelation between these identities and migration which will be examined here; and the ways the positions of individual migrants on the issues of migration and identity are socially constructed in terms of their perception and interpretation of ethnic identity and living in other places.

7.1.1 Attitudes to Migration

As one might expect, attitudes to migration appear to be extremely differentiated, often opposite, and even contradictory. Obviously they have never formed a homogeneous body, even less at the present time when migration from Ireland shows

more and more diversified features in terms of determinants, destinations, and composition of flow.

In the past the perception of emigration as exile remained prevalent, and only rarely was migration seen as a voluntary decision taken as a means for self-improvement (Fitzpatrick, 1994). As Miller points out, the image of emigration as exile is one of the most powerful images ever evoked in reaction to eviction and forced migration after the Famine (1985). He stresses that:

the misrepresentation of emigration as political banishment was integral to Catholic Irishmen's sense of individual and collective identity and, most important, it was crucial for maintaining social stability and bourgeois hegemony in a Catholic society whose capitalist institutions and social relationships made mass lower-class emigration imperative (1990, p92).

A third generation migrant still talks of his family history as exile: "We were forced out of our land, that's why we came over here". The word *deorai* (exile) still appears in the 1970s (MacAmhlaigh, 1970) to depict emigration as a necessity rather than as an individual opportunity for self-betterment. On the other hand, even at governmental level, a fatalistic acceptance of emigration has usually prevailed, almost like a conviction that emigration is part of the essence of being Irish (King, Shuttleworth, and Walsh, 1995).

However, Hayes (1990) points out that migration was seen also as a source of opportunity and "since only the successful came back to tell, success was seen to be the norm" (p16). Therefore, emigration, or the view of the emigrant as successful,

promised a better life, compensation for poverty, discrimination, inequality of opportunity and lack of success in Ireland. Pat says:

We left Ireland in March 1958. There was a lot of unemployment in Ireland and I had three children to feed. A lot of people were coming to Britain and they were doing well... I was fairly impressed and I thought it must have more to offer than Cork so we left.

The role of information flows appears to be quite important as a contribution to higher expectations and has an impact on the decision-making process in encouraging migration (De Jong and Gardner, 1981).

For many migrants who arrived in the post-war years emigration was a constant feature of the Irish social environment. Besides, both at government and personal level, it seemed accepted as the better solution to economic problems (Lee, 1989; Walsh, 1989). In this sense, emigration fulfilled the traditional role of safety valve for all economic and political shortcomings (Choille, 1989, 1996). A migrant who came over in 1949 recalls:

I remember when I was six or seven, my father like most of the men in the area went to Britain for seasonal work. We took it for granted because he was no exception, actually it was the rule of the families around.

Thus, emigration appears as a familiar experience since early childhood and plays a relevant role at a later stage when the interviewee himself decides to come to Britain. This contributes to the perception of migration as a self-perpetuating process (Shuttleworth, 1996). It is striking as emigration is not even questioned as emerges from what Mark says:

I didn't really think about emigration as such... it's very odd looking back on it... but coming over to England was almost the natural thing to do, I mean before I came I didn't question coming to England, it was simply what I was going to do, no big deal. I guess it was taken for granted.

As we have seen, emigration stems mainly from economic factors, as unemployment and lack of a suitable occupation are often referred to as among of the main determinants by the majority of the migrants. This holds for both male and female migrants, although women had to face even gloomier prospects. Joanne left Kerry in January 1944. She had been working on the family farm for a number of years when she finally decided to leave:

I was fourteen when I left school so I worked on the farm... a bit of everything and it was hard work. We used to get up at six o'clock in the morning and we'd be working all day, working in the fields, or in the bog gathering turf in for the winter, until my mother would call us to the dinner, then it was time to milk the cows in the evening and then you had the chores, so it was very hard. My brothers and sisters were all going to school, different schools so I was the only one at home, it was just the three of us, me and my father and mother. I had a cousin, one day she told me 'What are you going to do? Are you going to stay until you are so old nobody is going to want you? They are all going to go away'. So I thought 'I have to go' and I wrote to an uncle who was here in England and asked him to look for a place for me, but it was war time and it was difficult but I said 'I'll take my chance and I'll go away'. So I came over and I worked in London for a while then I got married and we moved up here.

Women in rural Ireland faced limited options. After 1882 the Land Commission was redistributing large estates to make small farms more viable. Although women's role was crucial to the running of a successful farm, women could not be considered for addition of land and families with sons took priority over those with only daughters. That meant that many women had little option in those circumstances but to leave in

search of work. It also set a pattern which was to continue through the years (Travers, 1996).

As Britain during the war needed to augment its labour force, it turned to its traditional source, Ireland. This underlines the extent to which the economic relationship between the two countries remained unchanged by political independence. Although Ireland was officially neutral, in practice it worked on Britain's side as many Irishmen joined the British army and numerous migrants, both male and females, left for Britain, directly recruited by the British authorities in order to fill the gaps in the labour force (Lee, 1989). In the years after the war, Britain was rebuilding its economy and its need for workers was even greater. At the same time Ireland seemed to ignore the fact that a real exodus was taking place, with whole communities being uprooted by emigration and the population of rural Ireland declining very rapidly (King, Shuttleworth and Strachan, 1989). With the social and economic opportunities diminishing even further for those left behind, another emigration cycle was taking place. The prospects for women were even more dramatic. Because of their inferior status and lack of opportunity at home, the pull of an expanding economy in Britain was a strong incentive to leave. As the quotation above illustrates, emigration is seen as a necessity. Nor did education provide a solution to it; people who were being educated were going to leave anyway. Furthermore, with men leaving in great numbers prospect of marriage were scarce and social pressures contributed to inevitable migration (Travers, 1996).

The traditional role of women in Irish life was another factor which contributed to the perception of migration as a solution to their subordinate status. Jean left in the years just after the war and she stresses this point:

There were no opportunities for women in Ireland at that time. There was no jobs then or the pay was nothing, if you were lucky to get one. Then if a woman got married, you'd be expected to leave your job the minute you get married, it never occurred to them that a woman might like to go out to work. I knew I had no future there. I had two sisters in England and they came home for Christmas and said 'there'll be nothing here for you, you must come back with us' and that was it. I was over here after two weeks.

These quotations show how the tradition of emigration is rooted in Irish culture. Emigration has touched virtually every Irish family and people have left gradually to join those who had already gone, often in places where they had connections through a long line of emigrants. This has certainly been the case with Tyneside, as we can see from the accounts above. Besides, the closeness of Britain has made emigration easier and helped in fostering the illusion that it was possible to come and stay for a short while, eventually returning home. In fact, the vast majority never returned to Ireland, although they never stopped keeping self-deceiving plans of going back one day.

Many of these migrants did not find easy it to leave, but they perceived it as necessary, as they explained. Nor did they turn their backs on Ireland, as they kept sending money to the communities they came from. As a matter of fact, remittances have made for a large part of Ireland's gross national product (Breanacht, 1989). On the contrary, they felt that Ireland had turned its back on them and their resentment often dominates their experience of migration. Marie says:

Looking back, all of us have the same story. We all came and here and worked and got married, had children, what have you... but it wasn't easy and the people back home didn't understand it. I mean, we went home every year...but they don't understand how difficult it was. My brothers and sisters couldn't see how we tried to save money to get the kids home to Ireland every year to see their grandparents, how we tried to be still a part of... and you know, I think people like us who left in the 1940s and 1950s did a lot for them, because if we had stayed there they wouldn't have what they have today".

The feeling of having been let down by Irish society is a recurrent theme, which reflects both a sense of rejection and a desire to assert one's own achievements against past circumstances. Michael is very clear as to his attitudes to migration and his Irish childhood:

I didn't like Ireland, it didn't do anything for me. I couldn't wait to get out of the farm... I wanted to learn and get a good job but I just couldn't find a scope there. I'm glad I left but sometimes I thought hard about it, that really annoyed me. After I was over here I went back and of course I had a car and I was working for a company and people saying 'you look to be doing well'... I still go to Ireland, I still like Ireland, but I like this country, it was good to me.

The repeated failure of Irish governments to improve people's job opportunities is obviously one of the main reasons behind emigration, but not the only one. Attitudes to migration reflect other aspects of Irish society and different individual needs as shaping forces at work in the migration process. As Daniel points out:

I learned a lot since I came over here. It's good to see how other people live. I had a very strict Catholic upbringing, I went to Catholic schools and it was a fear regime really, but I coped with it. So when I came here it was like having freedom and the rest of it".

Emigration was in many respects a liberating experience. The very act of migration implied a freedom of movement unfamiliar to those reared in rural Ireland, but also to

educated, urban migrants like Daniel. Besides, relevant changes have taken place, which have modified current attitudes to migration in relation to different roles played by the migrants. Daniel's comments aim at distancing him from the traditional figure of the migrant:

I'm in a different situation to, say, the early emigrants, like, they came over because they didn't have a job. I actually had a job before I came here. So, I was secure really even before I came here to work for this company. I came here because I had a job, while they came here because they didn't have one and they were looking for one. A lot of the old folk came over and didn't have a job and started from scratch and for that reason when they look back although they see it very dearly, they bear a grudge against it because they didn't give them a job and you get different views on it, and you get some people they wouldn't go back there and some go back all the time.

Therefore, the perception of migration is undergoing a transformation which is to be linked to qualitative differences in the composition of the migration flow, and therefore in turn to status and a growing awareness of the contribution of Irish workforce to the British economy (Hazelkorn, 1990). Moreover, attitudes are being shaped also by a difference in the attitudes of the host population. This becomes clear when Brian talks about his experience of migration:

I don't see myself as a migrant, I mean in reality the life that I lead would be very similar to the life I would lead in a provincial city in Ireland... and I'm never treated as a migrant, I'm treated just like anybody else really. I think particularly the last four or five years British media have made a big effort, I would say Irish have become more popular in Britain and I think Ireland has changed in that time as well... it has become more accepting if you like of things non Irish, so there's a change in the attitudes between the two countries, which is not a bad thing.

What is perceived as a more relaxed relationship between Ireland and Britain helps in looking at migration in a less negative way and, on the other hand, makes people

more aware of their specific role in the British context. Besides, it shows as migration is faced in a more assertive way, and portrayed as a precise strategy. Mark, a medical doctor, points out:

I think the Irish community here is quite affluent, you see, the people who come to Newcastle are different. A lot of Irish go to London. But you know, the people who go to London, they do it without reasons. They are running away from something. A lot of Irish people in London are not there by choice, whereas you wouldn't exactly come to Newcastle unless there is some reason to come, specifically, like education or employment.

Migration in these accounts has lost the image of exile and expresses more the idea of self-improvement and opportunity. The stress, therefore, is on the break (real or perceived) with the past trends and the change in the present situation. Sean (life story presented in chapter 6) doesn't see himself as a migrant:

I'm not a migrant. Where I live it's my home. I suppose when you travel so much, that's the way it feels. I think migration is part of history in Ireland, before if you had a job you didn't have to go abroad, it was always those people they had to go because they weren't good enough to get a job at home, there was like a stigma about it perhaps. They cannot comprehend why you leave, now it's different we have excellent universities in Ireland and people who go abroad to get some jobs they use it as a career option, going and getting experience and come back and a lot will come back. It's immigration at times and the flow goes the opposite way, I may join them, you never know.

However, we should bear in mind that although a considerable number of migrants who arrived in Tyneside in recent years fall into this group of professional migrants who view migration in a positive way and see it as a rewarding experience, many of the Irish migrants in the area shared the feelings of rejection expressed in so many of the previous quotes. A third generation migrant from Sunderland whose father was a miner in Horden, vividly depicts the history of his family coming to Tyneside:

When my people came over to escape hunger at the end last century I am told that they brought small sacks of the Irish earth with them, so that whenever or wherever they died, they could have Irish earth sprinkled on their coffins. I never saw any. It must have all been used up by my day. Now I, the last of my line to do so, I have left Tyneside. After more than hundred years since the family left Ireland, I am the one to turn out the light as I leave. Most are in un-marked graves, a few buried alive in mining disasters. God rest them all.

7.1.2 Perceptions of Ireland

As with attitudes to migration, perceptions of Ireland also differ quite sharply according to when migrants left Ireland and in which circumstances. They range from idealised images of bucolic scenery, or friendly neighbourhoods, and lively social life to desolated pictures of poverty stricken rural communities. Rose (1996) points out as the West of Ireland has become a symbol of Irishness and Irish nationalism. Such images are often evoked as political discourse in order to express political views and are part of a historical vision of migration as involuntary and forced upon migrants by external factors and indeed by another country, rather than by any failures of their own. Kevin refers to a collection of poems to express his perception of Ireland:

I have a poetry book on my shelf entitled 'Poems of the dispossessed'³ The Irish had their lands and possessions torn from them by the invaders. We feel dispossessed, part of us has been withheld which was our birthright. To me the very rocks seem to speak of the history of my people. I cannot visit Connemara without looking at the mountains and all that unearthly barren beauty and thinking on poor starving people trying to raise families on those soil-lacking slopes. Here they were driven by the English when their own fertile lands were grabbed from them. I can tell you the very field where they had their bothawn⁴ . point to the very spot where the whole family were put breaking stones for road repair as part of Famine relief, because the 'Protestant ethic' would not allow even food for the starving to be given without it being worked for.

³ O'Tuama S. (ed), 1981 An Duanaire, 1600-1900: Poems of the Dispossessed. Dublin: Dolmen

⁴ Sod Cabin

Untouched by revisionism, this account shows how his sense of place focuses on powerful images in order to project a strong nationalist stand. These are images which do contribute towards a specific sense of identity and, although linked to the past, have a clear impact on later and present experiences. He recalls a day at school:

I attended a Catholic Secondary school in Horden during the war. It had the usual anti-Irish ethos. We never heard anything of Irish history, or indeed anything at all of Ireland apart from in Geography class one day I remember a teacher commenting 'Ireland is like a saucer, all mountains around the edge and a flat plain in the middle. Another day a woman teacher told us that the Black and Tans were justified in what they did in Ireland because it was in retaliation for the attacks by the Sinn Feinners. My father was raging mad when he heard about it and went up to the school to complain.

However, several migrants pointed to the ways their perception of Ireland has changed in time. A manager reflects on how he sees Ireland:

I still see Ireland in the way it was when I left but when I go there I feel there's quite a difference. I think Ireland does become significantly more liberal. I went to a Catholic school, I was brought up as a Catholic...I suppose it's got a lot to do with why I'm here and what I am. But I found it quite restrictive and I found that by the time I was seventeen I didn't really believe it too much anymore...I saw a huge amount of hypocrisy. When I was seventeen I was down town, I was late going back to my parents' house, seeing all these drunks there were there and I knew they were obviously Catholics...at 17 years old you think 'that isn't right'...and you saw so many people who went to church every Sunday but in my view they weren't Christians and I felt that society builds around hypocrisy and that's part of the reason why when there was an opportunity in my work to go somewhere different I just left. I think that possibly isn't there as much as it was but still I think it exists. I don't feel comfortable with being in the church or in a society like Ireland. Religion to me is a private thing and in Britain it is a private thing, so that's an aspect that I didn't like, I suppose. Other than that, it's a marvelous place really, but that would be probably the one primary reason that I wouldn't go back because I feel my wife wouldn't be accepted as a Protestant and that would be quite difficult.

Joanne is a student at Newcastle University. She explains how her perception of Ireland has changed since she moved to Tyneside:

When I lived in Ireland I didn't like it. It's a small place, there's not a lot happening there. I didn't want to live in Ireland. But after a while I kind of missed it... to me it's just home, I mean it's not like this country. It's not like other people see it Ireland being green and beautiful and everybody is friendly, which a lot of people are, but it's not all of it. It's got good points as well as bad points as you find it everywhere else. To me, that's where I'm going back to, I mean you get kind of identity of what you are so although I'm not practicing Catholic, still I'm glad I was brought up a Catholic and with my kids will do the same because I recognise myself in those values.

The perception of Ireland in association with specific religious and cultural values, as we can see, work both in a positive and negative way, according to different trajectories in individuals' experience.

7.2 Self-Descriptions of Integration and Assimilation to the Host Population

This section analyses migrants' perception of their role within the host population through their accounts of discrimination and how it shaped their integration and assimilation. Different responses emerged as a result of often different kinds of experiences and also differing ways of dealing with them. It is precisely those different ways which lead on to defining specific directions in the process of identity formation. As we will see from the following accounts, Tyneside appears as a quite different environment in comparison with other parts of Britain and most of the informants stressed how the overall attitude of the local population has been relatively more friendly and less prejudiced than otherwise experienced in the South of England, where many of them first arrived. Nevertheless, the process of integration and assimilation was hardly ever referred to as a painless stage and occurrences of

discrimination and anti-Irish attitudes were often reported, particularly when referring to specific years whenever the situation in Northern Ireland got worse. However, the main feature of so many of the accounts below is the degree to which migrants felt gradually more integrated, and the change in the attitude of the host population which has become more liberal and more accepting of Irish immigrants.

7.2.1 Experiences of Discrimination in Everyday Life

This section looks at various situations in everyday life where Irish people are likely to encounter 'racist' attitudes. These range from being bullied at school, to discrimination in employment and at work, to anti-Irish attitudes in social life as a result of political problems between Ireland and Britain, and we highlight the importance of 'racism' for identity formation. In these contexts, being Irish in Britain might become suddenly evident and evoke incidents which contribute to the processes of identity formation. As a matter of fact, occurrences of discrimination structure the very experiences and memories on which identities are based. In turn, these experiences, together with others such as gender, family background, and interregional differences, become the defining features of the different patterns of multiple, hybrid identities found among the informants. As identity is often defined in contrasting terms, i.e. as what one is not (Said, 1978), these experiences are at the core of identity formation as they function as a shaping device of personal identity, and, at the same time, clearly position migrants in relation to the host population. However, it should be pointed out that many of the interviewees were eager to stress the lack of 'racism' in their experience in Tyneside, a fact which contributes greatly to the process of identity formation in that it strengthens their local regional identity.

The literature on racism and ethnic minorities in Britain almost totally ignores the very specific experiences of Irish people. Irish migrants simply do not appear in any of the recent works, which overwhelmingly concentrate on black and Asian minorities. Useful exceptions are Gilley (1985, 1989) and Curtis L. P. (1971, 1984). The first one gives a useful historical overview of the early formation of anti-Irish feeling. The second author represents the 'hard side' of the debate, as she sees anti-Irish racism as deeply rooted in the history of Anglo-Irish relations and she tackles more recent aspects of the problem, such as Irish jokes, teasing about Irish accents, and anti-Irish common expressions. These contributions, though very useful, do not give enough space to Irish people themselves to reflect on their experiences and voice the everyday struggle for integration.

In addition to noting these gaps in the literature, a need was felt for more attention to the personal role of the researcher, and for a more reflective method. In this sense, my being Italian and therefore myself a migrant, and coming from a Catholic background like most of the informants, was obviously a relevant issue in this part of the research. However, most of the times this issue proved to be quite difficult to assess. At the beginning, I was counting on a false assumption that it would be easier for me to obtain extended accounts of 'racist' incidents than a British researcher. However, I was overlooking an important factor, that historically this region has shown a relative lack of racist incidents since the first immigration of Irish migrants in the nineteenth century (see chapter 3). Moreover, the most common response to my inquiries was migrants' reluctance to discuss their experiences of 'racist' discrimination. Besides, as informants thought that as a Catholic migrant I should

automatically understand, they felt also a need not to elaborate to me, not to explain in detail what their experiences implied for their identity.

Clearly, important mechanisms against racism consisted of playing down its significance, not to talk about it, to dismiss it and to refuse to acknowledge its impact on their lives so that their sense of identity could in this way be safeguarded. Accordingly, they were reluctant to disrupt the precarious balance reached over a lifetime struggle to adjust to an alien environment. In contrast, more recent arrivals and professional people often reported no incidents whatsoever and showed greater confidence in their role as migrants, they were able to laugh off Irish jokes and anti-Irish attitudes as part of ignorance and misinformation rather than racism. In several instances, their elusive answers prevented me from securing more extended accounts, and my being of a similar background made me at times wary of probing further and more aware of their right to retain information in order not to recall painful past experiences.

One of the fundamental facts about the place of the Irish in British society is their isolation since childhood. As Hickman points out (1995, 1997), since the nineteenth century, Irish children going to Catholic schools have been differentiated and segregated from the rest of the population. In other words, the Irish have been bounded into a segregated system. This is probably less true nowadays as many Irish families choose to send their children to any good school, regardless of being Catholic or not, but in a sense Irish children in Tyneside are probably just as isolated as ever. This is because most schools have very few Irish children, and they have to face anti-

Irish attitudes largely without the support and potential backing of friends with a similar background. Life at school for some Irish children is regularly characterised by instances of name calling and verbal abuse. As Catherine says:

I feel really frustrated...they just take the Mickey, they call me Paddy and I feel so ... I mean it's so unfair 'cause there's one of you and twenty of them “.

Name-calling is one of the most common instances reported by migrants when referring to their school days. What is striking here is that the informant herself uses the expression 'taking the Mickey', which is in itself the product of anti-Irish feeling (Curtis, 1984), to voice her experience of 'racist' abuse. Andrew came over after the war and he recalls his struggle at school:

When I came in 1954 I was sent to school in Scotswood, I was there five months at the most and my parents were thinking of sending me back to Ireland, they wanted to send me back to my grandparents in Clare..... because I was fighting all the time, from the very first day of school. A lot of children appeared to be Irish, but not as Irish as me. My clothes definitely had something to do with it, I looked terribly Irish , and the way I spoke didn't help. The very first class on the first day at school the teacher asked me a question and I answered, but ... my accent. The very first playground after that, almost the whole school was shouting at me 'Paddy' and of course I was fighting and I was in trouble every day. But I never thought of it in sense of being Irish, I do now though

Accent seems to be one of the main hurdles faced upon arrival. Therefore, it would be wrong to assume that because Irish people are native English speakers they do not encounter language problems. As a matter of fact, several migrants mention it as the very obstacle to full integration. As Anne says:

They teased me about my accent, the children at school. They would stand around you in the playground and say 'say this, say that' and they'd laugh, they were laughing at your accent.

The inability to communicate with people at school or at work plays an important role in the process of integration and in the formation of specific images, as Nancy explains:

when I arrived in England I only had an address that they gave us at the Labour Exchange, but I didn't know where to go and anyway nobody understood what I was saying, you know. I asked a policeman at the station where could I get a taxi and he didn't know what I was on about... and I felt so stupid. They think you are stupid because the Irish have that name.

Dermott is a second generation Irishman who moved to Tyneside in 1990. He feels very strongly about his cultural origins and he is very proud of being Irish. He gives this explanation of the language problem:

Well, it stems from history, because in the days of Cromwell English was a second tongue, the Irish were not used to speak English, it was pidgin English so they were not able to get the point across and people thought they were stupid. But it is worthwhile for Irish people in general, because they always get underestimated, and if you are negotiating with somebody you are underestimated because people think you're thick when you are winning straight away, so they are quite happy to win along with it. It's like with the Irish joke, I don't mind, it doesn't bother me.

Part of the confidence shown by Dermott comes from his childhood in Wolverhampton, where he enjoyed the support of an almost entirely Irish environment:

When I was at school there was a big anti-Irish thing from other schools, like we were the Catholic school and the opponent in town the Protestant school and they were very anti-Irish and they'd tell you, you know... they don't like Irish, they refer to you as IRA scum and all that nonsense and there was a lot of resentment towards the Irish so... I've seen it, it's there in the background but we tend to fit quite well really. I haven't felt any anti-Irish feeling in Newcastle, not really. I do tend to keep a low profile when something happens because I'm embarrassed, really; because they're connected with Ireland and you don't want to be

associate with that. I'll be disappointed if someone thought that I would be supporting that type of action so it's probably best not to get involved.

Forms of resistance are important factors in the shaping of various processes at stake in migration, not only in relation to integration and assimilation, but also in identity formation. Therefore, the possibility to build some kind of collective action in order to cope with negative attitudes around migrants is paramount. In fact, as many Irish migrants went to Catholic schools they were perhaps less vulnerable to "racist" abuse.

As Mary points out:

I went to a Catholic school and I think I wasn't exposed to so much prejudice at school because most of us were Irish, most of the teachers were Irish so because the environment was very Irish I always felt safe there... in a way I felt sorry for the few English Catholics, they probably felt overwhelmed by us, for once we were not the minority

However, school is not the only arena for this kind of confrontation. Integration proved difficult on several grounds and acceptance from the host population was by no means straightforward. Religion played a big part in this, especially in intermarriage, as Eileen explains:

I can't say that everybody was pro-Irish or anti-Irish, I mean you meet all sorts of people ... but I haven't experienced anti-Irish prejudice that much, probably because I don't have an Irish accent. It's more anti-Catholic feeling, some people were very anti-Catholic and that had an impact on you, like when John and I married, my father was very much against it, because for an Irish person to marry a non Catholic, it was almost a crime. And then when we got married I had to go and live with my in-laws for a while, and that was dreadful... they thought I wasn't good enough for their son because I'm Irish. They were very hostile, their attitude towards me was really unfriendly, I just wasn't good enough being Irish.

Work was another field where migrants faced discrimination, particularly in the post-war years, as Paul recalls:

I can still remember the signs 'No Irish, no blacks, no dogs' on the shop windows. That was 1950, maybe 52 you know, when you'd be looking for a job and you had notices up 'No Irish need apply'. We had a hard time, because of prejudice, really... and it was worse down in London, much worse... while here, thank God I never had any bother.

Paul refers to prejudice as being worse in London and he clearly draws a difference with Tyneside, where he has been living since 1967. He worked in the construction industry for more than thirty years. Workers had to put up with a lot of anti-Irish feeling as another builder (Jim) remarks:

there was a lot of words being said at work. There were a lot of Irish, North and South... I used to get on well with that lot, the problem was with the others, they didn't like Irish, I could strangle some of them, I never had any fights, but I was close.

Michael faced the same problem when he was told by fellow English workers: "we don't work with Catholics". However, construction was not the only field where discrimination took place. Anti-Irish feeling was present even among professionals, as Rose, a teacher of History points out:

I never really thought about 'being Irish', because I always felt so positive about my identity and who I am. I was not ready... I mean I didn't expect anyone to treat me as different or inferior. When I went to work some other teachers were talking and I overheard a remark, that was my first experience of a negative attitude against Irish people. I was shocked and appalled, because I was totally unprepared for what I consider the ordinary English person's perception of Irish people. I mean, of course I was aware of the history and all that, but when it came to the actual day to day contact with English people I often felt I couldn't cope, it was such a shock when I met up with it. It took me a while to come to terms with it and even now it still annoys me. I mean, I'm quite aggressive about it all. I never accept Irish jokes and all that".

Anti-Irish attitudes, of which the ubiquitous Irish joke is perhaps the most widespread instance, are said to deepen as political problems increase. As Jenkins (1997) points out, ethnic jokes represent an alternative to overt inter-ethnic hostility. Such jokes are an efficient means for categorising ethnic subordinates. Power is at the heart of the matter in that enforces definitions of what the ethnic 'Other' is (Said, 1979) There is no such a thing as just a joke and the Irish joke is no exception. Philip noted there had always been Irish jokes, but they tended to become more common and more cruel as the situation in Northern Ireland progressively deteriorated:

they began to make jokes as a way to hit back at the Irish. I guess it's a defence mechanism, they are either jealous or afraid of the Irish. When I came over I worked in London for about two years and there were little bits of prejudice... yes the Irish joke, oh that was all around, but it was about the Englishman, the Scotsman and the Irishman, now it's just the Irishman, isn't it? I think the problems in the North have changed the whole situation and that's why you get that kind of remark and it's the whole situation, really, people look at you and they see a terrorist. When a bombing happens I become aware of being Irish. Particularly in London, whenever there was trouble in the North I used to feel so intimidated, you go in a shop and they hear your accent you get that look....

Clearly then, the political situation in Northern Ireland is a main factor in the shaping of the relations between Irish migrants and the host population. As a matter of fact, long-standing migrants who have been in Britain previously to the "Troubles" and in different parts of the country were able to monitor the shift in the attitudes towards Irish immigrants as a result of terrorism and killings. Tara links the two issues:

I can't honestly say that people were racist but I always felt there was a prejudice against Irish people... I was aware that it was there against the Irish community, I was aware of what people thought of me, just because I'm Irish and it got worse after the troubles in Northern Ireland, then you'd hear those remarks and it began to be more frequent and more bitter.

However, other stereotypes, deeply rooted in English Victorian images of the Irish contributed to anti-Irish feeling. These emerge from Kate's words:

I've always felt different in many ways. I always knew I was different, I think I took it for granted. I've always been aware that as an Irish I was thought to be different. These people here always thought of Irish as inferior people, stupid, drunken. I guess we have prejudices too, against the English I mean, but I always felt all this feeling that they are superior people, I mean it's just rubbish.

In an interesting way Kate's self-perception of being different is a reflection of her being made to feel 'different'. The way people perceive her, in turn affects the very way she sees herself. This might occur even with migrants who are apparently well integrated within the host population. Noreen stresses this point:

People make me feel different, because I'm Irish, because of my religion. And I do feel I am different, because my national identity and religion are interrelated, so although I'm married to an Englishman and I've been here for thirty odd years, but still I'm glad I kept much of what I was taught as a child.

Thus, being integrated does not mean immediate assimilation. For many Irish migrants, social life, even a relatively friendly environment such as Tyneside, involved negotiating between different spheres. Rowan is very well integrated, but he still feels that a great part of his life revolves around Ireland and Irish people:

There is always a very strong influence in our lives, I mean most of my friends are Irish, my wife is Irish, we go back to Ireland every year, in fact several times a year. So, although we have English friends and we know a lot of nice people around here, still our social life is with Irish.

Willie had lived in Newcastle for about four years when I first interviewed him. He is a manager and he claims to be quite well integrated, but at the same time he points out that:

sometimes I go on a defensive on political questions, you know the Irish question...but I like people here, it's good part of the world, it's home away from home for me... people are friendly, they are a bit similar to the Irish. But I think if you look at the Irish people here, a lot of Irish themselves say they are integrated, then you find a lot of them are actually mixing with Irish people so I wouldn't call that integrated, they're integrating into society living here, owning their own house, the general things that people in this country do, while the people they're mixing with, first generation, they're probably in a lot of cases Irish people and I think you'll find that even with professional people. I think it's similar minds, similar interests, maybe similar values and similar ways of enjoying themselves. If you get an Irish comes down to your party and they say seven o'clock, people will turn up at nine o'clock, nobody bats an eyelid, they're just totally at ease, whereas if it is a mix..."

Mark stresses the point further, he is integrated since his relation to local people is good, but he is eager to claim his feeling of still being Irish and therefore he sets a clear distinction between being integrated and getting assimilated:

I think I am integrated here, I mean people are always nice and I made a lot of friends, so it wouldn't be fair to say that I always feel an outsider, I've been here for most of my life and I met very nice people, English people I mean. Geordies are so friendly, they're just like Irish people, really. But... it's a bit strange I guess after all these years in this country I still wake up in the morning and I'm conscious all the time of being Irish, I just am conscious of it.

Several informants offered a more confident account of their perceived position within the local population. Some of them are married to British spouses, they have many British friends and, at the same time, they retain a strong Irish identity. Brian is married to a Scot and he feels perfectly integrated in Newcastle:

I'll say I'm perfectly integrated here in Newcastle. We are totally accepted in the business community and certainly in our social life. I think British people are marvellous, I mean I worked in London, there was quite a big Irish community in London in the mid-1970s, and there were some very bad atrocities then, I worked in Northampton during the Falklands war when there was a lot of unhappiness because Ireland didn't support Britain in the war

and... I've never had bad words spoken to me because I was Irish in twenty years I've worked here, which is tremendous. I think British people are incredibly open-minded, I mean people would have a difference of opinion but I've never been called a bad name because I'm Irish, ever.

Migrants show different strategies for dealing with having their cultural origins called into question. An exploration of the interview discussions illustrates varied responses: first of all, developing a strong sense of personal pride in being Irish; downplaying anti-Irish attitudes and racial abuse; defending themselves against racism by splitting the Irish elements of identity from other spheres of their identity, in other words keeping the Irish side in a safe private space at home or with other Irish friends and holding different elements of identity within non-Irish circles; striving to fit in, be accepted and not be considered different, often by acquiring a specific regional, local identity, becoming Geordies, as we will see in detail in the following sections that deal more closely with identity formation and transformation.

Those migrants who strongly assert their identity as Irish often relate the development of such an approach to a growing awareness of being treated as different. Responses involved becoming aware of looking different and above all of being looked at as different. Their strategy of fighting back enable them to feel proud of being Irish. However, it must be stressed how the informants described Tyneside and Geordie people as very friendly. Accounts of discrimination were often related to past experiences in other parts of the country and the positive perceptions of Tyneside were regularly contrasted to them. Nevertheless, such experiences are paramount in the process of identity formation and must always be taken into account when looking into the development of migrants' position in integration and assimilation.

7.3 The Process of Identity Formation

After having explored various cultural themes, this chapter moves on to develop a more focused view of identity formation. Drawing upon the background outlined in the previous chapters and in the preceding sections of this chapter, it will look at identities as formed in different ways, the product of often disparate processes, as dynamic social identifications formed through narratives of self-production and re-production, or through responses to external attributions made by others, and through projections of individual internal definition upon social categorisation (Jenkins, 1997).

Different identifications are formed in part as a defence against categorisations that ascribe unwelcome positions to individuals. Others revolve around the feeling of guilt for having lost their Irish identity. Others, in turn, compare themselves in contrasting terms against those who seem to them have lost their Irish identity. Others display several, if not all, these traits and are able to go beyond local, regional, or national identifications to claim transnational identities as a result of migration and integration in the host society. Many, particularly among second generation Irish, present mixed, multiple identities, with simultaneous identifications: Irish, British, or Geordie. Hybrid identities are, thus, more common among Irish people whose parents tried to convey a sense of Irishness but who, at the same time, identify with the environment they live in.

The analysis of identity formation proved arduous, as the interrogatives at stake are continually contested questions and the very issue of identity brought doubts and uncertainty to the surface of migrants' attempts of self-definition. Some migrants did

not offer a ready definition for self-identification. That sometimes provided a sense of frustration at not being able to put into words the way they felt about their identity. John, who has lived in Tyneside for over thirty years, exemplifies this hard to pin down sense of displacement and identity conflict:

I feel Irish, but then... not... not completely, because I'm British as well. It's like I'm Irish, I mean I have my Irish passport and I go back home three times a year or more, I like being with Irish people and I love Irish humour and the music and all that... but I don't live there and to be honest I like it here and enjoy both aspects of my life, so...it's difficult to say.

John's difficulty in giving a self-definition of his sense of identity is not so much the result of a culture clash, as it is often the case with other ethnic minorities, as the direct effect of his integration. Another migrant express a similar sentiment:

It isn't a culture clash, it's different sides... I sometimes think there is some sort of ... conflict... maybe, but... I wouldn't say I am English and... I'm not Irish either. I have been here for twenty years, my wife is English, my children were born in Newcastle, they are Geordies. So... part of me is definitely Irish, but part of me... it's difficult to decide, I feel I belong here, my life is here now, but I wasn't born here, so that makes a difference...".

This would seem to confirm the paradigms of identity crisis and being between two cultures, but also points to partial identifications as a basis for formulating identity as neither wholly Irish nor wholly British on one side, and on the other side as another basis for negotiation and inter-mediation for being both Irish and British at the same time. Clearly, we need to look at identity as an ongoing construction, as pointed out in the theoretical outline presented in chapter 2. Therefore, we are not referring to identity as a static concept, rather we are focusing on plural identifications, which are in the process of being continuously formed and transformed. In this sense, considering identities as constructions makes it possible to validate complexity and

multiplicity. This approach is useful when taking into consideration the changing of the importance of one identification over others and, therefore, the mutable nature of identities for an individual. Brendan is second generation Irish. He was thirty two when I interviewed him. He gives an example of this process as he explains:

at the moment I feel just the same about my Irishness and being British, but if you asked me few years ago... my English side was stronger,...yeah, it was more dominant because I just didn't want to stick out, I wanted to be like my friends, I mean... we all try to fit in, don't we?... But now, I feel I am Irish and I'm proud of it, It's part of my background, even if I was born here in Newcastle and I was brought up here in Newcastle. So, it's always been there but now I think my...Irishness, my sense of being Irish is becoming more important to me".

Brendan clearly refers to the need to fit in, particularly at a younger age, when the urge to conform made his English side dominate over his sense of Irishness. His words imply that the connection to one's cultural heritage or background is relevant in that it is primarily discovered within himself and thus important to his developing sense of personal identity. As this connection back to Irish origins or roots is (re)discovered and transposed into the present, the balance between the two shaping forces at work is made even. However, the most obvious aspect conveyed here is the temporary nature of the present stage, which does not preclude the process described from further development; quite the contrary, it almost foresees it.

Identity formation for the Irish migrants who took part in the study appears to be a matter of positioning themselves (or not) as an ethnic minority community and that involves different issues such as: at times negotiating varying degrees of discrimination, but also, and perhaps more often, the task of keeping a national identity in the face of a constant pressure to assimilate; a genuine friendliness of the

Tyneside host population which does make it easier for Irish migrants to integrate and eventually assimilate; the disapproval of the Irish community of those who show a loss of identity; the search for solidarity by other migrants who are in a similar position.

There are several points to bear in mind when considering the specific place of the Irish in Tyneside and their sense of identity. First, as mentioned earlier in the thesis, the absence of a large Irish community and the lack of a large number of recent immigrants makes individualist strategies a priority for coming to terms with being Irish and living abroad. Also, with the Irish community dating as far back as the early nineteenth century, its pattern of settlement is highly dispersed, given the repeated relocation of migrants in different areas of Tyneside. This clearly helps towards further integration, and because of the sense of isolation, it does not encourage nor strengthen a sense of Irish identity in migrants. Besides, thanks to their long-standing presence in Tyneside and to other factors, such as intermarriage, the Irish have penetrated into the Tyneside social setting, with large numbers of second and third generation Irish, and numerous Tyneside people claiming Irish descent.

Secondly, unlike other ethnic minorities, it is rather difficult to provide a tightly defined notion of what Irishness or Irish culture is, or is perceived to be. Whilst Asians or black migrants present rather precise differences in terms of language, religion, ethnic customs which help in giving a clear definition of what that particular cultural tradition implies, with the Irish the boundaries are less clear cut. Not only are the Irish native English speakers, but they are by and large much closer to the British tradition than any other ethnic minority. In fact, religion still plays a major role in the

shaping of the process of identity formation. However, political aspects related to the situation in Northern Ireland are also very important in forging identities.

As we have seen with Brendan, the need to fit in is paramount, especially at crucial times of one's life course. As a matter of fact, identity formation is often characterised by the downplaying of difference and the wish to integrate. However, a difference should be drawn in relation to British identity at the regional and national level. In fact, very few migrants seemed un-problematically to embrace a British national identity, including those second generation Irish who were born and brought up in Britain. On the contrary, most migrants did not find it difficult to define themselves as Geordies, several long-standing migrants speak with a strong Irish-Geordie accent, express patriotic feelings of affiliation on sporting occasions, while, at the same time, being strenuous supporters of Newcastle United.

Kathleen has spent most of her life in Tyneside. She is very assertive about her Irish identity, but when she refers to herself as British, she also feels the need to narrow down her self-definition to a precise local identification. Besides, as she compares Britain with Ireland, she makes clear her reasons behind her sense of identity:

I'm a mixture, really. I'm Irish, but I'm also English. I'm a Geordie. We should be grateful, at least here they give you a good living and you should respect that.

Patrick echoes her position. He feels quite comfortable with the notion of belonging here and contrasts himself with other fellow countrymen who do not share his sense of belonging:

a lot of Irish people have a lot to thank this country for. A lot of people say how wonderful is Ireland and do nothing but criticising

this country, but if Ireland was that b*** good, how come they're here? I mean, this country was good to me, you know? I mean, I like Ireland, but... didn't do anything for me...

Therefore, here are displayed not only different, overlapping strands of identity- Irish, English, and Geordie, but also different perceptions of Ireland. Pauline, like Kathleen, has been in Newcastle for most of her life. She explains how she feels about her identity:

it's difficult to say, really... I am Irish and I am proud of it. I have my Irish passport, so... I suppose that means I am Irish.

When asked in greater detail about which side of her identity she felt as prevailing, she began to unfold her first definitions into a more specifically regional identity. Therefore, her deep attachment to this country is not expressed as a national identification to Britain, but rather through a local affiliation to Tyneside and a strong sense of North-East identity:

Me friends say I speak Geordie I don't know, I don't think I lost me accent, but they say I speak Geordie... I've been here for donkeys years so...

Margaret is a long standing migrant. She was married to a Briton and she explains how difficult is to pass on a sense of identity across generations:

I don't want go back because it's been so long. I've lived here all my life, this is my home... but of course I still feel Irish, I was born in Ireland, I mean what else shall I be? I mean I come to the Irish centre and I meet with Irish people. I tried to give this to my kids, but they are Geordies [laughs].

Fitting in with a specific locality of Britain extended the identity formations into constructions which combined being Irish with a particular local identity, totally missing out any sense of identity with England or Britain. On the contrary, such an

affiliation might quite readily be rejected. This might be interpreted as a strategy for avoiding the clashes, tensions or contradictions raised by being or feeling both Irish and British, and investing in a regional identity as a safe self-identification. Besides, asserting a regional English identity may work as an efficient means of self-definition in that it provides a hold for those individuals who find themselves in need of some kind of recognition by both Irish and English people. A second generation migrant says:

My English friends think of me as Irish, but for my Irish friends I'm not Irish enough so I'm English for them, so it's strange... I am what I am, and I feel I can be Irish but also when I go out with my friends I just feel I am one of the lads, just like any other Geordie, really .

Dermott, another second generation migrant, faces the dilemma on both sides:

Here people think I'm Irish, but Irish people say I'm English, then I'm looked at as an English in Ireland, whereas I'm Irish. My parents, again because they've been away so long, people regard them as English, because they come with new cars and different ideas and feel outsiders even if they are in their own community, people feel like they have let them down, you see, and resented a bit towards them like if they've been rejected.

As a tension may emerge between such self-consciousness in being Irish and yet at the same time being aware of other elements of their identity, the strategy consists of expressing themselves as 'one of the lads', or combining the two in a newly created sense of identity, going against, in so doing, other people's expectations. However, this should not be taken as a way of denying their Irishness. In fact, as well as continuing to identify strongly with Tyneside, they keep many Irish activities going and go regularly to Ireland, thus showing that they have not dismissed being Irish.

Besides, the lack of a strong Irish presence encourages an individual's defences against isolation and such an investment in local identity is one of them.

Especially for young second generation Irish people, the pressures to conform are felt strongly. Thus Terry is married to a Briton, speaks with a strong Geordie accent, is a long suffering supporter of Sunderland F C, but does not feel a strong national identity. His Irish background still emerges as the most powerful basis for his self-definition. He further develops these themes of the disconnection between regional and national identities, as different planes which shift continuously:

I used to feel kind of mixed... when I was at school I felt more English then, or I should say more Geordie, really, I never thought much about being Irish, but I kind of become more aware... I think when I started working... yes, I began feeling more and more Irish, I'm more aware of my culture, and when people hear your name and you say your parents come from Ireland, then you're Irish “.

Identity formations are shaped and transformed partly by the definitions given by people wishing to position them. As a result of this, a desire and a need to define themselves in their own terms acts as a catalyst of self-identification towards identity formations which escape national identities and transfer, instead, those affinities on alternative planes, such as the local or regional one:

I know I am Irish, my parents are Irish and we go back every year but I am from Newcastle, that's where I am from, that's where I live “.

A further pattern which goes beyond the combination of Irish and regional identities involves a more segmented sense of identity that seldom presents an organic mix of different identifications. As a matter of fact, it often consists of compartmentalised,

fragmented identities where being Irish and being English roughly correspond to two separate spheres, the private one at home within the family and friends from the same background; and a more public sphere at work or on different social settings. The two were sometimes connected and embraced alternatively according to varying situations, but they were at times kept as well-defined, almost conflicting levels which did not meet. Thus the commonly heard phrase 'best of both worlds' (see Sean, quoted in chapter 5) is not always used to indicate two worlds which are actually combined, blended, or joined together:

I feel Irish but I'm also English... it depends on situations, really. I wouldn't expect my English friends to join in for St. Patrick's Day, most of them wouldn't know St. Patrick's Day anyway... so, there are times when I live the Irish way but then again a lot in my life is like anybody's else. I mean, I go out with the lads every other day... no problem at all... so, it's like having two sides and I enjoy both... it's the best of two worlds “.

Keith also uses the phrase 'best of two worlds' to express his perhaps unconscious handling of the different segments characterising his identity formation. In this case, the use of this expression indicates how the two worlds are not combined and are experienced distinctly in separate situations, on different contexts, at distinct times:

I can go out and have a good time with my friends but still have my Irish identity I can still be Irish with my parents, I mean they're totally Irish, we really love going there, I really enjoy it, we go back every year and it's lovely. It's nice to be able to have your traditions and it's important to think that after all these years we hold on to our culture.

However, this non-conflicting partitioning between an outside local environment and a mainly Irish culture which is held quite comfortably at the private level, often involving enjoying Irish traditions, religious celebrations, Irish popular music and other aspects of Irish culture in the private sphere or in a predominantly Irish

environment, is not as common as one might expect. Irish social settings are themselves rather mixed, therefore a total separation of the two spheres is usually rare. As Sean commented about Irish circles:

They're very mixed, if you go to the Irish centre, spot the Irish, there are very few in there, maybe Geordies “.

Therefore, it is not a total partitioning, rather an ongoing strategy of negotiations on the migrants' side of their role, across the different levels as the result of mixed self-identifications where shifting identity segments become at times dominant over others.

However, such identity formation can be double-edged in relation to migrants' role within the host population. Having a sense of 'two worlds' helps those with segmented identities to carve a private space of Irish identity, a niche from which minimal effort to conform superficially to the dominant English context is needed. On the other hand, those who fully combine English (or Geordie) and Irish identifications connect and live simultaneously through two different cultural perspectives which leave them without a safe space of purely Irish identity, to retreat to in the domestic sphere whenever confrontational situations occur in the other contexts.

For the migrants quoted above, giving themselves dual identifications as 'one of the lads' or 'a Geordie lad' indicates a crucial tension in the identity formations of second generation migrants. More specifically, this tension points to the struggle to reach a compromise between asserting the right to express one's specific identity as Irish but, at the same time, striving to fit in and claiming no difference with the local population of Tyneside. Such new forms of identification involve difference and affiliation at the

same time, a perpetual oscillating between two cultural realities, never being wholly one thing nor the other, without a sense of being unquestionably Irish, but always aiming at defining one's experience relationally, with no single fixed identity embracing the whole of an individual's perspective.

As a result, there is a danger that 'the best of both worlds' may lead to multifaceted, fragmented, open definitions which are developed out of fragile, unstable, often under-articulate identifications. Thus, as Other-based definitions fail to convey the precise sense of what being Irish abroad involves (Castles and Miller, 1993), such Self-based definitions are themselves likely to mirror segmented, hybrid identity formations that embody an implicit sense of multiplicity, temporary nature, and instability. Therefore, many of those who see themselves as able to enjoy the best of both worlds actually hold such identifications as separate sectors to which they switch at different times. The inherent weakness of these identity formations, thus, lies in the fact of their inability to fully invest in any of the two, as they alternatively shift between the two.

However, particularly among recent migrants a greater consciousness for the need for strong self-definition as Irish emerged as a striking feature of a renovated sense of confidence. These expressed a well-defined sense of Irish identity as their overriding feature. Often, this form of identification, as a very strong and secure notion of being Irish, is uncompromising with being British, but lacks the sense of isolation and marginalisation found among migrants who resorted to it as they experienced anti-Irish attitudes. In fact, these migrants claim to be perfectly integrated, but assert their

right not to be assimilated, that is to retain their specific culture. This points to a form of identity that is more distinct and closed than the previous ones, as a split between mutually excluding being Irish and being British or English. However, there is no sense of conflict in these accounts. A strong, cohesive, assertive certainty of Irish unitary identification is expressed through positive terms. Thus, this closed narrative form developing around one's Irishness involves a (re-)evaluation of one's Irish tradition and cultural background, a reassertion of one's origins, in short a new growth of confidence in being Irish. Mick says:

I'm Irish, 100% Irish. That doesn't mean I don't like people around me , I love Newcastle and people are very friendly here... but my cultural background is Irish and my nationality is Irish so I'm Irish in my identity .

Mick takes his Irishness, culture and identity as inherited, possessed at birth, rather than actively constructed and formed, a strong self-definition which stems from his origins. This seems to be a recurrent feature even among people who were not born in Ireland. Kevin comments:

It's a strange thing, this 'nationality thing, especially when you are second or third generation. Possibly the only place I wasn't aware of a certain awkwardness was in the Irish centre. And it isn't just a matter of having an Irish passport. I feel Irish, I'm never so happy as when I'm on Irish ground, the very sight of Gaelic on a road sign brings a lump to my throat as I drive southwards over the Northern Ireland border. I relish Irish conversation, Irish music, the very air of the place. I treasure my Irish origins. It was my father who passed this jewel on to me. Once my father and I counted the number of phrases and isolated words still in use amongst us a century after the old people came over. It approached a hundred. Among them were blessings, prayers and curses. My father had a blind brother who prevailed upon him to read Irish history books to him, every night when he came from the pit he had to sit and read a chapter to the blind lad. In this way both were educated in Ireland's history and those injustices were recited to me in turn. I was even named after Kevin Barry the Irish patriot hung after the 1916 Rising in Dublin.

This is a marked contrast with the identity formations outlined earlier in this section. Contrary to many who mentioned possessing nationality documents as a sign of identity, Kevin draws a sharp distinction between formal, documented, but shallow identity, and real, strongly felt self-identification, which in his case is undoubtedly and proudly Irish. He does not deny his connection with regional and, in fact, national British identity, since he is third generation Irish. However, he sees identity as a purely cultural formation, a matter of language and awareness of one's history, a self-definition of affiliation and, therefore whole-heartedly, unquestionably Irish. Besides, his political views are a powerful factor behind his sense of being Irish:

Being Irish has played a big part in my own life. I can say that it has been one of the most important motivating forces in my life, nor am I alone in this. I recently had the pleasure and honour of being asked to give Gaelic lessons to IRA prisoners in Durham jail. Would you believe that more than half of those prisoners who are undergoing severe sentences for the struggle for Irish freedom are English or Scottish born. It cannot merely something lightly or whimsically referred to in casual conversation, this pride in being Irish. Young men have gone out and put their very lives at risk and presently waste their young lives in prison cells because of this conviction. This is not something from the remote past. It is happening at this very moment “.

Identity is definitely a contested arena and attempts to try to define it meet several obstacles. The maintenance of identity and the formation of new identities, changeable within different contexts is noticeable (Kellner, 1992; Hall, 1992). In the following quote Brian reveals the tensions between maintaining his Irish identity and fitting into different family and social settings:

All my friends know I'm Irish, yea I'm Irish. I still have an accent, I'm sure I could have lost it if I wanted to lose it: I've lived more of my life in England than Ireland but I still see myself as Irish and I'm proud to be Irish. My kids consider themselves Irish even though they've a Scottish mother and they're born in England but they are Irish more than anything else. I don't think we consciously set to teach them anything in particular but they know

where they come from. We primarily left this to them, we thought they would be confused. So, from an early day they are Celtic which is something because that is in both races. They can speak a bit of Gaelic, we speak Gaelic a little, just a few words maybe, but just to make them aware that it's there and they go to Ireland and Scotland every year. The idea of being Celtic has been lost really. To this day the relationships between Ireland and Scotland and Ireland and Wales are not really close. In fact, Irish are getting on with English much better than Scottish or Welsh people which is dreadful really, because they're so similar, but it's been lost. They lost the Celtic bit and retained the Irish bit.

Here, clearly at pains to try to reconcile the differentiated patterns of identity within the family, he resorts to a fourth definition: not Irish, Scottish or English, but Celtic. In referring to "race" he takes the concept of identity away from the confrontation which may arise if it was associated with nationality (he's Irish, his wife is Scottish, his kids are English) or religion (he's Catholic, she's Protestant, they are brought up in the Church of England).

Anne is very assertive about her identity, particularly when referring to the future:

I'm happy here now. I mean, as long as it is temporary I don't mind. I enjoy life here, there's plenty to do if you're young and you have a lot of friends. But if I think about what it's going to be in 10 years time...I mean I'm Irish, I'll never be anything else and I want my children to be Irish so I know eventually I'll have to go back.

Although Kathleen feels very strongly about her identity the need to keep a low profile is evident:

I'm proud to be Irish. It's everything to me, the way I was brought up, my people, my values. But I've been here for a long time you know, 22 years it's enough to teach you...I mean, you know whenever there's trouble, like a bomb or killing somewhere in the North you know I just don't want to hear about it, I don't speak about it. I don't want people to know I'm Irish...because I want nothing to do with that. It's awful.

As it emerges from the quotation above, several factors contribute to the shaping of identity, both on a level of self-definition and external influences that affect migrants' projections of self. Thus, political factors as well as more personal attitudes intervene in the formulation of the various meanings given to identity.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed several cultural themes of the migration experience from the point of view of the migrants themselves. The discussion shows the importance of giving priority to spoken voices and lived experience in the research process. This points directly to the narrative form in which identities are constructed and performed. The range of identities is much wider than the two senses of cultural identity outlined by some current work in the field of cultural studies. There is not such a straightforward opposition between stable, unitarian identity on the one hand, and hybrid identities on the other. Irish people display a far greater range of identifications and ambivalent, often contradictory positions than a simple dichotomy between closed and open identities can encompass.

CHAPTER 8:

CONCLUSIONS

8.0 Introduction

This chapter will summarise the most important findings of the research. The main strands of the thesis will be drawn together and the main empirical findings of the research will be synthesised under the themes and issues addressed in the previous chapters. The historical and cultural context of Irish migration to Tyneside will be considered, together with the economic aspects of the migratory flow. The cultural themes of Irish migration to Tyneside will then be reviewed. Finally, an attempt will be made to evaluate the context of the thesis and place it in the wider context of research on migration and identity. This final section of the discussion will be useful in order to suggest further avenues of enquiry and point to areas of much needed research on the Irish in Britain.

8.1 Main Findings of the Research

This section will summarise the main findings of the research using the themes presented in the thesis. I shall, therefore briefly review the empirical findings of the research on the Irish community on Tyneside, leading to the core issues of the research in the section on integration, assimilation and the process of identity formation. Attention will be paid to the relationship between the migration process and the process of identity formation according to the results of the investigation.

8.1.1 The Historical and Cultural Context of Irish Migration to Tyneside

Ireland has a long standing tradition of migration to Britain. Tyneside is one of the urban areas of Britain that experienced significant Irish immigration in the nineteenth century (Fitzpatrick, 1980; Davis, 1991). Undoubtedly, the presence of a long standing Irish population on Tyneside helps in reproducing traditional trends of Irish migration. Firstly, evidence from the data studied suggests that migrants often rely on informal information flows based on social networks. Kinship and friendship networks appear to play an important role in contemporary migration as they did in past migratory flows (Hannan, 1970; Shuttleworth & Kockel, 1990).

Secondly, migrants' accounts of their experience of migration show how migration is deeply embedded in Irish social life and how the very idea of migration is encountered early in an individuals' life and then developed in later stages leading to the actual decision to leave Ireland. In this sense, migration decisions are not simply the result of events prior to migrants' departure. Rather, the meaning of the migrants' migration decision is situated in their life history and is based on values and attitudes developed over their entire life course in specific social and cultural contexts. The tradition of migration has contributed to the establishment of a migration culture which has a major impact in the decision-making process (Miller, 1985, 1990; Kearney, 1988). The social environment around potential migrants affects their attitudes to migration and promotes a willingness to leave Ireland.

Thirdly, the particular place of Irish migration to Tyneside allows for remarkably good relations between the Irish community and the host population. Chapter 3 has shown

that the Irish gradually integrated into the local community and, by and large, were not the object of racism or discrimination (Cooter, 1973; Byrne, 1996). This historical relationship has made possible a high degree of integration while, at the same time, allowing for the Irish to retain their specific identity.

8.1.2 The Economic Context of Irish Migration to Tyneside

It was suggested in Chapter 4 that Irish migration is a result of structural features of the Irish economy as well as individuals' decisions. More specifically, economic forces that structure the migratory system formed by Ireland and Britain were identified as the shaping features of the migratory movement. These allowed Irish migration to Tyneside to be interpreted as part of broader international developments (Walsh, 1980). The Irish labour market is closely integrated with that of the UK and variations in labour market trends were shown to be of great relevance in their impact on migration (Kirwan, 1982; Kirwan & Nairn, 1983). Using unemployment differentials allowed us to relate trends in emigration to employment opportunities abroad (Sexton, 1987, 1997; Walsh, 1986).

Besides, as many migrants confirmed, the search for a job was one of the main reasons behind their decision to emigrate. Evidence suggests that Ireland is part of an economic periphery which is unable to provide suitable employment for its growing work force even in periods of economic expansion like now (Shuttleworth, 1991, 1993; Shuttleworth & Shirlow, 1997) . As a matter of fact, despite a buoyant economy, levels of unemployment remain high together with significant net migration. However, as seen in Chapter 6, social factors are also important in the shaping of the

decision-making process and is the combination of economic and social factors which proves to be determinant in migrants' behaviour.

Britain is a traditional destination of Irish migration and still attracts a considerable part of the whole Irish emigration. Although core regions such as the South East are the preferred destinations, even migration to areas like Tyneside, itself peripheral, reflects the general trends of Irish migration (McLaughlin, 1991). Therefore, as we have seen in Chapter 4, the migratory movement of Irish into Tyneside, albeit small, responds to market forces acting at a higher level.

8.1.3 The Cultural Themes of Irish Migration to Tyneside.

A main set of findings relates to the cultural themes of Irish migration to Tyneside. Using qualitative data and analysis, several themes were investigated, such as attitudes to migration, perceptions of places, integration, and assimilation. The process of identity formation was dealt with in detail. As it emerged from the investigation, no single response to the vast issues at stake was found. On the contrary, and as I had expected, a whole variety of approaches was offered by the migrants themselves, and different levels of identification emerged: from personal to collective identifications; but also at a local, regional, national, transnational and global level (Bauman, 1992; Bottomley, 1992; Gray, 1996). This is in itself a considerable result as it demonstrates how narrow and inadequate are traditional models of identity formation (Glazer & Moynihan, 1964, 1975; Waters, 1995). In this sense, no simple categorisation was obtained as we moved from a static, fixed notion of identity to a more complex and dynamic conceptualisation of identity as a process (Hall, 1990, 1992). Thus, identities

emerge as cultural constructions, dynamic, multiple and relational, according to the different contexts and the specifics of the situations in which any given migrant finds her/himself (Bhabha, 1994; Benmayor & Skotnes, 1994; Kells, 1995; Li et al 1995).

As seen in Chapter 7 the range of identities is much wider than the two senses of identity outlined by Hall (1987, 1992). Therefore, an opposition closed/open identities does not reflect the complexity of identifications expressed by the different migrants. Some of the identity formations respected more traditional patterns (Gray, 1996) being characterised by a strong nationalist political affiliation, others expressed multiple affiliations on local, regional and national levels, whilst others still presented all the features of hybrid identities.

In discussing identity, giving priority to lived experience and of an individual's past events proved paramount. Therefore the narrative form in which identities are constructed and performed in different contexts and relational settings emerged as a principal vehicle to identity formation and transformation (Somers, 1994). Therefore, an important result was to observe and analyse as the process of identity formation unfolds and evolves during a migrant's life course: the way individuals reflected upon the very features shaping their sense of being lead to a more precise definition of identity both in terms of what constitutes it and the specifics of the process (Somers, 1994; Ganguly, 1992).

In this thesis identity becomes more usefully defined as a process, rather than an abstract entity. This, in turn, has shown how identities constitute a process in

progress, always unfinished; generative, productive and reproductive. As a result, the notion of identity formation becomes a more useful tool in analysing a wide range of issues related to migration, such as the decision-making process, integration and assimilation (Gutting, 1996; Rutherford, 1990).

8.2 The Context of the Thesis and Future Avenues for Research

After having presented the main findings of the research, it is now important to assess its significance and to place it in the context of other research on Irish migration to Britain as well as on migration and identity. This will allow us to evaluate the value of the research within the wider context of cultural studies and suggest future avenues for research.

It should be stressed that this work does not aim at covering all aspects of Irish migration, nor at producing a 'Grand Theory' which might explain all the issues involved in the migration process and the process of identity formation. Such targets would be far too ambitious for a work of this kind. Moreover, several limitations were encountered which determined the scale and goals of the study. Therefore, the thesis had, from the very beginning, more practical if not limited, empirical aims. However, despite those limitations, the thesis has attempted to offer explanations for Irish migration to Tyneside and present migrants' own experience of migration.

Therefore, the main value of the thesis lies in the following areas. Firstly, it is hoped that this thesis is a useful case study of Irish migration from the perspective of a region with strong historical links with Ireland. Secondly, this study contributed to our

knowledge of the Irish population in Britain. This is in itself a positive outcome as information on the Irish communities is rather patchy. A further contribution has been the collection of migrants' histories which has highlighted the different stages of the migration process. Finally, the thesis has attempted to cover a much neglected area in investigating the ways the migration process and identity formation work and how they mutually affect each other in the case of the Irish.

This work has, therefore, addressed three major gaps in the existing literature. Firstly, by examining in detail the historical, economic, social and cultural aspects of an Irish community in Britain. Secondly, the thesis contributes to the current debate on identity, ethnicity and migration (Hall, 1990; Fielding, 1992; Champion, 1992). Thirdly, it puts great emphasis on qualitative methods in Geography and shows the usefulness of an (auto-)biographical, ethnographical approach to the study of migration (Halfacree & Boyle, 1993; Findlay & Li, 1997; Gutting, 1996; Miles & Crush, 1993; Vandsemb, 1995).

However, it is important to stress that the thesis has had limited objectives, both in theoretical and empirical terms. Because of the very nature of the investigation and the research strategies adopted, the study has been very specific and focused on a single case study. As this involved extensive field work and much time-consuming qualitative analysis, I chose to concentrate on one community. That sacrificed a possible comparative angle to an alternative that allowed in-depth investigation of the issues at stake. Thus, although many questions were answered, others were raised and this was in the very nature of the work. The thesis was conceived as a contribution to the still

few studies of Irish communities in Britain. In this context, I hope it contributes toward a more comprehensive image of the Irish in this country.

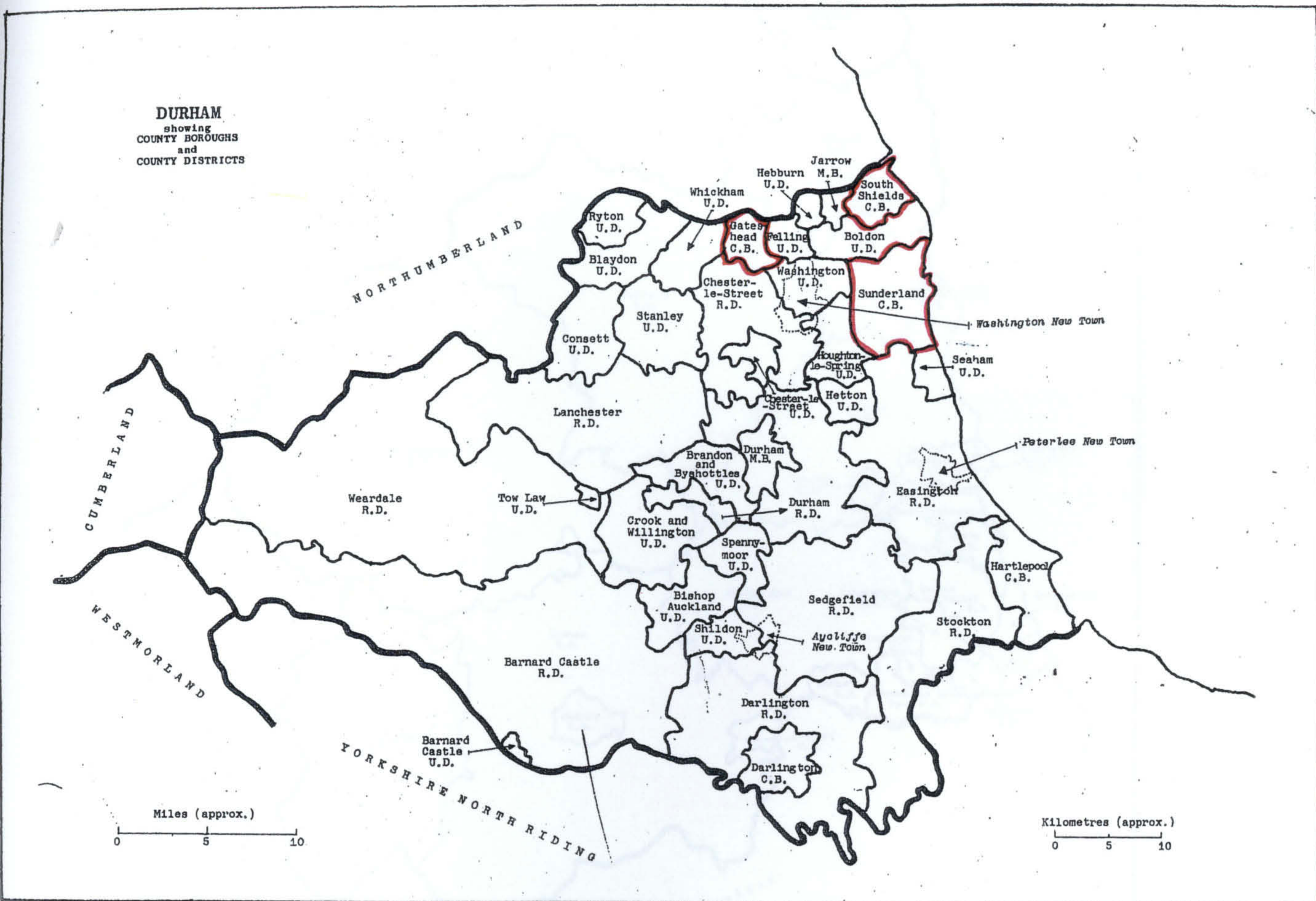
Finally, much further research is needed on the Irish in Britain and this is long overdue, given the historical place of Irish migration to Britain. Firstly, it would be useful and appropriate to undertake studies of the Irish in other urban areas as this would allow for a comparative view of the topic. In this sense, the migration process and the process of identity formation could be analysed by comparing Irish communities in different settings. Secondly, more specific approaches are necessary, such as investigating gender issues, given the paramount role of women in Irish migration. Thirdly, more qualitative analysis of Irish migration would be welcome. Using (auto) biographical and ethnographical methods would allow for a better understanding of the process of identity formation, integration and assimilation and, furthermore, would bring the Irish community back on the agenda of ethnic and cultural studies.

Map 1: County Durham. Source: Office of Population Censuses and Survey, 1971

Map 2: Northumberland. Source: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 1971

Map 3: Tyne and Wear. Source: Ordnance Survey, 1991

APPENDIX ONE: MAPS



Map 1: Co. Durham, 1971. Red boundary showing Tyneside, Definition 1 County Boroughs for which Census Country of Birth data are available.



Map 2: Northumberland, 1971. Red boundary showing Tyneside, Definition 1 County Boroughs for which Census Country of Birth data are available.



Map 3: Tyne & Wear, 1991

APPENDIX TWO: INTERVIEW GUIDES

These lists of questions were compiled as a guide to the main topics I planned to cover in each interview. However, the actual order and questions asked varied according to the context and the interviewees' response.

1 Individual In-Depth Interviews

Name

Year of birth

Birthplace

Marital status (is your spouse Irish or Anglo-Irish or British?)

How many children ? Were they born in Ireland ?

Tell me about your family....

Year of leaving school

Summary school history

Post-school experience and on-job training

First job

Where ?

What type of work ?

How did you get the job ?

Which company or firm ?

Job history

Housing history

Current job

When did you start this job ?

Description of what the job is about

Degree of satisfaction with it

Was it possible to get the same job in Ireland ? (if yes explain why you didn't)

Skills required

Future plans related to this job

Date of first arrival in U.K.

Where did you first arrive ?

Date of arrival in Newcastle

Why did you come to Newcastle ?

Where do you live in Newcastle ?
Is the house you are living in rented/owned ?
How do you like Newcastle ?
Perceptions of quality life (neighbourhood level/town level)
Any intention to move within the town or out of Newcastle ?
Were there any friends or relatives in town before your arrival ?
Do you know a lot of Irish people here ?
Do you see them often ?
Do you usually go to the Irish centre ?
What do you like to do in your spare time ? sport/travel/cultural activities/music etc.
Tell me about your friends...
How do you get on with your colleagues ?
Which places do you most like in town ?
Are your parents in Ireland ?
Do you visit them often ?
What about your brothers/sisters ?
Do you come from a catholic family ?
Are you catholic yourself ?
Tell me about your own perception of Ireland...

Any intention to go back ?
Explain why yes/no
Future plans

2 Life history interviews

When and where born

Family background

Childhood

Adolescence

Perceptions of Ireland

Being Irish: what did it mean then?

Self-image

Expectations

Attitudes to migration

Experience of migration (any family member or friend had already migrated?)

Education

Key individuals and important events

Friends, activities, travel

Relationships, marriage, children

Changes in the sense of identity

Future

APPENDIX THREE: PROFILE OF THE INTERVIEWEES

Migrant	Year of Birth	Place of Birth	Year of Arrival	Occupation
Jim	1925	Kildare	1956	Builder
Betty	1926	Laois	1959	Housewife
Michael	1916	Leitrim	1948	Construction Agent
Daniel	1950	Dublin	1977	Manager
Joan	1925	Mayo	1937	Cleaner
Jake	1932	Cork	1954	ShipYard Worker
Sean	1960	Kerry	1987	Manager
Dennis	1952	Cork	1985	Executive
Kelly	1970	Carlow	1989	Student
Tracy	1971	Kildare	1990	Student
Bill	1960	Kilkenny	1982	Clerk
Terry	1911	Cork	1963	Decorator
Eamonn	1932	Kilkenny	1959	Teacher
Martin	1943	Galway	1963	Police Inspector
Larry	1927	Cork	1944	Porter
Sophie	1947	Cork	1966	Secretary
Maggie	1929	Sligo	1945	Cleaner
Margaret	1935	Mayo	1955	Factory Worker
Bob	1929	Donegal	1946	Builder
Gerry	1932	Waterford	1951	Sub-contractor
Kieran	1950	Dublin	1976	Bank Manager
Dermott	1963	Kilkenny	1989	Bank Manager
Jack	1929	Donegal	1953	Builder
Steve	1933	Mayo	1952	Policeman
Francis	1938	Kildare	1960	Teacher
Winnifred	1939	Louth	1964	Teacher
Natalie	1945	Cork	1968	Nurse
Alex	1949	Dublin	1973	Teacher
Hannah	1969	Cork	1989	Training Nurse
Grace	1970	Cork	1989	Training Nurse
Susan	1925	Kerry	1944	Cleaner
Tim	1963	Wicklow	1987	Manager
Cliff	1930	Cork	1958	Builder
Robert	1937	Mayo	1959	Builder
John 1	1940	Cork	1961	Civil servant
Jocie	1943	Mayo	1961	Housewife
Keith	1937	Donegal	1958	Builder
Mike	1918	Mayo	1946	Builder
Joe	1929	Mayo	1959	Builder

Connor	1957	Galway	1987	Executive
Sarah	1970	Dublin	1989	Student
Mary	1968	Wexford	1988	Sales Assistant
Gina	1930	Clare	1948	Factory Worker
Fred	1929	Cork	1949	Decorator
Kathleen	1926	Mayo	1939	Waitress
Kevin	1932	Kilkenny	1959	Retired Teacher
Rowan	1953	Cork	1986	Executive
Brian	1955	Dublin	1976	Bank Manager
Georgina	1968	Dublin	1991	Barmaid
Pat	1931	Cork	1958	Builder
Patrick	1929	Clare	1949	Factory Worker
Joanne 1	1925	Kerry	1944	Nurse
Jean	1925	Mayo	1946	Nurse
Mark	1956	Dublin	1983	Medical Doctor
Joanne 2	1969	Cork	1989	Student
Andrew	1932	Clare	1954	Builder
Catherine	1971	Dublin	1986	Student
Anne	1940	Mayo	1959	Factory Worker
Nancy	1940	Carlow	1961	Housewife
Mary	1933	Mayo	1958	Cleaner
Eileen	1941	Limerick	1964	Housewife
Paul	1927	Donegal	1950	Builder
Rose	1936	Meath	1959	Teacher
Philip	1935	Mayo	1957	Welder
Tara	1931	Dublin	1952	Nurse
Kate	1947	Cork	1968	Housekeeper
Noreen	1939	Donegal	1959	Housewife
Willie	1951	Kildare	1986	Manager
John 2	1943	Cork	1965	Bricklayer
Brendan	1962	Britain*	----	Shop Assistant
Patrick	1939	Donegal	1961	Builder
Pauline	1934	Kilkenny	1958	Housewife
Dermot	1960	Britain*	----	Accountant
Mick	1962	Tipperary	1987	Technician
Seamus	1946	Kildare	1969	Executive
Ryan	1938	Britain*	----	Architect
Margot	1946	Dublin	1970	Teacher
Sian	1941	Kerry	1968	Teacher
Ewan	1938	Donegal	1959	Sub-contractor
Senead	1968	Galway	1987	Training Nurse
Gary	1930	Donegal	1951	Steel Worker
Alan	1952	Louth	1980	Medical Doctor
Sibhane	1969	Cork	1990	Training Nurse
Liam	1952	Britain*	----	Bricklayer
Joseph	1941	Mayo	1963	Factory Worker

Graig	1954	Cork	1981	Engineer
Ian	1939	Dublin	1953	Music Teacher
Tony	1939	British*	----	Lecturer
Maureen	1951	Mayo	1973	Housewife
Lee	1962	Dublin	1991	Solicitor
Russell	1949	Kerry	1985	Insurance Broker
Louise	1925	Mayo	1951	Waitress
July	1939	Britain*	----	Housewife
Ray	1956	Britain*	----	Car Dealer
Tanya	1968	Clare	1990	Student
Anthony	1935	Mayo	1958	Sub-contractor
Larry	1943	Donegal	1967	Builder
Sheila	1950	Kildare	1969	Factory Worker
Emily	1970	Dublin	1991	Barmaid
Lisa	1960	Cork	1988	Midwife
Helen	1947	Waterford	1969	Housewife
Colin	1944	Limerick	1972	Technician

* Second generation Irish

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