

**“I’ll tell me Ma’ when I come home”:  
Female Irish Migration to Christchurch, New  
Zealand from 2000-2016**

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Go raibh míle maith agat!

## **Abstract**

This study looks at the contemporary migration journey of eight women from the Republic of Ireland from 2000 to 2016, to Christchurch, New Zealand through an oral history methodology. It aims to explore the idea that every migration journey is complex and individual, and that each migrant has their own set of motivations and emotional responses to migration. Ireland and New Zealand share a long history of migration. Historians in New Zealand have carried out a substantial amount of research on earlier waves of Irish mobility, but contemporary patterns of movement in the twenty-first century are yet to be examined. Moreover, the gendered dimension of migration has often been obscured or neglected in Irish scholarship which tends to be male-centred. My thesis addresses these silences by adopting an oral history methodology that gives insights into migrant's personal motives, experiences and reflections.

However, personal narratives do more than just illuminate migrants' private experiences of migration. Oral histories also reveal how migration affects the migrant themselves, those they leave behind and those whom they come into contact with at their points of destination. I argue that migration is a continuing journey for the Irish women at the centre of my study. A second major finding is that- contrary to popular wisdom- the adaptation of Irish women to their new lives in Christchurch was relatively easy. Although there were important emotional milestones in each of their migration journeys, my participants made local connections and new networks of friends in a short period of time.

## Introduction

*At the airport it was only my parents and um yeah that was just horrendous. I don't even know, I only found out I was pregnant about two hours before I left Ruth. So that was actually a good thing to take you mind off it. I was not going to tell my parents (laughs), as I'm leaving by the way I'm off to New Zealand and I am pregnant with number three (laughs) wouldn't of been a good look.<sup>1</sup>*

*-Ruth*

Ruth, a midwife, is one of more than 8,379 Irish migrants who made their way to Christchurch, New Zealand in the twenty-first century.<sup>2</sup> When I interviewed Ruth about her experiences she recalled the day she left Ireland to come to New Zealand, on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2007. She recalls the crying and feelings of heartbreak of the weeks leading up to her departure. Ruth remembers finding out she was pregnant just before leaving Ireland and yet she tells this story, in hindsight, with a humorous tone. There are so many emotions in those four lines and it is a story that is unique to Ruth. Her testimony also raises important questions that are at the heart of this thesis: why did Irish women like her migrate to a city “half the world from home”? Did these women choose to migrate and how do they feel about their experience of migration? How do these women maintain transnational relationships while adapting and making new connections in a foreign land? How can we characterise the adaptation of these women to life in Christchurch?

This thesis draws on oral history interviews with eight women and explores their experiences as migrants from the Republic of Ireland to Christchurch, New Zealand, between the years 2000 and 2016. Contrary to popular wisdom, these women do not give major importance to “push/pull” factors such as the Celtic Tiger or the Canterbury earthquakes of 2011-2012, as their reasons for moving to Christchurch. Rather, the participants emphasised other things: the emotions of leaving, the sense of adventure and excitement they felt and the worry they had for their family at home. The stories of

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth Interview.

<sup>2</sup> Information received via personal email correspondence from Statistics New Zealand 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2017.

Irish women in Christchurch go far beyond finding work in a shaky city. The emotional dimension of their mobility is a central aspect of this thesis. Not all migrants grieve and not all of them enjoy their experience. Some feel pushed, while others happily choose to migrate. The migration experience is complex, individualised and set within a broader context of global movement.

My exploration of Irish women's experiences in the twenty-first century Christchurch addresses a notable lacuna in the study of migration from Ireland to New Zealand. Most recent scholarship has focused on the patterns of nineteenth-century movement and adaptation. Little work has been done on post- 1945 migrants and even less on gender dynamics and women. New Zealand differs here from other diasporic locations, such as Britain, where scholars in various disciplines have made important contributions to our understanding of Irish women's lives abroad. To fill this gap- and to capture women's voices and experiences- I have chosen to adopt an oral history methodology. The personal testimony of the eight women I interviewed revealed much about the natures of their journey and the ways in which they adapted to a new environment. Their stories challenge some of the media representations of the Irish migrant and underline the importance of acknowledging emotion, transnational networks and local connections to understand mobility.

In the following sections I will place my study in the current scholarship. The first section, I will examine the literature related to the study of migration, including the ways that researchers in several disciplines have approached aspects of migration, such as reasons for leaving, technological developments, and social connections. In the second section, I will discuss oral history methodology and why this is so valuable for a study of this nature.

## Historiography

### Early work

New Zealand has a long history of Irish migration to New Zealand, but for many years this history remained untouched by scholars. Donald Harman Akenson was responsible for writing some of the first seminal pieces on Irish migration to New Zealand. *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer* and *Half a World from Home* are some of the first texts that look at women in migration. He explores themes such as gender and religion, the ‘push and pull’ theory in migration and transnational ties Ireland has with certain countries such as USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.<sup>3</sup> Scholars such as Lyndon Fraser, Charlotte MacDonald and Angela McCarthy have built upon work done by Akenson on Irish women migrants in New Zealand, both single and married, and have helped to build a baseline of understanding of women in migration on which this thesis is built upon.<sup>4</sup> Akenson in his early work wrote that limited research has been done in area of women and migration, and this still rings true to this day.<sup>5</sup>

Much work has been done on Irish migration to New Zealand in the nineteenth century. Notions like “transnationalism” and “diaspora” have been at the heart of recent scholarship in this time period and influence the historical interpretation of migrant social connections to this current day.<sup>6</sup> Beyond this nineteenth and early-twentieth century work, little has been done on Irish

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<sup>3</sup> Donald Harman Akenson, *Half the World Away from Home: Perspectives on the Irish in New Zealand 1860-1950* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1990); Donald Harman Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer* (Belfast: The Institute of Irish Studies, 1993).

<sup>4</sup> See; Lyndon Fraser, *To Tara via Holyhead: Irish Catholic Immigrants in Nineteenth Century Christchurch* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1997); Lyndon Fraser, *A Distant Shore: Irish migration and New Zealand Settlement* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2000); Lyndon Fraser (ed), *Castles of Gold: A History of West Coast Irish* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2007); Charlotte Macdonald, *A Women of Good Character: Single Women as Immigrant Settlers in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand* (Wellington: Allen & Unwin New Zealand, 1990); Angela McCarthy, *Personal Narratives of Irish and Scottish Migration, 1921-1965: ‘For Spirit and Adventure’* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); Katie Pickles “Colonisation, Empire and Gender,” in *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, edited by Giselle Byrnes, 219-241 (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Akenson, *Half the World Away from Home*, 197.

<sup>6</sup> For further scholarship that uses this approach see; Jock Phillips and Terry Hearn, *Settlers: Immigrants from England, Ireland and Scotland 1800-1945* (Auckland: Auckland University Press 2013); Lyndon Fraser and



migration to New Zealand and even less on women's mobility. Historians such as Angela McCarthy, Enda Delaney and Alistair Thomson have produced exceptional pieces of scholarship on women and mobility, but their works focus on the post-war era. McCarthy's work, on women from Scotland and Ireland migrating to New Zealand, fits in this post-war era.<sup>7</sup> Enda Delaney has also produced work on Irish women, but focuses more on their mobility around Britain with examples of nurses and nannies trying to find work.<sup>8</sup> Alistair Thomson has produced work on women who migrated in the "ten pound pom" era of 1960 from England to Australia.<sup>9</sup> While this work on women and mobility is extremely helpful there is still little work on Irish women migrants in New Zealand in the twenty-first century to compose a historiographical database. With this in mind, producing a contemporary piece of work is an exceptionally hard feat and the work of other disciplines, which history lends itself flexible in use, become of great use and importance.

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Katie Pickles (eds.), *Women and Migration in New Zealand* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2002); Brad Patterson (ed.), *Ulster-New Zealand Migration and Culture Transfers*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006); Tom Brooking and Jennie Coleman (eds.), *The Heather and The Fern: Scottish Migration & New Zealand Settlement*, (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2003); Tony Simpson, *The Immigrants: The Great Migration From Britain to New Zealand, 1830-1890*, (Auckland: Godwit Publishing Ltd, 1997); Angela McCarthy, *Irish Migrants in New Zealand, 1840-1937 'The Desired Haven'* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005); Angela McCarthy, "Migration and Ethnic Identities in the Nineteenth Century," in *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, edited by Giselle Byrnes, 173-196. (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009); Stuart William Greif *Immigration and National Identity in New Zealand: One People, Two Peoples, Many Peoples?* (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1995); David Pearson, *The politics of Ethnicity in Settler Societies* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

<sup>7</sup> McCarthy, *Personal Narratives of Irish and Scottish Migration*.

<sup>8</sup> Enda Delaney, *The Irish in Post-War Britain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> Alistair Thomson, *Moving Stories: An intimate history of four women across two countries* (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 2011); Also, A. Hammerton and Alistair Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms: Australia's invisible migrants* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

## Contemporary Scholarship

In his book *The Irish in Post-War Britain*, Enda Delaney writes of the significant trouble historians face when writing on contemporary Irish migration:

It may well be that historians view the more recent past as essentially the territory of the social scientist. Indeed, the more challenging findings on the Irish in post-war Britain have come from other disciplines such as sociology and geography. Much of this work is, however, infused with a strong theoretical component, which alienates those less versed in the abstruse vocabulary of post-colonial studies. What this book offers which is distinctive is a historical interpretation that seeks to locate those who arrived in the post-war years within the wider context of Irish settlement since the early nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup>

Like Delaney's own work, my own thesis relies heavily on the work done by sociologists, geographers and other migration specialists. I aim, in this thesis, to navigate and bring about conversation between the academic theory and personal testimony evidence. I am to compose a historical database on contemporary Irish women's migration, but at the same time to maintain emotional and personal aspects of mobility and human experience.

Within this specific study, work of sociologists and geographers has become crucial to understand the broader context of contemporary migration, due to the lack of work by historians done beyond the twentieth century. When looking at work on contemporary migration there are many discussions on various areas and causes of migration, some discussions are more prevalent depending on the discipline. For example, Chapter two looks at three, and sometimes competing, explanations for contemporary Irish migration. These reasons are; job progression, economic considerations (in this case being the rise and subsequent crash of the Celtic Tiger) and lifestyle migration. The idea of job progression migration stems from the "brain drain" theory. The theory being that a higher proportion of younger people have a higher level of qualification but there are not enough jobs in these graduate fields, hence "forcing" young graduates to migrate.<sup>11</sup> Scholarship in this field has been written by sociologists and economists, who have gathered information to present a large study of data of how

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<sup>10</sup> Delaney, *The Irish in Post-War Britain*, 5.

<sup>11</sup> Brendan M. Walsh, *Ireland's Changing Demographic Structure* (Dublin:1989)

unsatisfied and unhappy these young graduates feel not to be able to use their education. The assumption that this leads to them move raises some difficulties in the Irish context as the crash of the Celtic Tiger, (a second factor) also affects the possibilities of job progression, or in fact getting a job as a graduate.

Due to the crash of the Celtic Tiger in 2012 there have been fewer jobs, therefore many young people returned or went to university in hopes of getting better job. By being better educated, the young graduates expected that by the time they left graduate study the economic conditions would have improved.<sup>12</sup> This unfortunately was not the case, and due to there not being many jobs at all, a lot of young graduates who had not yet entered the work felt forced to migrate, perhaps increasing the brain drain statistics. However, for those who did choose to migrate to get a job in their chosen field overseas, their feeling of job satisfaction increase. This is opposed to those who did not take a job in their chosen field, who reported little job satisfaction, affirming the job progression theory.<sup>13</sup> However, factor three takes a more holistic approach on the reason for migration. Lifestyle migration is a term to explain someone who migrates with the idea that they would have a more satisfying and fulfilling life somewhere else. This can be because of economic considerations, career prospects, or due to love, travel or friendships.<sup>14</sup> The reason that lifestyle migration is more holistic in approach is because it is reliant on testimonies of individual migrants to explain what they found dissatisfactory and what persuaded them to migrate and how they found their lifestyle improved once they migrated; instead of raw data and statistics. This lifestyle approach encompass' not only the migrant's voice but takes into account their journey and other multiple factors that could affect their decision making process.

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<sup>12</sup> Iral Glynn, Tomás Kelly and Piaras MacÉinrí. *Irish Emigration in the Age of Austerity*, (Émigré: University of College Cork, 2013), 39-40.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Michaela Benson and Karen O'Reilly, "Migration and the search for a better way of life: a critical exploration of lifestyle migration," *The Sociological Review* 57/4 (2009): 608-609.

The data gained from specific research studies into job progression and Celtic Tiger studies are needed for the broader understanding of what contributes to Irish migration. However, the challenge for the contemporary historian is to take these excerpts of information from other fields, that at times can be heavy in theoretical information, and to apply them to wider historiographical study.<sup>15</sup>

Unlike the reasons for migration, work on social connections of female Irish migrants come with little robust academic debate. This is due to the limited amount of research done in the area. Work of scholars such as Louise Ryan, Breda Gray and Bronwyn Walters are absolutely necessary when looking at how contemporary Irish female migrants maintain and create social connections within their country of destination.

Louise Ryan has done a great deal of pioneering research looking at the historical concept of transnational ties and the application of this in a contemporary setting. Ryan is very aware that her scholarship takes place in a time of constant technological change and that how the migrant makes and maintains social connections is relative to the technology available. For example, in a recent article, she looks back at previous waves of migrants to see how they made connections and how this effects how contemporary migrants make connections and sense of their own migration.<sup>16</sup> She writes on the idea of “transnational memory”, and idea also coined by Breda Gray, to describe how contemporary migrants do not want to seem like exiles or forced as their mothers, aunts, uncles and grandparents had been in previous waves of migration.<sup>17</sup> The findings in Ryan’s research suggest that contemporary migrants want to highlight their mobility and freedom in an age where mobility and freedom is a lot easier to achieve.

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<sup>15</sup> Patrick Fitzgerald and Brian Lambkin, *Migration in Irish History, 1607-2007* (London: Palgrave Macmillian, 2008). Marjory Harper and Stephen Constantine, *Migration and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>16</sup> Louise Ryan, ‘It’s different now’: A narrative analysis of recent Irish migrant making sense of migration and comparing themselves with previous waves of migrants, *Irish Journal of Sociology* Vol. 23/2 (2015): 114-123.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 114-116, 122-126; Breda Gray, ‘Putting Emotion and Reflexivity to Work in Researching Migration’, *Sociology* Vol. 42/5 (2008): 938.

Breda Gray's work looks mainly at women, social reproduction and connection in a modern setting and how emotion from the migrant themselves, and the people they leave, affects how the migrant tells her story. Gray, herself an Irish migrant, effortlessly articulates herself in explaining the emotional complexity of migration with ease and sensitivity that other scholars may not achieve. She does not look at migrants as numbers that form a type of pattern or behaviour but as individual agents with their own story. Gray also looks at how social media effects how people make connections and what this means for the future of migration.<sup>18</sup>

Bronwen Walter's work has contributed to gender dynamics of migration. Her book *Outsider inside: whiteness, place and Irish women* looks at the construction of the "other." Walter explores anti-immigration tension of the Irish in England. She highlights the struggle of both being white and speaking the native language in a country that has complex and contradictory attitudes about Irish emigrants.<sup>19</sup> Walter further explores the "other" or "outsider" nature of being a female migrant and what women did to overcome it.<sup>20</sup>

These women have begun the seminal work on contemporary women in migration. This thesis hopes to build upon their work done on Irish female migration and the way women navigate and make social connections. Each of these scholars adds understanding to the journey of contemporary female Irish migration, and this study aims is to build upon these ideas and to aid in the understanding of the migrant mind set and the journey of migration.

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<sup>18</sup> Gray, Breda, "Generation Emigration: the politics of (trans)national social reproduction in the twenty-first century Ireland," *Irish Studies Review* 21/1 (2013) See also; Breda Gray, "Remembering a 'multicultural' Future Through a History of Emigration: Towards a Feminist Politics of Solidarity Across Difference." *Women's Studies International Forum* 27 (2004): 413-429; Breda Gray, "Gendering the Irish Diaspora: Questions of Enrichment, Hybridization and Return," *Women's Studies International Forum* 23/2 (2000): 167-185.

<sup>19</sup> Alistair Thomson too writes about this in his book *Ten Pound poms*. This is the idea that being both white and speaking English, the migrant should be able to easily settle into their new environment without taking into account cultural changes and xenophobic attitudes of the host country.

<sup>20</sup> Bronwen Walter, *Outsiders inside: Whiteness, Place and Irish Women* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).

## Technology in Contemporary Migration

Those studying contemporary migration will soon realise that their research must look at modern technology. Sociologists and geographers are at the forefront on producing work on contemporary social connections and ties, and how they are used in the modern context. With massive technological improvements happening in the last fifteen years, the way in which people keep and maintain connections has definitely changed, and this must be kept in mind and researched further when looking at migration histories. For example, Breda Gray has written on how with each “wave” of migration, technological progression is at the forefront of each migration experience. For example, the 1980’s and 1990’s generation of migrants are often colloquially called “Ryan air migrants”, this is because in this period migration no longer happened on a boat, and air travel became the migrants’ main form of travel.<sup>21</sup> However, this also changed the nature of migration, as travel was quicker and more accessible with migrants being able to visit home every few years with ease, as the trip was quicker and less treacherous than on a boat for weeks on end. Today’s new generation of migrants are fondly known as “Facebook migrants” or “generation emigration.” These names arise from the many social media platforms which migrants can use to stay in constant contact with those back in Ireland.<sup>22</sup> Again, there is very little in terms of historiographical debate about these areas of technology and scholars are still in the period of gathering data and exchanging ideas and information. Work on contemporary migration, as we have seen from the discussion above, is clearly inter-disciplinary by nature. With each discipline having their own methodology the need for a strong historiography methodology such as oral history, which is complementary to the inter-disciplinary nature of contemporary migration studies, is what makes this thesis unique.

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<sup>21</sup> Ryan air refers to a major airline in Ireland; Gray, “Generation Emigration,” 22.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

## Oral History

Oral history is a methodology that is useful not only because of its interdisciplinary nature.<sup>23</sup>

Contemporary migration is no longer seen as just leaving but as the decision to move, the act of moving and saying good bye, arriving in the country, making social connections in the new country and possibly still maintaining ties from home, and for some migrants returning home. Because migration specialists now want to understand the full migration journey and the emotional implications behind it, there is no better way to find this out than asking the migrants themselves.

Oral history is a spoken history; it is the recoding of people's memories and life stories.<sup>24</sup>

Oral history is often seen as an alternative method to study history, and yet oral history often compliments those traditional or "official" documents used by historians, such as chronicles, court records and government records.<sup>25</sup> Oral history fits perfectly into this study because it allows those who are not on the historical record, such as women and migrants, an opportunity to talk and to provide information otherwise not available through traditional sources. The root of oral history derives from oral narratives, such as myth, legends, tales, ballads and song. The idea of using collective tales and shared experiences as a source is not unique to historians, with anthropologists and sociologists using similar sources. However, the professionalization of oral history did not take off until the 1960s.<sup>26</sup> This came via the social/ cultural revolution granting those who were not in the

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<sup>23</sup> Helpful oral history texts that include different methodologies see; Robert Perks, *Oral History Talking about the Past* (London: Historical Association in association with The Oral History Society, 1992); Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, *The Oral History Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006); Stephen Caunce, *Oral History* (London and New York: Longman 1994); Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History* (Oxford; London: Oxford University Press, 2003); Anna Green and Megan Hutching, *Remembering: Writing Oral History* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2004); Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different," in *The Oral History Reader*, edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, 32-41. Oxon: Routledge, 1998; David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum (eds), *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Altamira Press, 1996); Jonathon Green, *Them: Voices from the Immigrant Community in Contemporary Britain* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1990); Karen Hansen, *New Zealand Irish Voices: Stories from Irish Migrants and their Descendants* (Wellington: First Edition Ltd, 2008); Gail Thomas and Leanne McKenzie (eds) *My Home Now: Migrants and Refugees to New Zealand tell their stories* (Auckland: Cape Catley Ltd, 2005).

<sup>24</sup> Perks, *Oral History Talking about the Past*, 5.

<sup>25</sup> Caunce, *Oral History*, 7.

<sup>26</sup> Anna Green. "Oral History and History," in *Remembering: Writing Oral History*, edited by Anna Green and Megan Hutching. 1-8 (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2004), 2-4; Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method," *The American Historical Review* 102/5 (1997): 1386-1403.

traditional narratives such as; ethnic minorities, migrants, women, elderly, working classes and those who live alternative lifestyles, an opportunity to speak their own history.<sup>27</sup>

The professionalization and practice of oral history has undergone significant developments, or as Alistair Thomson calls it “the four paradigms of history.”<sup>28</sup> The first paradigm is the post-World War Two renaissance and the use of memory as a historical resource. The gradual acceptance of oral history as a legitimate source came from technological developments such as portable tape recorders, which were used to preserve history. This made oral history a type of archival resource that could be used multiple times over various studies.<sup>29</sup> It is during this first stage that those in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s took interest in recording “the ordinary worker.” This idea came from social historians who believed oral history would be helpful in uncovering “history from below.” Paul Thompson was responsible for writing the first seminal text *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, which was the manual for those participating in oral history.<sup>30</sup> It was through creating this handbook that Thompson also tried to shift the perception of oral narratives by arguing that oral history challenged assumptions and accepted ideas of history, by allowing groups of people who had been previously ignored add to the historical discussion.<sup>31</sup>

The second shift in the professionalization of oral history was to overcome arguments of memory being biased and unreliable. Even today there are numerous texts that try to affirm or critique

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<sup>27</sup> Peter Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1997); Anna Green and Kathleen Troup, “Oral History,” in *Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth-Century History and Theory*, ed. Anna Green and Kathleen Troup (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 230-238. For scholarship on gender and oral history see; Kristina Minster, “A Feminist Frame for the Oral History Interview.” In *Women’s Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, edited by Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, 27-42 (New York: Routledge, 1991); Susan H. Armitage and Sherna Berger Guck, “Reflections on Women’s Oral History: An Exchange,” in *The Oral History Reader*, edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, 73-82 (Oxon: Routledge, 1998); Berger, Roni. *Immigrant Women Tell Their Stories*. New York: The Haworth Press, Inc., 2004; Joanna Bornat and Hanna Diamond, “Women’s History and Oral History: Developments and Debates,” *Women’s History Review* 16/1 (2007): 19-39.

<sup>28</sup> Alistair Thomson, “Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History,” *The Oral History Review* 34/1 (2007)

<sup>29</sup>: Thomson, “Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History,” 51.

<sup>30</sup> Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 52.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



the idea of memory as a historical source. For example, in more recent work Alistair Thomson interviewed Australian World War Two veterans. Their retelling of their experiences had changed from their comrades who had been interviewed in early periods. Thomson's participants often talked of experiences that did not happen and were identical to scenes found in Hollywood movies such as *Gallipoli*. Their memory had in fact shifted slightly from what they had experienced and remembered to a social/ collective memory of the experiences of war.<sup>32</sup> Research done in psychology, anthropology and sociology showed that this in fact was telling and needed to be on the historical record. Scholars argued that the idea of people reproducing a collective memory shows a lot about what is happening around them and is indeed a type of history. Including methods such as sampling, document/ fact checking for reliability and consistency and providing guidelines was a way to overcome these problems.<sup>33</sup>

The third step in the professionalization of oral history was "objectivity" and ethical considerations. This developed in the late 1970's and is the foundation of every oral historians understanding on the professional treatment of their participants. Feminist theorists, anthropologists and sociologists became deeply reflective about how they were affected by their participants.<sup>34</sup> Being aware of who can interview for whom, certain relationships that develop in an interview and how the interviewer themselves, although thinking they are remaining neutral, are putting words into the participants mouth via the way they ask certain questions.<sup>35</sup> The practice of writing in a reflection journal after each interaction, a tool borrowed from anthropologists, is of great use. In my own reflective journal I reflected on my initial perceptions of people. Of one participant I write, "she has the most beautiful curly red hair and bright green eyes, her posture was open and calm, and her home was that of a magazine. It was a beautiful warm sunny day, no place better to conduct an interview." Beyond superficial impressions I also wrote if I sensed nervousness or trepidation in my participants. Whether they were confident or meek during the interview process. In the initial meetings I would

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<sup>32</sup> Alistair Thomson, "Anzac memories: Putting popular memory theory into Practice in Australia," in *The Oral History Readers*, second edition, ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 2006), 245. Read full chapter for Thomson explanation on memory and how it is important to oral history study.

<sup>33</sup> Thomson, "Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History," 54.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 61.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 62.

often catch the participants “checking me out” followed by questions such as “why do you want to do this project?” and “why Irish women?” I guess they were making sure I was the “real deal.” In hindsight, what I had written in my journal about the experience I could hear in the interview. Nervous laughter, inside jokes we already had, were all present in the interview, but were unnoticed until reflection of the experience. Reflection is a great tool for the oral historian not only to pick up what could be missed, such as a reason for a laugh or a pause, but also makes the oral historian aware of the effect and the participation they have in the interview. It also makes the interviewer aware that in fact they are not an unbiased outsider, but is a part of a relationship to create this interview with the participant. Often throughout the interviews the participants would ask “am I on track”, or “is that what you wanted?” To me this showed that there was a relationship and there were two sides to the relationship, for me to ethically and delicately receive information about their migration experience, and for them to give me what they deemed “useful” information. After the interviews the participants often seemed pleased, happy and satisfied with the interview. Not only did they get the opportunity to tell their own personal story but that they knew that they had taken part in something important. Alistair Thomson comments on this point, saying people enjoy telling their own story, in whatever form, because they feel like they are part of history.<sup>36</sup>

It is also through this third stage of professionalization and reflection that oral historians became very aware of the need for ethical guidelines to be in place. National and international oral history bodies were set up, ethical guidelines and considerations such as consent forums became common practice, use of pseudonym for the publication of material, how the work was to be archived and who could gain consent to use the material in the future were now considerations made. While this was a necessary and important step at the time, it became more important due to the digital turn oral history would take. The digital revolution has changed the nature of oral history, not only are interviews now recorded on digital devices as opposed to tape recorders but the files are also digital, allowing them to be kept on multiple devices such as laptops and hard drives. Transcriptions, by some

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<sup>36</sup> Alistair Thomson, “Anzac Stories: Using Personal Testimony in War History,” *War and Society* 25/2 (2006): 9.

practitioners, are no longer done by hand, but instead by uploading the digital file to transcribing programs to do the work for them. As we have seen with our own use of technology in this digital age, being careful who we share this material with and how it is kept safe is also something of an ethical consideration.

The professionalism of oral history in practice is always developing and changing, but at the heart of oral narratives is the desire for “ordinary” people, those currently not on the historical record, to have an opportunity to share their story. Oral history allows us to get a glimpse into the private life of another person, so not only do we get their interpretation of the history they were a part of but also the emotion and feelings that goes with that. This is a reality that cannot be escaped when conducting oral history and something that makes this study unique. To share a personal story one cannot avoid but to have emotion, things such as vocabulary, tone and expression, which can uncover emotion in storytelling, are often not analysed by the oral practitioner but left to the linguist. The reason historians, and oral historians, have avoided discussion of emotion the narratives for some time is due to the lack of clear academic definition of emotions.<sup>37</sup> However, as Breda Gray has written, there is emotional complexity to being a human, so narratives the come from the human experience cannot but have emotion.<sup>38</sup> The key is admitting that as scholars we may not clear cut answers but instead get a more comprehensive understanding of the migrant experience.

Getting this tone of emotion from the interviews into the written pages of a study can often be difficult. Thomson, in his book *Moving Stories*, writes of how he wanted each women’s personality but also own voice to speak through the pages, writing,

Though I drafted these chapters they are collaborative achievements which draw upon women’s own written and spoken testimony, and which incorporate their editorial corrections and suggestions. To

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<sup>37</sup> Anna Green, “‘Unpacking’ Stories,” in *Remembering: Writing Oral History*, ed Anna Green and Megan Hutching (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2004), 17.

<sup>38</sup> Gray, “Putting Emotion and Reflexivity to Work in Researching Migration,” 936.

emphasis this co-ownership and to highlight the women's perspective and voice in each of these four chapters their own words are printed in italics and without question marks.<sup>39</sup>

I, too, have followed this model. All of my participants quotes are in italics and I have done little editing to their interviews in this thesis to make sure their voices are visible in this study.

### **Oral History Work in Practice**

The oral historian, or oral practitioner, can compile and use life stories in many different ways. For example, McCarthy, in her book *Personal Accounts*, used diaries, photographs, letters, ship records and interviews. McCarthy used one hundred and two interviews, ten transcribed, with some being sourced from previous oral history archives. Oral history was not seen as a side source for McCarthy, who used primary sources to help clarify and illustrate the migrants' story further. McCarthy writes that before scholarship can confidently have a broader sense on migration, migration sources give a sense of experience that can nowhere else be obtained as deeply.<sup>40</sup>

Alistair Thomson and A. James Hammerton in the book *Ten Pound Poms* used oral history interviews as their main focus. Official and other historical documentation was used to support the narrative or clarify things that were not spoken in the interview.<sup>41</sup> Thomson took a slightly more in-depth approach in his work *Moving Stories* where he conducted a life history of four British women who moved to Australia. The narrative is directed by the women. While Thomson clearly had outcomes in mind he wanted to achieve for the project, he also allowed the women the opportunity to talk about what they thought was important. Through letting the women talk without firm direction, Thomson saw themes repeated throughout the interviews that he may not have come across if he had dictated the direction of the interviews. This approach allowed for a unique and personalized study which contributes greatly to both the areas of oral history and migration.

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<sup>39</sup> Thomson, *Moving Stories*, 14.

<sup>40</sup> McCarthy, *Personal Narratives*, 7.

<sup>41</sup> Hammerton and Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms*.

Other scholars such as Bronwen Walters *Outside Insider* divided her narrative into two parts. The first section is where she investigates the scholarship around her work and key concepts around this work. In the second part of the book is where she writes of her own findings in this area of work using women's interviews as one of her many sources.<sup>42</sup>

While many scholars use oral interviews in the study of migration, both how they use the information and gather the information can be done in many ways. For example, sociologists frequently use methods such as group interviews and all records get destroyed after use. However, in oral history a large proportion of interviews go into a depository for future preservation; allowing a historical database of information to be used in a multitude of ways. While each way of gathering oral interviews has its positives and negatives, being aware of how each scholar has conducted their methodology can help illuminate and give clarity to the study's findings and outcomes.

### **How this study was done**

Because this is a historical study, this thesis follows an oral history framework that has been suggested by the *National Oral History Association of New Zealand (NOHANZ)*. After submitting an application form to the *University of Canterbury Human Ethics Department*, I went on to recruit my participants. I placed ads on the Facebook pages of three Christchurch *Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)* pages, *Christchurch McKennas*, *Waimack Gaels* (an all-female club), and *Canterbury Cusacks*, as well as the *Christchurch Irish Society* page. I also set up my own Facebook page for this study labelled *Stories of Irish Women's Migration to New Zealand*. This was a place

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<sup>42</sup> Walters, *Outsiders Inside*.

where potential participants could find out more about me and the study and ways to contact me. From there eight participants were recruited.

I got in contact with my eight participants, and preliminary interviews were set up so the participants could get to know me and learn more about the study. Preliminary questions and consent forms were given to the participant to read. Another meeting was scheduled if the participant was happy to continue, the consent forms were signed and the interviews took place. The interviews varied from an hour and a half to five hours long. Some interviews were done in one session while others were done over multiple sessions. The interviews were semi-formal, but I was open to taking the interviews in new and exciting directions. Once the interviews were done transcription took place by hand. The interviews were then given to the participants to approve and make any changes. Off the record I was shown photos and the stories that went with them, but the participants did not want these to be a part of this study.

If a participant's body language seemed uncomfortable when asked certain questions during the interviews and they were not giving long answers I was happy to move to a different topic. While there should be a level of professionalism between a participant and the interviewer, to remain stone cold and uptight can be seen as disrespectful to people who are sharing intimate details of their personal lives. There is joking and laughing throughout the interviews, and the participants mentions points or conversations that had been discussed outside of the official interview, again this is where journaling the experience of the interview afterwards (a skill learnt from our fellow anthropologists) can help connect points of conversation. At times, talking about personal aspects of your life can be emotional and this emotion can be surprising. To be open and receptive to my participants and what they were feeling, I believe, was the ethical way to conduct this study. My participants were encouraged at any point to stop the recording and/or pull out of the study if it became too emotionally heavy for them. There were times were I did have to stop recording, and again with professionalism

still at the forefront of mind, a gentle pat on the hand and letting them know they could continue when they were ready was I believe the human and respectful way of negotiating the situation.

An oral history methodology is the foundation of this study. It is through the practice of oral history I am not only able to receive information about Irish women's migration to Christchurch, but I am also able to understand my participant's full journey and the emotional complexities that are a part of their migration journey. It is through the revelations made by my participants, or any oral history study, that as historians and migration specialists we are able to gain a new understanding about contemporary migration and what needs more research. For example, many of my participants talk of the grief that their parents felt when they migrate. While there is research produced from Ireland showing the political rhetoric of emigration as a tragedy, personal accounts of parents, friends and families and are not part of this discussion and something my participants think should be. The authenticity, vulnerability and openness my participants give in their oral accounts is something that cannot be replicated. The emotional honesty my participants talk with is something that cannot be found in survey or statistical analyses. It is through taking time to talk with the migrant and understanding to the best of my ability their experiences that I am hopefully able add a new dimension to the discussion on migration literature.

Contemporary migration history is a field which borrows from many different disciplines and methodologies. A history methodology is desirable to conduct migration history project. However when conducting contemporary history there is a heavy reliance on fields with different methodologies and agendas, and at times this can be confusing and difficult. The unfamiliar jargon of different fields can be often complicated, and can confuse the researcher in how to apply it to a history format. Oral history is an excellent tool to overcome these issues. Oral narratives are used by most migration specialists and it is through these migration anecdotes that the heart of the scholars' work can be seen and what they wish to accomplish through their studies. Migration narratives are also versatile in their use, meaning one migrant narrative could be used by a geographer, a sociologist and a historian. Oral history is the cornerstone of this study, making a contemporary study of migration

possible. The next two chapters highlight this, with the work of the academic community at times being scrutinised against what my participants have said in their interviews. The migrant narrative is at the forefront of this thesis and without oral history and the openness of the participants this thesis would not be possible.

## Media in Contemporary Migration

Media coverage of Irish migration has proliferated both New Zealand and Irish media outlets and for this reason is one of the primary sources of this study. However, much of this coverage has been largely negative in tone. In New Zealand, for example, there were xenophobic articles about the Irish drinking too much or being responsible for an increase of chlamydia in Christchurch.<sup>43</sup> The Irish media is characterised by a strong sense of grief and anger at the level of departure of so many young people. Articles and letters to the editors of major newspapers highlight that Irish citizens feel let down due to poor economic management and lack of government acknowledgement of the recent migration wave.<sup>44</sup> It is through these articles and letters to the editor we see the highly emotional nature of migration that is hard to dismiss and too often ignored in migration scholarship. An example of this can be found in the *Irish Times* Generation Emigration webpage. The website is filled with letters and articles from returned Irish migrants, who feel they no longer belong in Ireland or are

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<sup>43</sup> Georgina Stylianou, "Irish getting a bit sick over stereotype," *The Press*, September 01, 2012, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/christchurch-earthquake/7591875/Irish-getting-a-bit-of-stick-over-stereotype> ; Georgina Stylianou, "Luck of the Irish has sex disease downside," *The Press*, October 12, 2013, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/9274685/Luck-of-the-Irish-has-sex-disease-downside>; "Press Council finds against the Press", *The Press*, December 04, 2013, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/9466453/Press-Council-finds-against-The-Press> ; "Irish in NZ furious at 'sex disease article'", *Irish Echo*, October 14, 2013 <http://ie2015.irishecho.com.au/2013/10/14/irish-in-nz-furious-at-sex-disease-article/29383> ; Noel baker, "Paper cited for 'Irish sex disease story,'" *Irish examiner*, December 12, 2013, <http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/paper-cited-for-irish-sex-disease-story-252407.html> . My participant Geraldine discusses this in depth in her interview. Also see; Myles Hume, "Fletcher Construction boss Graham Darlow sorry for comment about Irish workers," *Stuff*, August 20, 2015, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/industries/71284076/fletcher-construction-boss-graham-darlow-sorry-for-comment-about-irish-workers> ; Anthony Fitzgerald, "What are the Irish in New Zealand so sensitive about?," *The Irish Times*, August 23, 2015, <http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/abroad/generation-emigration/what-are-the-irish-in-new-zealand-so-sensitive-about-1.2326028>

<sup>44</sup>Noonan: Young emigrants 'not driven away from unemployment,'" *The Journal.ie*, 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2012, <http://www.thejournal.ie/noonan-young-emigrants-not-driven-away-by-unemployment-331911-Jan2012/>, Stephen Collins, "Emigrants leaving by choice, not by necessity," *Irish Times*, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2012, <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/emigrants-leaving-by-choice-not-necessity-1.483161>, Letters to the editor in response to Stephen Collins article, *Irish Times*, 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2012, <http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/letters/leaving-ireland-a-question-of-lifestyle-or-necessity-1.486000>



struggling to migrate home due to various political and bureaucratic issues from living away from Ireland for too long.<sup>45</sup> These letters and migrant testimonies again highlight the ongoing emotion and journey of migration and that even when the emigrant has returned to their homeland their journey has not finished.

Scholars too are starting to realise that the study of the continual migration journey and emotions of migration are at the heart of understanding migration better. Again, oral history is an excellent tool for this. Alistair Thomson argues when one conducts migration life histories one see the theme of migration as a continuing experience that cannot be ignored.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, this can be seen in recent work done by scholars on return migrants and migrants dealing with home sickness, Thomson and Marjory Harper both write thoroughly in this area. Some scholars have come to the conclusion that return migration to the migrants homeland is often due to feelings of homesickness and emotions of not feeling they belong in their place of migration and desire to have feelings of belonging to a community filled by returning home. However, as Harper, and other scholars have found, the idea that the sense of community and belonging naturally happens when one returns to their homeland is ill-founded as some migrants can feel more disconnected than ever:

Ironically, however, a greater awareness of home, or the promotion of a particular image of home, could also impede the return emigrants who realized or feared that they could not simply slot back into a world that had remained static. As Donald Akenson has remarked, it is harder for the Irish than the non-Irish to return.<sup>47</sup>

It is through the integration of migrant testimony, media reports and contemporary migration scholarship that this thesis aims to highlight the individual migration journey of eight Irish women to

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<sup>45</sup> Ciara Kenny, "Government 'needs to be honest' with emigrants, says Joe McHugh," *The Irish Times*, 7th June, 2016, <http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/generation-emigration/government-needs-to-be-honest-with-emigrants-says-joe-mchugh-1.2674913> ; Fr Alan Hilliard, "Emigrants won't return if they don't feel they don't belong," *The Irish Times*, 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2016, <http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/abroad/returning-to-ireland/emigrants-won-t-return-to-ireland-if-they-feel-they-don-t-belong-1.2493949>

<sup>46</sup> Alistair Thomson, "'My wayward heart': homesickness, longing and the return of the British post-war immigrants from Australia," in *Emigrant homecomings: The return movement of emigrants 1600-2000*, ed. Marjory Harper, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 128.

<sup>47</sup> Marjory Harper, "Introduction," in *Emigrant Homecoming: The return movement of emigrants 1600-2000*, ed. Marjory Harper (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 5.

Christchurch. The understanding of why they chose to migrate, making and maintaining connections in a new country and their reflections on migration help give a broader understanding to contemporary migration as a whole.

## **Chapter One: An Emigrant's Daughter**<sup>48</sup>

*I went for a run through Hagley park this morning and I thought to myself this is life, this is living it is so nice. I've never sat down and thought oh this isn't good, oh this is rubbish. It's probably because life has gone so well for me here. If I had come out here and got no job and made no friends- different story. But because I am very happy here and very settled I have a nice home, I have a good job, I have a nice circle of friends, I never think oh I want to go home tomorrow.*<sup>49</sup>

-Geraldine

At a press conference in January 2012 Michael Noonan, the Irish minister of Finance, made the following statement:

There's always young people coming and going from Ireland, some of them are emigrants in the traditional sense, others simply, it's a small island and they want to get off the island, a lot of the people that go to Australia, it's not being driven by unemployment at all, it's driven by a desire to see another part of the world. I have five adult children, three of them living and working abroad, I don't think any of the three would be described as an emigrant, it's a free choice of lifestyle and what they wanted to do with their lives. There's a lot of families like that. Now there are other people being driven abroad alright. Now what has happened is that the collapse of the building industry has created a lot of forced emigration. . . . What we have to make sure is, that people have the best possible education right up to third level so when they go, they're employed as young professionals in their country of destination rather than the traditional image of Irish people from the 1950s.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Reference to a song by Machair Folk.

<sup>49</sup> Geraldine interview.

<sup>50</sup> "As it happened: Noonan and Howlin discuss the latest Troika review," *The Journal.ie*, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012, <http://www.thejournal.ie/liveblog-noonan-and-howlin-discuss-the-latest-troika-review-331799-Jan2012/>;

"Noonan: Young emigrants 'not driven away by unemployment'," *The Journal.ie*, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012, <http://www.thejournal.ie/noonan-young-emigrants-not-driven-away-by-unemployment-331911-Jan2012/>

Noonan's remarks caused heated debate, not only in Ireland but among the Irish abroad, about the level of agency available to the contemporary migrant. Do migrants choose to leave Ireland or are they pushed? Have migrants throughout time left home for the same reason? Do contemporary migrants migrate for the same reason as their predecessors? This chapter will look at the possible motivations for, and decision making around, leaving made by contemporary female Irish migrants in Christchurch. I will argue that women leave for a variety of reasons. Some of their motivations were practical, such as study or long term work. In other cases, migrants talk in emotions, which are hard to describe in qualitative terms. I focus in this chapter on three central motivations that feature in the current discourse around Irish migration: job progression, economic considerations (particularly due to the crash of the Celtic Tiger), and lifestyle. Where appropriate in this chapter I will look at each of these three considerations in the literature and explore how gender can impact the migrant decisions via these considerations. This chapter also compares what current scholarship highlights as important factors behind the motivations of migration and the participants reflections on their personal motivations, to see if the migrant and the scholarship are symbiotic.

### **Contemporary Migration to Christchurch, New Zealand**

In 2015 *Statistics New Zealand* reported that 1,148 Irish migrants had come from Ireland to work in Christchurch, New Zealand.<sup>51</sup> There have been two historical events that have contributed to the nature of contemporary Irish migration to Christchurch. From 2010 to 2011 a series of large earthquakes hit Christchurch, New Zealand with the city centre being one of the major impact areas. Christchurch has had a long history of Irish migration to New Zealand. In a 2013 article *The Press* reflected on this long migration history comparing the image of Irish migrants building the Christchurch Anglican cathedral on swamp land in the late 1800s to current Irish builders helping rebuild Christchurch city center, and again working on the Christchurch Anglican cathedral, on land

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<sup>51</sup> Information received via personal email correspondence from Statics New Zealand 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2017.

that at times feels like swamp land.<sup>52</sup> Concurrently, at the same time Christchurch was dealing with the aftermath of the earthquakes Ireland was having its own troubles. The Celtic Tiger, a financial trend that saw a historically depressed Irish economy rise significantly in the early 2000s had declined dramatically by 2010. From 2008-2011, the Irish GNP had declined 10%.<sup>53</sup> The decline of the Celtic Tiger brought nationwide unemployment and redundancy, especially within the building and construction industries. For some people the situation was so bad that they decided to migrate to find work. It is at the same time as the decline of the Irish economy that Ireland saw another wave of mass emigration. While some argue that this mass exodus was due to the economic downturn, migrants in the last few years through newspapers and other media sites explain that economic considerations are not the only factors that contribute to migration and that in many cases there are multiple reasons for some to choose to migrate.

The downfall of the Celtic Tiger and the Canterbury earthquakes are both unique events yet they are connected in terms of Irish migration to Christchurch. Due to the availability of work in Christchurch to help rebuild the city and those in construction heavily affected by the downturn in the Irish economy, Irish migrants are drawn to Christchurch. But not all migrants are here to find work in construction. By conducting an oral history we find out the different aspects and motivations of the migration journey to Christchurch, and why women in particular have decided to migrate.

### **Contemporary Scholarship**

Of the three possible factors mentioned in the scholarship that influenced migrants to leave Ireland, both job progression and economic motivations, are themes that come clearly through media reports and existing scholarship. However, the third factor, lifestyle is a theme that came through the interviews with my participants and was necessary to be included in this chapter as it gives the

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<sup>52</sup> “An Irish workforce back again”, *The Press*, March 16, 2013, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/christchurch-life/8433577/An-Irish-workforce-back-again>

<sup>53</sup> Glynn, Kelly and MacÉinrí. *Irish Emigration in the Age of Austerity*, 38.

participant a voice amongst the academic scholarship. I argue in this chapter that lifestyle migration is the title that fits most appropriately to my participants if a category or reason must be given. This is because it lifestyle migration not only describes best what my participants put forward in the interviews but is the only type of migration that has multiple motivations in the one title. Lifestyle migration is the quest to find a more fulfilling lifestyle away from the “rat-race” that the participants feel like they are living in. Economic reasoning is a huge factor in contemporary Irish migration, as both the media and the scholarship attribute the sudden influx of migration in the last ten years to the crash of Celtic Tiger, which will be discussed further in this chapter. Job progression or “brain drain” migration is argued by some as a symptom of a weak economy with little or no employment. This idea of job progression migration has also been discussed by some media outlets as an alternative possibility for migration and makes a natural decision to be discussed in this chapter. Finally, the idea to choose lifestyle migration as a factor for discussion is a theme that has come out of my interviews that have been conducted for this study. Repeatedly the participants highlighted how much they like the lifestyle in New Zealand and it being a motivation for them to stay. Lifestyle migration must then be included in this chapter to give balance to both the participant voice and academic research.

Transnationalism and the idea of transnational networks has been a core theme in migration literature. Anthropologists and sociologists repeatedly argue that migration is based on informal networks and people locate to a community where there are existing kin networks.<sup>54</sup> Historians, however, question the definitions and frameworks in which the term transnationalism is used in and argue that is an always growing term. In contemporary studies, the meaning of “transnational” has changed as migrants can communicate more easily with members of their home country, facilitated by

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<sup>54</sup> Enda Delany, “Transnationalism, Networks and Emigration from Post-War Ireland,” *Immigrants and Minorities* 23/2-3(2005): 427. Also see; Caroline Brettell *Anthropology and Migration: Essays on Transnationalism, Ethnicity, and Identity* (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2003); Dianne Hall and Elizabeth Malcom, “Diaspora, Gender and the Irish,” *Australasian Journal of Irish Studies* 8 (2008/9): 3-29; Kevin Kenny, “Diapora and the Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study,” *The Journal of American History* 90/1 (2003): 134-162; Kerby Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

developments in technology and modern communication.<sup>55</sup> However, as Enda Delany highlights the term transnational “can have multiple meanings leading to impression in its usage and indeed opposing claims are often made on the basis of this concept.”<sup>56</sup> Chapter two of this thesis will highlight the idea of transnational networks in terms of communication and keeping an existing network and support received from the diaspora. However, for the purposes of this section, transnationalism is to refer to people who migrate for the sole reason of kin or family members being in, this case, New Zealand. While indeed some of my participants have family, friends and connections in New Zealand before they arrived this was not their central motivation for moving. These connections, did however, help narrow the field of potential destinations from Canada to New Zealand, or even Auckland to Christchurch. Henceforth, people continue to stay partly because of the transnational networks they have in Christchurch, New Zealand. However, the purpose of this chapter is to understand why people decided to move in the first place, and family or kin networks were not a part of the participant’s decision makings and therefore will not be discussed likewise in this chapter

### **Job Progression**

Sociologist Elaine Moriarty and her co-researchers have published an article on a recent study, *Irish Graduate Abroad Study (IGAS)*, which links a key factor to migration of young Irish graduates to job progression via transnational ties.<sup>57</sup> They argue that the main motivation for migration is the need for job progression outside of Ireland; partly due to the Celtic tiger economic crash, which will be discussed further in this chapter, but also as a way to scale up the career ladder.<sup>58</sup> The *IGAS* study focused on four employment sectors: construction, hospitality, financial services, and software.<sup>59</sup> The authors contend that comprehension of the English language is important for this type

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<sup>55</sup> Delany, “Transnationalism, Networks and Emigration from Post-War Ireland,” 428.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Elaine Moriarty et al, “Graduate Emigration from Ireland: navigating new pathways in familiar places,” *Irish Journal of Sociology* 23/2 (2015).

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 78.

of migration. This is not only because they will be able to communicate with ease, but also because of previous transnational ties their qualifications are often accepted allowing them to progress in their jobs. Due to the need to migrate to countries that speak English and accept Irish qualifications, countries with historic transnational ties such as Canada, England, Australia and New Zealand are the most common destinations for those who seek career advancement.<sup>60</sup> Knowing that there is family, possible friends, or the knowledge that people have been over there and succeeded helps puts the migrants mind at peace and encourages further the decision of migration.<sup>61</sup>

There is a plethora of work on this topic highlighting the motivations of young graduates to seek job progression in another country. Brendan M. Walsh highlights that until recently very little was known about the composition of emigration. However, he states that the idea of a “brain drain” has always been suspected. He writes, “we have in the past known relatively little about the composition of the outflow due to emigration, although there was always a suspicion that it contained a “brain drain.”<sup>62</sup> Now that more work has been done in this area, there is evidence to support the reality of the “brain drain.” Walsh writes that these high levels of emigration amongst graduates is “...one of the most worrying aspects” of the current wave of contemporary migration.<sup>63</sup> David Cairns discusses that young graduate migration is high, not only for the purpose of job progression, but also because graduates are more able to be mobile than other demographics.<sup>64</sup> With very little holding them back, young graduates are able to take advantage of the opportunities available at little cost or risk.<sup>65</sup> In a recent study done at the University College Cork (funded by the Irish Research Council) known as the *Émigré Report* researchers found an overwhelming response from their participants on the desire for job progression.<sup>66</sup> The study found employment was a main driving force in the decision making process to migrate. The study revealed that people were unhappy with their working conditions and their ability to find job security, writing:

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 73-74.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Walsh, *Ireland's Changing Demographic Structure*, 15-16.

<sup>63</sup> Walsh, *Ireland's Changing Demographic Structure*, 16. Also mentioned in Glynn, Kelly and MacÉinrí, *Age of Austerity*, 10.

<sup>64</sup> David Cairns, “I wouldn't Stay Here”: Economic Crisis and Youth Mobility in Ireland,” *International Migration*, 52/3 (2014) : 237

<sup>65</sup> Ibid; Glynn, Kelly and MacÉinrí, *Age of Austerity*, 19

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.



People employed at home [Ireland] generally were not happy with the lack of opportunities to develop and advance their career. Therefore, they went to countries that did offer them the opportunity to progress in their selected professions. As a result, they felt much more contented with the direction of their careers.<sup>67</sup>

Therefore, it should not be surprising that this current wave of migration (2000 to the present day) consists of a large amount of young graduates leaving; 47.2% of Irish adults aged 25-34 are recorded having tertiary education, which is the highest percentage for any of the European Union members.<sup>68</sup> Nonetheless, 62% of recent Irish emigrants hold the equivalent qualification, which suggests that graduates form a disproportionately large percent of the emigrant population.<sup>69</sup> This is a stark contrast from the 1950's where very few Irish progressed from primary school to secondary school. Quite clearly primary motivations change with each wave of migration.<sup>70</sup>

Further reading into the existing scholarship demonstrates that migrants do not necessarily desire job progression, but rather, job security. A study published in 2012 by *The Irish London Centre* found that while some migrants indeed migrated to England “for change or educational or employment progression,” a large majority reported said they had moved due to the inability to find employment, or because they had lost their jobs.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, a study done by *The National Youth Council* of Ireland in 2013 found that the primary motivation for migration in young graduates was “because of a lack of employment opportunities at home or in the expectation that they would have better work prospects abroad.”<sup>72</sup> In the *Émigré report* researchers found that many participants left full time work and emigrated overseas due to low job satisfaction and not feeling content with their professional career development.<sup>73</sup> This is demonstrated in one interview where the participant felt there was no point going to college for four years to end up in a call centre, which had no opportunity

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 67.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid,35.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.,II.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>71</sup> Jeff Moore, Eugene Waters, Mary Tilki and Lisa Clarke (London Irish Centre), *Fresh Perspectives: A needs Analysis of the Irish Community in London Vulnerable Irish migrants feel let down by UK Welfare system* (London: London Irish Centre, 2012) 106-107; Glynn, Kelly and MacÉinrí, *Age of Austerity*, 16.

<sup>72</sup> Marie-Claire McAleer / National Youth Council of Ireland, *Time to Go. A Qualitative Research Study Exploring the Experience and Impact of Emigration on Ireland's Youth*, (Dublin, 2013) 12-13; Glynn, Kelly and MacÉinrí, *Age of Austerity*, 17.

<sup>73</sup> Glynn, Kelly and MacÉinrí, *Age of Austerity*, 42.

for professional development.<sup>74</sup> While many participants in the *Émigré* study expressed that the desire for job progression was their motivation for migration, participants also highlighted the need to find full time work as a motivating factor. In the *Émigré report*, 47.1% of participants had full time jobs in Ireland before leaving while after departure 84.4% now work in full time jobs overseas.<sup>75</sup>

Due to the parameters of these studies mentioned above it may be possible that there is a variant scale in the term “job progression” among young emigrants. While some may feel the desire to get a job that will develop their professional skills further, some would like to begin in their chosen field, while others simply wish to obtain work.<sup>76</sup> For example a participant in the *Émigré report* recalled being on the dole and applying for a teaching job, but when he found out that there were six hundred applicants for the job he felt he had little chance but to go abroad.<sup>77</sup> This testimony demonstrates that not only obtaining a job, but a job in a chosen field, can be a central motivator to leave Ireland.<sup>78</sup>

## Participant Reflections

*Ruth: How were you feeling about Ireland and your hometown before you left?*

*Geraldine: I was over it just completely over it, I didn't see anything there for me and I think a lot of my friends where the same it was just aimless. It was like alright we've gone to school, we've gone to college what now kind of thing. So a few of us fell into jobs that weren't what we had studied like the insurance job that I had previously and one of my other friends like ended up like in a call centre job and a few of them continued studying and it was just, it was just a bit of a not hopeless but no excitement nothing to look forward to kinda*

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 43.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 65.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 39.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 46.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

*time so I was quite happy to leave. I was and I had come to the end of my entitlement for a benefit so it was stopped.*<sup>79</sup>

While academic scholarship viewed the young graduate migrant profile as migrants eager to start a career that they are unable to ascertain in Ireland. In my own study I found those of my participants who could be profiled as a young graduate did not fit these criteria. My participants come from a wide range of careers; from teachers to midwives and from designers to researchers. All of these occupations have not been fully examined in other studies to fit the young graduate profile. While my participants all have a higher education, with five of the eight at a postgraduate level, none of them identified career progression as being a motivation for their move to Christchurch. However, they did mention that their careers have improved, as a by-product of their migration, this was one of the reasons they continue to stay.

Geraldine, for example, a professional in the health sector with a desire for continual study, highlights the interesting dichotomy between motivation for migration and continual habitation. Geraldine talks of the struggle of being qualified but finding no work after a period of travel:

*So I went home and stupidly thought that with a degree and postgrad diploma and a year's internship I would get a job (both laugh) and I didn't because it was 2010 and nobody had a job in Ireland at this time. So I was on a benefit, ah a jobseekers allowance it is called and living back with parents...*<sup>80</sup>

Geraldine moved to New Zealand because her jobseekers allowance had expired and her job prospects were non-existent. Her sister Denise suggested she come to New Zealand for a holiday as a chance to escape from the situation. Once in New Zealand Denise suggested to Geraldine the possibility of her working in New Zealand, after some thought Geraldine decided that she would work for a small period of time. She got her job in the health sector soon after arrival moving through the

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<sup>79</sup> Geraldine Interview.

<sup>80</sup> Geraldine Interview.

ranks and receiving four promotions during her time in this position. When asked about her job and its influence over her decision to extend a yearlong holiday visa to five years she replied:

*Um my job was a big part of it. I was very lucky to get a job in an organisation that did work that really interested me. So... just before I moved over I started applying for some jobs and when I arrived I had an email inviting me to have an interview ... there was while that first year other jobs became available that I was qualified to do and I made it known that I was qualified to do.<sup>81</sup>*

*Yeah, so only for my employer's and the opportunities that came up there I would of gone home.<sup>82</sup>*

*...it's a really lovely place to work because there is... such support for people to progress and try something different, so, yeah my job is a hundred percent a big reason why I am here still.<sup>83</sup>*

Clearly Geraldine loves her work and it is a central factor in her decision to stay here for so long, but it was not her original motivation to leave Ireland. In this instance the question must be asked whether Geraldine falls into the category of the “job progression” migrant due to her not migrating for job progression but instead staying because she loves the opportunities she is receiving in her chosen career in Christchurch .

Another participant Lisbeth, originally here on a holiday visa, has been here 7 years. When asked why she decided to stay her first reply was “*pure stubbornness.*” Upon further discussion it is uncovered that she too, like Geraldine, originally moved to find work after being on the jobseekers allowance, but also for a change in lifestyle after being burnt out from her high demand job back in Ireland. When asked why she has stayed in New Zealand and particularly Christchurch during trying times with Earthquakes she replied:

*Stubbornness, genuinely pure stubbornness and I suppose the job the job was very good. Yeah I didn't really want to leave the job. You know what I mean I was very lucky not lucky to get it but it was*

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

*always going to be a very difficult job to do, and once I got through it and did it you know I knew I would jump salary levels, so I really didn't want to give that up.*<sup>84</sup>

Edel a designer, on the other hand, moved over to support her partner in getting a job. Once she arrived here she took whatever job she could. After a few months, however, she found herself quite upset with her working conditions. She decided that if she could not find a job in her chosen field then there was no point in staying in New Zealand long term stating:

*No...the place was fine I just wasn't doing what I went to college for. So I was doing data entry and basically admin work. And then, and then I decided I was un-happy and it made me really, really homesick and I sat down and I was like if I don't get another job I am going home, it just why come here and be un happy and then. And then I found my job... and it is the best job ever, and I love what I do know and now I'm like oh. It was kinda a phase you know.*<sup>85</sup>

While many participants in my study identified career progression as a benefit of migration and a reason for their continual habitation in New Zealand, it was not an original motivation when choosing to migrate. The question that arises from this analysis is do the participants of my study count as job progression migrants because they enjoy the by-product of job satisfaction due to their migration. In the instance of this study and my participant responses, I would argue no. Job progression was not the motivation for my participant's migration and my participants do not bestow this title/ label upon themselves. However, this theoretical title (of a job progression migrant) is definitely nuanced and future research into this area might broaden the definition of what counts a job progression migrant.

The experiences of my migrant women in many occasions also included their partner's experience. Both in their interviews and off the record discussions, my participants talk about how their partners experience of migration, and especially of finding work was very different to their personal

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<sup>84</sup> Lisbeth Interview.

<sup>85</sup> Edel Interview.

experience, highlighting the gendered dimensions of migration. Furthermore, a half of my participant's moved because their partners could not get work at all. The other half of my participants all meet their, ironically Irish, partners in New Zealand. For example, Edel wrote of how her partner Alan was working in England because he was unable to get work in Ireland. For Edel the idea of migrating to New Zealand was attractive as it allowed herself and her partner both secure work and also be able to be with and consistently see each other. She highlights this saying:

*At the time Alan was working in England so he was fourteen days, no ten days on four days off. And it was just not working for him like. He use to spend a day travelling home, spend two days, and then a day travelling back for work. So it was two days of his day off travelling. And I was like I just can't cope with this. So we had the mature talk or whatever, and he was like "how do you fancy like going to work in New Zealand or somewhere?" Coz he had worked here for a while before and he knew a few contacts and stuff and I was like, "yeah, yeah sounds cool." So then, we had decided then by June that we were coming here, so I knew I was going to stay and save up a bit of money before I came out here.<sup>86</sup>*

With the participant input in mind, further research into the study of job progression migration could find that there are gendered dynamics to this type of migration and the reasons that my participants do not see themselves as job progression migrants maybe due to their gender.

The idea that there are not enough career opportunities, and thus making your graduates forced to migrate, suggests that there is a lack of employment and professional development opportunities which effects migration. This next section will look at the effects of the Celtic Tiger and how due to an economic crash which effected thousands of jobs, that that job progression migration maybe a symptom of their not being enough work. This section will look at the fall of the Celtic Tiger and how it could be a possible consideration for migration both in practical and emotional terms.

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<sup>86</sup> Edel Interview

## Celtic Tiger

*I like I mean I remember when I came back from travelling I was like what is going on here. I went to the dole cue and I meet half the people from my class, who all had better jobs than me, who were all earning better money than me, who had all bought houses, and had all lost it all. You know so like people were really suffering. I think a lot of people don't realise that about the young one's coming over here. You know for the construction because they are a lot younger than I was, but like their families basically pushed them out of the door because they knew they had no future, you know not for the next few years.<sup>87</sup>*

*-Lisbeth*

“Celtic Tiger” is a term to signify economic growth and opportunities in Ireland, particularly in the early 2000's.<sup>88</sup> After several years of unprecedented economic growth a server recession hit Ireland which saw the Irish GNP declined by more than 10%.<sup>89</sup> As a result the European Union and the International Monetary Fund took over governance of Ireland's finances between 2010 and 2013.<sup>90</sup> The downturn of the Celtic Tiger had dire consequences for the Irish population. For example, 214,000 people signed onto the un-employment register in Ireland between 2008 to 2011.<sup>91</sup> During the same period house prices fell nationally by 50%.<sup>92</sup> During this time period one of the ways the Irish population coped was to better educate themselves in the hope of getting a better and well-paying job in a limited the job pool. Hence, 47% of Irish people between the age of 25 and 34 hold a tertiary level qualification of three years or more.<sup>93</sup> The effects of the Celtic Tiger downfall seeped

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<sup>87</sup> Lisbeth Interview, 11.

<sup>88</sup> Moriarity etal, “Graduate Emigration From Ireland,” 74-75.

<sup>89</sup> Glynn, Kelly and MacÉinrí, *Age of Austerity*, 38.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 44.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, II.

into Ireland's everyday life.<sup>94</sup> All of my study's participants had different "horror stories" to share about what they had heard and seen due to the market crash. During an interview tea break a participant discussed the housing estate she lived in, and how hundreds of houses laid abandoned and derelict because people could no longer afford their mortgages.

The debate over Celtic Tiger as a reason, or "push factor", for migration has become a sensitive discussion as many people argue the crash of the Celtic Tiger was a reason for migration whereas some believe migration is part of Ireland's wider history. An example of this can be seen in the response to Michael Noonan's "free choice of lifestyle" speech.<sup>95</sup> There was a large influx of commentary from the public through media and on-line platforms arguing that high un-employment levels cannot but have an effect on migration. Others argued that while migrants did leave by their own choice Noonan's comments belittled the effects of the Celtic Tiger crash on families.

One example is Stephen Collins' famous *Irish Times* article "Emigrants leave by choice, not by necessity."<sup>96</sup> Collins article published the results of a survey conducted by Ipsos MRBI, for the *Irish Times Generation Migration* section. The results showed "that 59% of emigrants left out of choice while 41% said they were forced to emigrate."<sup>97</sup> These results support Noonan's contentious statement that migrant leave by choice.<sup>98</sup> However, the reader response to Collins article demonstrated differing opinion and highlights the sensitivity of the topic. One reader responded stating "... a few apologies are due to Mr Noonan."<sup>99</sup> Another reader, who also happens to be Dr Piaras Mac Éinrí, a

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<sup>94</sup> Proinsias Breathnach, "Exploring the 'Celtic Tiger' Phenomenon: Causes and consequences of Ireland's Economic Miracle," *European Urban and Regional Studies* 5/4 (1998): 305-316. Editor's note. "Quality of life after the Boom." In *Best of Times? The social Impact of the Celtic Tiger*, edited by Tony Fahey, Helen Russell, Christopher T. Whelan, 1-10 (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2007); Tom Fahey, "How do we feel? Economic Boom and Happiness." In *Best of Times? The social Impact of the Celtic Tiger*, edited by Tony Fahey, Helen Russell, Christopher T. Whelan, 11-26. (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2007).

<sup>95</sup> Part of this speech was used at the beginning of this chapter. "As it happened: Noonan and Howlin discuss the latest Troika review," <http://www.thejournal.ie/liveblog-noonan-and-howlin-discuss-the-latest-troika-review-331799-Jan2012/>; "Noonan: Young emigrants 'not driven away by unemployment'," <http://www.thejournal.ie/noonan-young-emigrants-not-driven-away-by-unemployment-331911-Jan2012/>

<sup>96</sup> Collins, "Emigrants leaving by choice, not by necessity," <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/emigrants-leaving-by-choice-not-necessity-1.483161>

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> "Leaving Ireland: a question of lifestyle or necessity?" <http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/letters/leaving-ireland-a-question-of-lifestyle-or-necessity-1.486000>; this is multiple comment's/ letters in response to Stephen Collins article, this comment was made by Thomas Ryan.



lecturer in geography and migration studies at the University College Cork, Ireland and author of the *Austerity Study*, wrote in applauding the *Irish Times* for taking on a project that will be beneficial for all as “experiences of emigrants is still in short supply.”<sup>100</sup> Mac Éinrí does raise concerns about the statistical sourcing methods found in Collins article, claiming that the *Irish Times* sourced their contacts via ‘Snowballing’ an unsound statistical method.<sup>101</sup> Mac Éinrí continues to write that despite all these details “if 40 per cent felt they left involuntarily... it’s little consolation to them to be told that the other 60 per cent left by choice.”<sup>102</sup>

The idea that the downfall of the Celtic Tiger was a “push” factor varies amongst my participants with Lisbeth re-counting the experiences she had witness saying:

*I think a lot of people don't realise that about the young one's coming over here. You know for the construction because they are a lot younger than I was, but like their families basically pushed them out of the door because they knew they had no future, you know not for the next few years. Um and a lot of them don't want to go. I wanted to go, I was kinda quite happy about [it].*<sup>103</sup>

Lisbeth also states more clearly: *No I think it is a push to go. Yip I think they generally feel there is not enough future there, particularly for construction. I think for IT. It's probably different, ah professional services it is probably slightly different, but for construction not a hope. You know like you're pushed to go if you want to stay in that industry.*<sup>104</sup>

However, Lisa commented that through her own experiences she did not feel the same sense of “push” around those she knew who have migrated saying:

*We had it good we were the Celtic Tiger cubs....so to us migration was oh yea off to do my gap year in Australia kinda of thing... For my generation it was off to Bondi beach for a jaunt kind of thing, it wasn't it like the hardship that was before or after...*<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Lisbeth Interview.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Lisa Interview.

Overall, in my interviews the participants talked of the effects of the Celtic Tiger crash; however they did not see the crash itself as the main motivation to leave Ireland. Moreover, they talk of other people -friends and family- who they had seen pushed due to the economic crash. Again, much like in my participant discussions on job progression, the idea of this explanation for migrating could be gendered. Few of the participants talk of “the lads” who had been in construction, one of the industries most seriously affected by the fall of the Celtic Tiger, being forced to move due to having no work. However, as one participant highlights, her understanding of the current wave of migration was that she believed there were a lot of young and single boys who could leave without much thought. Whereas some of the older migrants with families, houses and partners had more responsibilities to consider.<sup>106</sup>

This alternative way to look at migration of choice versus constrain can be seen in my interview with Geraldine where she discusses the different outlook on migration between her and her partners (whom she meets in New Zealand) saying:

*Ruth: Has... your partners experience of migration and how he feels about this process been quite different to yours?*

*Geraldine: Yeah, yeah quite different to mine. I made a conscious choice to come out here he has kinda ended up here in a kinda round-about kind of a way. He moved abroad to study, intended to go home afterwards, moved abroad to work, intended to go home afterwards, moved to another country, intended to come home and he is still here. So he's circumstantial ended up here, I made a conscious choice to come here I came directly here he came a very long round way (both laugh). And his... outlook on living here and comparing it to home is very very different to mine, I think practically, I think... health system and opportunities and life styles and culture and he just thinks home, home, family, home and it doesn't none of the rest matter's to him he would rather be a home. Whereas I'd rather be away if all the rest is better here, so.<sup>107</sup>*

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<sup>106</sup> Lisbeth Interview.

<sup>107</sup> Geraldine Interview.

There is a clear discrepancy displayed by these examples of the Celtic Tiger and its perceived impact as a possible motivation for migration. However, it shows a similarity in how the participants view their migration experience, that they, were happy with their decision to migrate, where as some people may not be. It appears that through their own choice to migrate they are satisfied with their decision and harbour no resentment over the migration process. What was telling with the questions during the interviews is while each person had their own opinion on the subject of why migrants move, they were hesitant to talk to it about it on record with one participant making it clear *“that’s just my particular sort of circle, I have to say.”*<sup>108</sup> Indeed there was an echo of Mac Éinrí statement in their voices, staying whether you have or have not moved because of the Celtic Tiger crash there is little consolation in being told your opinion is right or wrong.<sup>109</sup>

Therefore, there exists a conflict between academic understandings and participant testimony relating to the impact of the Celtic Tiger crash on motivations to migrate. Literature and media reports portray the Celtic Tiger crash as being a major contribution, if not the reason, of contemporary migration. However, as this view is disputed by Irish migrants who did not migrate due to the Celtic Tiger crash. Within this study, many of the participants will argue that their decision to emigrate was a personal choice. However, they do not deny that other migrants may have felt pushed by the economic crisis, and are perhaps discontent with their migration journey. When my participants were asked what type of migrant they would identify with, if any, they discussed ideas and concepts that are synonymous with the idea of lifestyle migration. In the next section I highlight the participants’ voices on why they choose to migrate, and why my participants argue that lifestyle migration is the reason why they migrated.

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<sup>108</sup> Lisa Interview.

<sup>109</sup> Collins, “Leaving Ireland: a question of lifestyle or necessity?”

## Lifestyle Migration

*I can horse ride in the summer and I can Ski in the winter, you know where can I do that anywhere else in the world, just don't think it is quite possible.*<sup>110</sup>

*-Lisbeth*

Lifestyle migration is a term used to explain a group of people who choose to migrate based on the belief that there is a satisfying and more fulfilling way of life somewhere else.<sup>111</sup> The field of lifestyle migration has developed substantially over recent years becoming a multidisciplinary topic with anthropologists, sociologists, geographers, historians, physiologists, and political scientists contributing to this field.<sup>112</sup>

The term lifestyle migration has become contentious in academic circles. The idea of migrating for a better life is at the heart of all migration typologies.<sup>113</sup> Some scholars view lifestyle migration to be a historical continuation of earlier mobility/migration trends such as adventure travel, temporary and voluntary migration, and love migration.<sup>114</sup> Developed more broadly, the 1990's saw the development of "mobility studies" and included all human movement to include refugees, tourists and labour migrants.<sup>115</sup> More recently, researchers have sought to make sub-headings within the wider category to help define the motivations and concepts behind lifestyle migration. Examples of these sub-heading include retirement migration, tourism migration and seasonal migration.<sup>116</sup> Despite the increasing nuance with which academics are approaching migration these terms do not yet fully grasp the intricacies and complexities of lifestyle migration.<sup>117</sup> At the heart of these scholarly disagreements lies the agency of the migrant, again highlighting the reoccurring "push/pull" debate, as well as the

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<sup>110</sup> Lisbeth Interview.

<sup>111</sup> Benson and O'Reilly, "Migration and the search for a better way of life," 608.

<sup>112</sup> Sheila Croucher, "The Future of Lifestyle Migration: Challenges and Opportunities," *Journal of Latin American Geography* 14/4 (2015): 162.

<sup>113</sup> Benson and O'Reilly, "Migration and the search for a better way of life," 609.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, 608-609.

<sup>115</sup> Croucher, "The Future of Lifestyle Migration," 168.

<sup>116</sup> Benson and O'Reilly, "Migration and the search for a better way of life," 609.

<sup>117</sup> Croucher, "The Future of Lifestyle Migration," 162.

agency of the migrant re-telling their migration story, also something commonly found in oral history studies.

Scholars can, however, agree on a few things in regards to lifestyle migration. Brian A. Hoey, Michaela Benson and Karen O'Reilly, to name a few, argue that lifestyle migration can often seem “counter stream” to the dominant discourse/discussions on migration. This is because lifestyle migration studies the migration journey; this includes looking at the lifestyle before and after migration, and not seeing migration as just one act or movement.<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, lifestyle migration heavily relies on anecdotal material as opposed to the statistical and analytical material that general migration studies discussions rely on.<sup>119</sup> Another common thread that scholars have found in the study of lifestyle migration is the prevalence of privilege both in country and in the migrant themselves.

While more recently the prevailing academic view amongst lifestyle migration scholars is that privilege or affluence is at the heart of lifestyle migration, they also agree that this theory has been overlooked in the scholarship.<sup>120</sup> Aledo Tur has argued that literature tends to shy away from the affluent migrant because they do not fit the idea of a stereotypical migrant.<sup>121</sup> Affluent migrants tend to find jobs easily and are not radicalised as other immigrants might be.<sup>122</sup>

However, modern migration scholarship is discovering that while historical, cultural and material conditions do need to be taken account, those with economic privilege and ease of movement find it much easier to migrate.<sup>123</sup> The full extent of how and why this works is not yet completely understood.<sup>124</sup> The answer perhaps lies in transnational ties. A small study done by Irmengard Wolfhart found that to fulfil job immigration requirements in New Zealand, the applicants “human capital” was assessed; meaning their qualifications and personal experiences.<sup>125</sup> Wolfhart found those

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<sup>118</sup> Benson and O'Reilly, “Migration and the search for a better way of life,” 615.

<sup>119</sup> Croucher, “The Future of Lifestyle Migration,” 164-5.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 163.

<sup>121</sup> Benson and O'Reilly, “Migration and the search for a better way of life,” 609.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 609,618; Croucher, “The Future of Lifestyle Migration,” 163.

<sup>124</sup> Irmengard Wolfhart, “Lifestyle migration from Europe to New Zealand: Immigrant dreams and their realizations,” *New Zealand Sociology Journal* 30/4 (2015) : 156.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, 172.

of non-British, or European destinations found it harder to acquire jobs in New Zealand. This was due not only to language barriers but also educational and professional pathways that were not available.<sup>126</sup> Wolfhart's findings support/reflect the concept of the young graduate profile highlighted by Morairty Etal in the previous section of this chapter.<sup>127</sup>

In participant discussion of lifestyle migration, both in my study and other studies, they talk of their reasoning for migrating being things such as "breaking out of the rat race," escaping from their former life, and the opportunity to enjoy weather and their new geographical surroundings.<sup>128</sup> For example, Lisbeth talks about how she knew she wanted to stay in Christchurch, and in particular one night that had a profound effect on her when she was out in town saying:

*I think the Black Seeds were playing in the middle of the square and I just walked down and like the whole square was just packed, everybody there was a band on, looking up and you could see a everybody out on the balcony, all around the square dancing away I was like yip this is better (both laugh) this is way better.<sup>129</sup>*

For Lisbeth, lifestyle was huge motivation for her to stay in Christchurch. She found the work life balance, free community events throughout the city (such as the summer time concert in the square mentioned above), the little travel required to get to place throughout the city, and not needing a car as positive aspects to stay in Christchurch. When asked why she migrated, and why she will continue to stay Lisbeth replied:

*Um... I think um I love the kiwi simplistic life, you know I just love that...I mean I could have never had afforded you know a house like this, even a car like you know I would have been killing myself for peanuts. Um, certainly wouldn't be going horse riding, certainly wouldn't be going skiing, you know you kind of ...the lifestyle choice is quite different, you know but that is the price you pay you leave your family behind, yip.<sup>130</sup>*

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> That is the idea of transnational ties and English speaking language making it not only more of a motivation to migrate but makes it easier for the migrant to acclimate and progress in their new country of choice.

<sup>128</sup> Brian A. Hoey, "Place for Personhood: Individual and Local Character in Lifestyle Migration," *City and Society* 22/2 (2010): 237; Benson and O'Reilly, "Migration and the search for a better way of life," 609-610.

<sup>129</sup> Lisbeth Interview.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

There is no real varying opinion between my participants on this matter of lifestyle migration. They, and their partners, were working extremely hard back in Ireland with no hope of a future. The opportunity to find work, but more importantly to have a better lifestyle were work finishes at five and in the same day you can go to the beach and the mountains, seems to give them a huge sense of equilibrium in their lives.

However, scholars counter these anecdotes claiming they are not proof of lifestyle migration but fit into other migratory sub-groups such as job progression migration or tourism migration. Scholars argue that in an age of mass mobility and mass tourism, tourist's experiences spark imagining's of a possible life they could lead, and migrants therefore strive to live a tourist lifestyle and create imagining's that are not always accurate with reality.<sup>131</sup>

Some scholars suggest that participants' often present their migration story as a way to find a better life is a type of framework that is easily accepted in society.<sup>132</sup> However, more recently scholars argue that while structural decisions may help influence a migrant's decision to move, these decisions are experienced on a personal level and discovery of how they are experienced on this personal level is important endeavour in migration scholarship.<sup>133</sup> Narratives give sense to our lives, it makes us understand the how and why we got to where we are today, and while migration scholars may argue that migrant anecdotes are a narrative order to negotiate lives and does not really answer the question of why migrants move, lifestyle migration goes beyond that looking at the "diverse elements of experience" and illustrates the "the inherent contingency of selfhood as a 'work in progress ... project.'"<sup>134</sup>

A final theory deconstructs the idea of needing to have structured and reasoned theories to explain motivations for migration. Sociologist Breda Gray looks at the concept of using the history of emotions as a lens to examine migration. Migration is of course a very emotional topic both for the migrant and those left behind. To discuss migration Gray argues that one always has emotional biases

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<sup>131</sup> Michaela Benson, "How Culturally Significant Imaginings are translated into Lifestyle Migration," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 38/10 (2012): 1686.

<sup>132</sup> Benson and O'Reilly, "Migration and the search for a better way of life," 610-611.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 615.

<sup>134</sup> Hoey, "Place for Personhood," 242.

whether because of personal migration experiences, your countries migration experiences, or the views of family and friends.<sup>135</sup> In terms of oral history and personal testimonies emotion plays a central part in the re-telling of the migration experience.<sup>136</sup> Understanding our emotional biases and how these could affect our motivations for migration and how we write about migration, is a very significant development of migration literature. In terms of the rhetoric of why migrants move, Gray argues that many scholars are yet to acknowledge that emotion is just not contained in the personal testimony, but that it also spreads to the political landscape.<sup>137</sup>

Scholar Sara Ahemed highlights the trend to fetishize and manipulate suffering in the arena of politics.<sup>138</sup> This tactic is used by politicians to secure votes by highlighting an area of suffering and to claim they will remedy the situation if elected. Cordially, if you are the one in power you may minimize suffering and emotion happening in your country to show that you are in control. Gray reflects that she has become aware of the dominant narratives of emigration and how it has been used in the political landscape. She composes a dual argument stating that the dominative narratives of Irish migration are of a country in loss/grieving due to economic and political reasons concealing more complex social and emotional reasons.<sup>139</sup> It can be concluded that while there are factors that may contribute to migration, to leave emotions out of migration research would be to limit the study. This is also demonstrated in Enda Delany work when he writes, “Inevitably, no single mode or framework explains fully the patterns of Irish migration, although there is much of value which may be derived from a range of approaches from a number of disciplines.”<sup>140</sup> I find the “no single mode or frame work” approach to be true in the case of Emma- Louise when she said:

*And so we obviously knew there were other options out there you know around the world there was somewhere we could go that where we could be working and the lifestyle would be good. And like I loved my job in Ireland but I had to commute for four hours that was two hours to work two hours home from work. So that wasn't a life you know ...Tomás was not working in his field anymore, ah he*

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<sup>135</sup> Gray, “Putting emotion and Reflexivity to work in researching migration,” 943.

<sup>136</sup> Gray, “Generation Emigration,” 940-941.

<sup>137</sup> Gray, “Putting emotion and Reflexivity to work in researching migration,” 943.

<sup>138</sup> Sara Ahemed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburg University Press, 2004), 22, 42.

<sup>139</sup> Gray, “Generation Emigration,” 20.

<sup>140</sup> Enda Delany, *Demography, State and Society: Irish Migration to Britain, 1921-1971* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 289.



*was working with a friend was just kinda helping him with the farm and things like that and he was enjoying it don't get me wrong but it had no security um to it... Um yeah so we are one of the lucky ones because I know some people at home aren't even in a position where they could do that you know, they are in negative equity so badly that it is just not a possibility, So yeah New Zealand had more of a kind of open door to welcome us and that's how we ended up being here and yeah definitely got the lifestyle I think we were looking for.<sup>141</sup>*

Within this statement Emma-Louise highlights, if not confirms, several different types of migration according to the literature. She talks of not having work, not enjoying work; she mentions the struggles of the Celtic Tiger fall, and finally she remarks on the need for a better lifestyle, or more aptly, the need for a better life. It is clear that for Emma-Louise's migration story, or indeed for any other of my participant's stories, one mode or framework would be insufficient. Migrant stories are varied and individual, and as such, deserve a more nuanced approach that captures their complexities

Migration is a human experience, and like a lot of human experiences and actions. We perhaps do not understand or fully comprehend why we do what we do, that is, what compels us to make certain decisions. A number of reasons why people migrate have been highlighted in this chapter such a job progression, economic considerations, and for the need of a better lifestyle. However, it has been argued in this chapter that lifestyle migration is perhaps the most fitting migrant framework that explains the motivation for migration via this studies oral history testimonies. Job progression is the idea that people migrate to better their lives via career aspirations and once achieving these career aspirations they find their lives, for the time being, more fulfilling and enjoyable than they did from their country of origin. However, the participant input highlighted that this type of migration reasoning is applicable for a select few, but it does not explain why all Irish migrants migrate. Furthermore, looking at a reason that could be seen more as a "push" factor for migration, the Celtic Tiger, show's that this removes the agency for the decision making of the migrant. While many of the migrants in this study do admit the impact of Celtic Tiger crash has had

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<sup>141</sup> Emma-Louise Interview.

on their migration story, they still maintain a level of agency arguing that they were not forced to go because of the conditions in Ireland but that they choose to go. Finally, it has been argued in this chapter that lifestyle migration is perhaps the most fitting migrant framework that explains the motivation for migration. Lifestyle migration is the quest to find a more fulfilling lifestyle away from the “rat-race” that the participants feel like they are living in. Lifestyle migration is also fitting for this study as it looks at the experience of migration, the before and after, and just not the one act of moving. However, as it has been identified in this chapter it is hard to clearly define lifestyle migration in all its complexities and clearly explain what it entails and the motivation for someone to migrate. Chapter three will follow the adaptation and settlement of the migrant in their new country, in the case of this study- Christchurch. Moreover, chapter three will explore the idea of social connection and ties and how this effects how the emigrant feels, and then tells their story.

## **Chapter two: I'll tell me Ma' when I come home**<sup>142</sup>

*I've never sat down and thought oh this isn't good, oh this is rubbish. It's probably because life has gone so well for me here. If I had come out here and got no job and made no friends different story. But because I am very happy here and very settled, I have a nice home, I have a good job, I have a nice circle of friends, I never think oh I want to go home tomorrow. And I've I know people who could who could happily just get on the plane and go home tomorrow*

- Geraldine

This chapter explores how migrants adapted to their new surroundings both practically and emotionally. I will argue in this chapter that contemporary migrants make connections by informal and local ties, and that cultural organisations- like Irish Societies, while not strictly avoided, are not the main avenue for migrants to make connections in their host country. Furthermore, I will argue that while traditional transnational ties are no longer used by contemporary migrants, technology in new ways allows migrants to have transnational ties and be connected to Ireland. Again, where appropriate, I will look at how gender effects the formation and maintenance of social ties and the migration experience as a whole. Moreover, this chapter will give an opportunity for the participants to reflect on their personal migration experience thus far with the benefit of hindsight. This chapter will be broken into three sections. The first will explore networks and connection. It draws on personal testimony to show how migrants create community and networks in a foreign land, the way they made use of transnational networks, and how modern communication and technologies have facilitated contact across social networks. In the second section I will examine the contact that participants maintain with those still in Ireland, the gendered dimensions to keeping in contact, and the impact of new technologies on their experience of mobility. This section will also look at the political rhetoric of getting migrants home to work and the tactics employed by the Irish government to do this. The final section gives the participants an opportunity to discuss the nature of migration

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<sup>142</sup> Reference to a traditional folk song with no known origin. Most famously covered by artists such as Van Morrison, The Clancy Brothers, and Sinéad O'Connor.

and their experiences; in essence, what they found important about their migration experiences, what they think needs to be talked about, and their contemplations about the future of Ireland and migration.

### **Creating Networks and Connection**

*[T]hey were very welcoming and if there was anything going on outside of work just coffee mornings or lunches or anything like that you were just invited.*

*- Ruth*

Scholarly discussion on the necessity and importance of social networks in migration is significant in several disciplines. However, discussion on the formation of these networks post-migration and the day-to-day effect on migrants is limited.<sup>143</sup> Traditionally, discussion of migrant social networks focuses on the “transnational” idea being that social connections and relationships from fellow kin not only influence the migrant’s decision to move, but also provides the support that was essential for migration, such as finding a job, housing, and emotional support.<sup>144</sup> More recently scholars are contemplating that while using and maintaining already existing social connection helps the migrant “get by” migrants are also making new connections to help them get ahead.<sup>145</sup> Due to the changing nature of contemporary migration, particularly to the developments in communication

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<sup>143</sup> Louise Ryan, “Migrants’ social networks and weak ties: accessing resources and constructing relationships post-migration,” *Sociological Review* 59 (2011): 707-8.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid*, 708-709.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid*, 709.

technologies, and the inter-disciplinary nature of contemporary migration research and methods, social networks and its definition is seen as a loose combination of various approaches.<sup>146</sup> For the purpose of this study I will define social networks as a network developed through interpersonal relationships with friends, family or co-workers. Moreover, social networks take place in many different ways both person to person or via online platforms. The idea of gendered and age specific social networks is also an important area of research in the discussion of social networks. Many migration specialists argue for different coping strategies for different genders and that gendered social networks may aid or inhibit coping strategies.<sup>147</sup> Scholar Louise Ryan also highlights the importance of class and occupation in social networks, as those working in casual or low paid jobs may require more support in their initial days of migration.<sup>148</sup> With all this to consider when looking at social networks, a brief historical survey of network and migrant connections is useful. Additionally, the idea of transnationalism is a widely-used concept in the historical study of migration and migrant connections. For the purposes of this thesis transnational networks are “social spaces” where “familial, economic, political and religious ties... transcended the borders of nation states.”<sup>149</sup>

Anthropologists and sociologists determine that migration is an organised process of “informal personal networks’ involving kin or members of the same community.”<sup>150</sup> This kind of connection forms as a type of social capital with those emigrating feeling assured that housing, work, and cultural commodity are on the other side.<sup>151</sup> In historical context transnational history is a term for research that challenges “national approaches” and instead seeks comparisons and differences in cultures and celebrates them.<sup>152</sup> Historians more recently are asking about the changing nature of transnationalism and arguing that in fact it may not be a stagnant construct.<sup>153</sup> For example, in nineteenth and twentieth-century migration having an aunt, cousin, brother, sister, friend, or member

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, 712.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, 713.

<sup>149</sup> Delaney “Transnationalism, Networks and Emigration from Post-War Ireland,” 428.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 427.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, 427.

<sup>152</sup> Katie Pickles, “Transnational History and Cultural Cringe: some issues for consideration in New Zealand, Australia and Canada,” *History Compass* 9/9 (2011): 657.

<sup>153</sup> Louise Ryan “Family Matter: (e) migration, familial networks and Irish women in Britain,” *The Sociological Review* (2004): 364.

of your village in your country of desired destination was almost seen as a necessity. These connections would help you find a job, home and new social group. Without them your social and practical survival was in jeopardy. However, as the years have gone on, modern communication and technology has developed and as migration has continued we have seen a shift in the necessities of traditional transnational connections. Physical transnational connections are no longer the primary form of connection with job and housing being explored via the internet and sorted in Ireland before the plane ride over to the country of destination. Also, with the rise of social media it is easier to find fellow citizens in the same country, and the need of a contact before you leave is no longer a necessity. Social media has also removed the need for physical social networks as instant communication can be made to Ireland and the way people now make and keep connections is changing.<sup>154</sup> The rise of social media has completely transformed social and transnational networks, making this a new and exciting field of current research.<sup>155</sup>

There is a plethora of work in migration scholarship about immigrant organisations. Scholars are continually noting the importance of social networks and organisations not only for the migrant themselves but for their integration into a host society.<sup>156</sup> Migrants set up networks not only to “express and maintain a collective identity,” but to also navigate their new host country and the customs which follow.<sup>157</sup> Through this study of migrant organisations and social networks we can learn a great deal about the settlement process of migrants.<sup>158</sup> The study of migrant networks is also helpful in understanding contemporary migration.<sup>159</sup> An important issue brought up in recent scholarship is what makes a migrant organisation. Is it because the members are predominantly migrants, when does a migrant organisations stop becoming a migrant organisation, and what if the organisation only represent a small part of the ethnic population?<sup>160</sup> In migration literature migrant

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<sup>154</sup> Rianne Dekker, Godfried Engbersen and Marije Faber, “The Use of Online Media in Migration Networks,” *Population, Space and Place* 22 (2016): 539.

<sup>155</sup> Delaney, “Transnationalism, Networks and Emigration from Post-War Ireland,” 428-429, 438.

<sup>156</sup> Marlou Schrover and Floris Vermeulen, “Immigrant Organisations,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31/5 (2005): 823.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Rianne Dekker and Godfried Engbersen, “How social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration,” *Global Networks* 14/4 (2014): 402.

<sup>160</sup> Schrover and Vermeulen, “Immigrant Organisations,” 825.

networks are separated into categories. In this study discussion arises between transnational and local ties and formal and informal organisations. Transnational ties as defined previously is communication and keeping an existing network/support received from the diaspora. Comparatively, local ties are defined as connection made with a person/ group of people in close proximity to one's self. Examples of this are through work, mother's groups or other everyday settings.<sup>161</sup> For migrants, connections can be made through two different types of organisation, informal and formal organisations. Informal organisations are not associated with the government or official body and include organisations such as: Irish societies, sports clubs, and other ethnic based groups. There is little scholarship on these types of organisations because they leave little paperwork for archival research.<sup>162</sup> Official organisations are government departments such as (*Immigration New Zealand*) agencies endorsed by the government (such as *New Zealand Now*), or research bodies that look into immigrant organisations (such as the *Irish London Society* in England.) However, the problem with official organisations is that they may not fully represent the collective identity or needs of the migrant community and this alters how we, as a society, view the migration process.<sup>163</sup> This study recruited its participants via two informal migrant organisations, *The Christchurch Irish Society* and the *Canterbury Gaelic Athletics Association* (GAA). Through oral history interviews other social networks were exposed such as work, existing friends, other clubs, and even being a parent and making connections through schools and play groups. It is through the exploration of migrant organisations that we see the changing nature of migrant social networks and show that further research should be dedicated to research informal and local networks.<sup>164</sup> As David Fitzpatrick has noted, a network is "open and optional rather than exclusive and fully reciprocal."<sup>165</sup> This shows that there is agency in choosing social networks and there is many different approaches.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Louise Ryan, "Migrant Women, Social networks and Motherhood: The Experiences of Irish Nurses in Britain," *Sociology* 41/2 (2007): 298.

<sup>162</sup> Schrover and Vermeulen, "Immigrant Organisations," 825.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ryan, "Migrant Women, Social networks and Motherhood."

<sup>165</sup> David Fitzpatrick, "The Irish in Britain: Settlers or Transients," in *The Irish in British Labour History*, ed. Patrick Buckland and John Belchem (Institute of Irish studies :Liverpool, 1993), 7.

<sup>166</sup> Ryan, "Migrant social networks," 709.

The oral history interviews conducted for my study suggest that the participants used more informal networks than formal networks or organisations. However, while some formal networks were used they were often left out of the migrant's narratives and more importance was given to the informal networks. For example, six out of the eight participants used some type of agency to either get them work before they arrived here or to help with them with the journey over. Most of my participants also made use of government and official emigration websites such as *Immigration New Zealand* and *New Zealand Now*.<sup>167</sup> These official websites offer practical assistance with visas, bank accounts and finding housing and work. This process was very simple for most migrants. An example of this can be seen as Ruth recalled in her interview saying:

*That was really straight forward...I did not find that an issue at all. Yeah it was just what I expected, it was very straight forward typical thing you know you just criminal record anything like that and just asking were we meet and what we did and um just marriage certificates, just your basic certificates it was nothing, not too bad.*<sup>168</sup>

Similarly Lisbeth commented on the ease she felt with her application processes, reflective of New Zealand culture saying:

*I had no problems with it because whatever holiday visa I had coming over the company I went through set up a bank account for you a phone for you, gave you [a] card, so that stuff was already there... Ah that and I think there isn't a lot of red tape in New Zealand in general. You know their isn't a huge amount of bureaucracy your forms are very easy to fill in, places are open and you don't have to stand in line for an hour, you know like I just find the process like in general that's one of the things I love about living here, it's not complicated.*<sup>169</sup>

However, the participants still asked work colleagues for the best banks, areas to live in, and other information such as where to shop, and what products were the best value for money. Comments such as, “*yeah I still use the same hairdresser as one of the girls from work*”<sup>170</sup> were common throughout the interview. Five out of the eight participants had family, friends or contacts in New Zealand or Australia to help with those questions. However, the majority of the participants, even if they had family or friends in Christchurch, still had to find their own accommodation and work and were

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<sup>167</sup> “Immigration New Zealand home page,” last accessed 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2017, <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas>; “New Zealand Now home page,” last accessed 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2017, <https://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/>

<sup>168</sup> Ruth Interview.

<sup>169</sup> Lisbeth Interview.

<sup>170</sup> Lisbeth Interview.



financially reliant on themselves. An example of this can be seen in one participant, Ruth, who had a kiwi husband and decided to move back to New Zealand in 2007. I asked Ruth if it was easy setting up accommodation, bank accounts and the like because she had family in New Zealand she replied,

*No we kind of did it through his friends, his friends have been amazing, yeah his friends were just so good to us when we got here and they still are... I went straight to work, I had a job lined up and Christchurch Women's Hospital to work as a midwife there. And um, and that was great because it allowed me to meet a lot of people pretty quickly and to have my own set of friends, which was really good.<sup>171</sup>*

However, alternatively Geraldine, who decided to move to New Zealand while on a holiday visa lived at her sisters for an extended period of time:

*I was quite happy because I was with my sister in her house and she was great like she brought me to the bank to open a bank account, I didn't have to figure out well what bank will I go to and how do I get there. She told me everything like, her is trade me and this is where you buy a car, this is how you insurer your car. I didn't have to figure out any of that practical stuff by myself because she was there and her husband was there and the in-laws were there and somebody knew everything, there was always people to ask. I think that was a big thing for me to come here and it is different for some of the friends who I've meet here, when I arrived here I had family here, I had a base I wasn't alone I wasn't afraid, I was quite excited and quite happy.<sup>172</sup>*

While Geraldine acknowledged her “traditional transnational” ties, she also acknowledged that was not the case for everybody and certainly not for all of my participants. Geraldine does continue to say further on in the interview however, that she gained independence once she started her job and went flatting and as she felt no real connection with her sister’s friends. When talking about their initial settlement to New Zealand the participants talk how they saw migration as some type of exciting new adventure with one participant saying she was too excited to travel the country to worry about that “what ifs.”<sup>173</sup> When talking to the participants about social connections they focused more on those that helped them with their initial set up and any queries they had on New Zealand culture than career aspirations, friendship was the connection most sought after.<sup>174</sup> The participants were forthcoming with stories of helped they received, Lisbeth, for example, was truly grateful for the support from her workplace she received in her first initial weeks in New Zealand:

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<sup>171</sup> Ruth Interview.

<sup>172</sup> Geraldine Interview

<sup>173</sup> Lisbeth Interview. This is also talked about in the scholarship see Ryan, “It’s different now,” 123.

<sup>174</sup> Ryan, “Migrants’ social networks and weak ties,” 714, 717.

*Ah work where really good really supportive... Um, they were a small company you know they kinda knew what needed to be done and what support you need. Like if you need a lift, if you need stuff moved or, you know do you need a set of couches or actually I've got a mate down the road who is selling there's. Um any kind of information about the city you know what's on, what shops do I go shopping to buy this, where is a good hairdresser, where is a good beauticians, you know it's kind of that stuff actually, word of mouth things is more difficult rather than like paper work.<sup>175</sup>*

Likewise Ruth, a nurse at Christchurch Women's Hospital was overwhelmed and touched that she was treated like another member of her work group:

*No they were very welcoming and if there was anything going on outside of work just coffee mornings or lunches or anything like that you were just invited. And so they were very, very welcoming. Even down to, I was only here for a couple of months and somebody else was having a baby and they had a baby shower for her, they had a spontaneous baby shower for me... But they were lovely, and they were such a good help after the baby was born, yeah they really were. Just company, all I needed was company and they were really good company, yip.<sup>176</sup>*

The most common informal network the participants used to make connections was that of their workplace. It was at the workplace that the majority of participants made their good friends and connections and feel most satisfied and happy. However, half of the participants explain that they had to find a few jobs before they found one "that fit" and that a workplace culture was just as, if not more important, than the career potential the workplace could offer. One participant Geraldine talks of how she would move back to Ireland if she could take her job and the people she works with, saying:

*Ruth: If you could get the same job in Ireland would you go back there?*

*Geraldine: Yeah. If I could bring all the people with me too.<sup>177</sup>*

One participant, Lisa migrated to New Zealand to start her PhD. This not only became her place of work because she spent at least eight hours a day at university, but because of the structure of the university it also became like a workplace community saying.<sup>178</sup>

*So I suppose in Dunedin when I look back now, my good friends from Dunedin were probably people I was studying with because I guess we were all in the same boat together so um again, I said my office mate Ailbhe who was from Cork you know, as you know people you do that study with you get a in the trenches, sense of this together, comrades in arms um so that was one channel.<sup>179</sup>*

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<sup>175</sup> Suzie Interview

<sup>176</sup> Ruth Interview

<sup>177</sup> Geraldine Interview.

<sup>178</sup> There is currently no literature on the idea of a university being a type of migrant organisation with structures in place. This would be interesting to have further research in.

<sup>179</sup> Lisa Interview.

There is literature that supports this idea of workplace connection being a series of “privilege networks” that a migrant may otherwise not know about. For example, Louise Ryan talks of a participant in one of her studies who was a doctor. Through this network of highly paid and successful individuals he was able to find out about good schools and houses and had the economic capital to access this.<sup>180</sup> However, Ryan also comments that while social connections gained through the workplace may be advantageous for settlement, these connections often lack real connection and emotional bonds found in genuine friendship.<sup>181</sup> This, however, is not the consensus found among my participants who often talk with real fondness of their work friends. Geraldine talks of real connection with her work colleagues saying:

*And then work wise, there was a handful of girls at work that I did get quite friendly with and still am even though they have actually moved on to different places they don't work there anymore.*<sup>182</sup>

This is a new theme in migration research and shows perhaps that a series of factors affect closeness of friendship in the workplace, such as the type of occupation, how long they have been in the job, gender and marital status. The answer may lie in work done by Mao-Mei Liu, who stresses the importance in distinguishing between having friends/ strong ties and having acquaintances/ weak ties.<sup>183</sup> The workplace culture and the intention of the migrant, whether they actively want to make close friends or have acquaintances they can socialize with purely at work, results in whether the migrant has strong or weak ties in the workplace.

Beyond workplace connection recent research has suggested that age and marital/family status, as well as gender affect the way migrants make social networks. My participants are separated equally into two groups: those married with children and those without children and in some cases a significant other. Those married with children talk about how they made friends with other mothers and used their children as a form of social lubricant to make better connections and friendships.

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<sup>180</sup>Ryan, “Migrants’ social networks and weak ties,” 719-20.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Geraldine Interview

<sup>183</sup> Mao-Mei Liu, “Migrant Networks and International Migration: Testing Weak Ties,” *Demography* 50 (2013): 1245.

Louise Ryan has done some significant research in this area of motherhood being an advantage in migration and creating local strong ties, writing:

Although women, especially mothers, social networking strategies may be different from men's- more local, more child orientated- and may not involve public sphere engagement in the way policy makers recognise, nonetheless, these localised networks can generate practical and emotional support.<sup>184</sup>

This is clear in my interviews with two of my participants recollecting how soon after giving birth they realised that they had indeed some social connections. One participant, Ruth, found out she was pregnant two hours before she flew out on the day she migrated. Ruth expresses that being a midwife and a parent third time round she was not afraid to ask for help and was happy with the help she received saying,

*I think knowing from my line of work, I know how isolating having children can be so I was very quick to tell my colleges and who were now my friends at Christchurch Women's that I needed just company and that was fine and they were very good and they use to just come around and sit with me which was fine, because you are sitting there breastfeeding for days and days and days and weeks (both laugh).<sup>185</sup>*

And beyond the help Ruth asked for, she was pleasantly surprised at the generosity offered to her by the women she worked with.

*Ruth Larsen: And did you find that you had to kind of force yourself to make friends or?*

*Ruth: No they were very welcoming and if there was anything going on outside of work just coffee mornings or lunches or anything like that you were just invited. And so they were very, very welcoming. Even down to, I was only here for a couple of months and somebody else was having a baby and they had a baby shower for her, they had a spontaneous baby shower for me...they were such a good help after the baby was born.. Just company, all I needed was company and they were really good company...*

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid, 1246.

<sup>185</sup> Ruth Interview.

*Ruth Larsen: Did you find it surprising that the people were so welcoming?*

*Ruth: Ah yea, yes I did even down to getting lovely little gifts from people I only knew six months, it was just yeah they were so good. People bringing me dinners after he was born and yeah they were. And even, outside of work I took the other two children to a music group and even at that music group while I was pregnant and just after having the baby, they organised through the music group to bring me dinner one night which was just so lovely. And so I was a bit overwhelmed with that.*<sup>186</sup>

Sarah shared a similar story. A local church/music group extended care to her after having her second child in New Zealand. This was particularly significant as Sarah was house bound for several weeks due to having a caesarean. Not only did she receive meals brought to her by the mothers of the music group, but the pastor of the church in which the music group was held picked up her son from school and hung out her washing.<sup>187</sup>

While the predominance of literature is on the male migrant experience, the work produced in last ten years has a greater sensitivity to the gendered dimensions of migration. However, more research on how these gender dimensions function in everyday life needs more attention. Geographers have also noted various strategies adopted by female migrants, with the ‘topographies of home and homemaking’ adopted by female migrants that becomes a base of a series of networks and relationships.<sup>188</sup> Penny Sommerfeild writes that when talking about one’s life, females often conform to feminine norms such as marriage, wife and motherhood as a framework to explain their memories within the public discourse.<sup>189</sup> Likewise, Floy Anthias writes of how women are empowered by retaining these home traditions and are carriers of ethnicity, which brings the debate around that power positions in informal organisations are held by women. However, women are also happy to abandon these strategies if it will hinder their survival.<sup>190</sup> While women put their energy towards integration and maintaining strong social connections, men put their energy towards accessing

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<sup>186</sup> Ruth Interview.

<sup>187</sup> Sarah Interview.

<sup>188</sup> Mary Gilmartin, “Migration, Identity and Belonging,” *Geography Compass* 2/6 (2008): 1842

<sup>189</sup> Penny Summerfeild, “Culture and composure: creating narratives of the gendered self in oral history interviews,” *Cultural and Social history* (1/2004): 74.

<sup>190</sup> Schrover and Vermeulen, “Immigrant organisations,” 827

information about the place or destination and labour market and establishing weak ties. Once migrated they put their energy towards politics and anything that “directs their attention to the country of origin.”<sup>191</sup>

Those without children relied on different ways to make friendship such as work, other clubs and activities and through random connection. For example, Lisa made friends though people she met during her time skiing in Canada; they included close friends she already knew but also friends of friends and people she perhaps had only met once in the ski field. Lisa also made friends through a running club she joined, and created traditions with those friends such as going on road trips to different races and drinking coffee flavoured milk after each race.<sup>192</sup> Another participant, Lisbeth took up an old hobby and made connections through a horse riding club she now attends weekly despite a few serious accidents.

*Ruth: Did you meet any contacts through doing your horse riding?*

*Lisbeth: Yip, again there is a group, again a good group of girls who all do that together. Um and that's how I would of got in with them. They are a riding club, I'm still in you know we are still in contact I still got twice a week, um and I had other horses, other people horses I was training um and absolutely loved it yeah and that kinda of made a huge difference to my mental focus.*<sup>193</sup>

One participant, Emma-Louise, talks of how she made a friend by waiting in line in the Vodafone shop.<sup>194</sup> Two of the participants talk about how they met their best friends through flatting and one even met her partner through flatting. Highlighting her agency she got from flatting Geraldine says “So one person kinda leads to another. But it was definitely moving out and making that change and forcing myself to live with strangers and meet really new people.”<sup>195</sup> The participants all shared the randomness of making local friends and connections. With one participant, Lisa, who likened the experience to speed dating saying:

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid; Liu, “Migrant networks and International Migration,” 1247.

<sup>192</sup> Lisa Interview.

<sup>193</sup> Suzie Interview.

<sup>194</sup> Emma- Louise Interview.

<sup>195</sup> Geraldine Interview.

*I have to say, like to people were your first move to a new place I describe it like the first six months is like speed dating with friends, like you try out lots of different friends and lots of different activities and some of them take and some of them don't.*<sup>196</sup>

As mentioned previously I recruited my participants through the various Canterbury GAA clubs and *Christchurch Irish Society*. However, despite being recruited for my study through these clubs via their online pages, my participants showed little interest in attending or being a part of these clubs. This is a recurring theme and often central focus of migration literature; that is whether migrants seek to make connections with those of their same ethnic identity or are strongly disinterested in doing so. Louise Ryan found in her own work that many of her participants were resistance to anything that would be perceived as “trad” culture such as Irish societies, dancing, music and Gaelic football.<sup>197</sup> Within the participant interviews my participants highlight that they were not hesitant to make friends with Irish people, instead they did not want to do so via “traditional” avenues. Lisa says that while she did consider GAA as a potential social connection she realised she was doing so just because it was something Irish not because it was something she would enjoy, saying:

*Hell no initially, again especially with GAA I thought about it then I was like a hate Gaelic games, I have no interest... in them but I did consider it for a social network and was quickly like actually I would rather be tramping or I'd rather be running that's what I prefer doing. Um, and then with the Irish society I guess I sort of followed it on Facebook when I moved to Christchurch because I was like oh yes I should do that, but I haven't been terribly involved I have to say, you know yeah.*<sup>198</sup>

Furthermore, Geraldine talks about how she was not against making Irish friends but that she did not want to do so if it was via “traditional” avenues.

*Ruth: Um and did you ever think of joining the Irish society or the Gaelic Athletics Association to make friends that way or did you want to stay away from Irish friends?*

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<sup>196</sup> Lisa Interview.

<sup>197</sup> Ryan, “It’s different now,” 122.

<sup>198</sup> Lisa Interview.

*Geraldine: No, no I didn't want to stay away from them I think. I went to one event at the Irish society with my sister early on but it was like ah family day thing and I didn't have kids and it didn't interest me so I just assumed that's all they did which is not all of what they do but I just kinda wrote it off then. And the with the Gaelic I didn't like it I'm not good at it so I it never entered my head to join the team I know a few of the girls I've since gotten to know some of the people who are on the team and they are lovely but I don't play with them (both laugh) because I would be no good to them, yeah so. No I'd I don't think I needed to I had already made connections but if I needed to that would have been an obvious place to go to.<sup>199</sup>*

In his previous work on post-war migrants Seamus Grimes argues that migrants who have been around longer are a part of networks called “exceptional networks” and have family and were less involved in groups, whereas those who have arrived more recently, the “transient population” were more involved in their ethnic community.<sup>200</sup> While my participants do not follow these labels that Grimes proposes, I do agree that this highlights a theme found not only in my work, but that of other sociologists. There is a clear difference between each wave of migration and how they seek to make networks and connections, and that this current wave of migrants seeks very different types of connections compared to the previous wave, highlighting the ever changing nature of migration. Through examination of the scholarship and listening to the participant interviews it now seems that this recent wave no longer has a need for certain ethnic migrant organisations, or the need to create their own ethnic organisations.<sup>201</sup> This can be seen in both examples of *The Canterbury Irish Society* and the *GAA*. Two of my participants joined the Irish society with the aim to help revitalize the club and get a younger membership in through social media advertising. Six months in being part of the organisation and the club faced issues with its management stating in a public Facebook post on August 13 2016:

The viewpoint of a young Irish member, active volunteer, and parent: An Irish Society lost to old age and hostility. 2015-2016, saw an improved Irish Society come to be, revitalized with younger executive committee

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<sup>199</sup> Geraldine Interview

<sup>200</sup> Seamus Grimes, “friendship patterns and social networks among post-war Irish migrants in Sydney” in *The Irish History, Heritage, Identity, Volume One Patterns of Migration*, ed. Patrick O’Sullivan (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), 180-181.

<sup>201</sup> Schrover and Vermeulen, “Immigrant Organisations,” 828.



members who took on the mission of creating an Irish Society for the current and younger Irish immigrants in Christchurch...Needs of the younger Irish, which are somewhat different today, were beginning to be addressed: an active weekly Mums and Bubs Coffee Club, exercise groups, along with these once off events all adding to the branding of what the Irish society should be and should reflect. It was the beginnings of a bustling Irish Society. Although perhaps not reflective in actual membership, (a very aged demographic, largely because younger Irish immigrants simply do not require this link to their culture with modern technology) Irish in Christchurch were being drawn to this energised and rejuvenated Irish Society. The Clubrooms were opened up to welcome all younger Irish immigrants and Irish families in Christchurch, of which there are many.

Regrettably, this seems to have been in vain. A volatile AGM revealed the disgruntlement of past executive committee members, who have taken issue with the way in which the new committee has tried to make improvements. Its subsequent backlash has led to the resignation of the majority of the current executive committee. Most of these members are young and recently arrived in Christchurch, and their interests were to cultivate the Irish Society with the faces of the next generation.

It would appear that the Irish Society will either be dissolved or revert back to a senior citizens Irish Society and this to me, a young Irish member, active volunteer, and parent is very disappointing, very disappointing indeed.<sup>202</sup>

It was during the time of the post both of my participants left the society as they were a part of this “renovation’ process.” This post is written from the “viewpoint of a young Irish member, active volunteer, and parent.” The author of the post highlights many of the issues raised by my participants and covered in the literature. They highlight that the needs of the young Irish migrant of today are different to those of the past and the membership is still of an aged demographic due to “younger Irish immigrants simply do not require this link to their culture with modern technology.” They talk of how the younger members of the society put in an effort to make the Irish society welcoming to those younger migrants who wanted to make ethnic and social connections. The society having both mums and bubs coffee groups and exercise classes highlights the gender and parental status migrants seek when making social connection. The issues of implementing these new types of connections and the

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<sup>202</sup> “Christchurch Irish Society Facebook page,” issued August 13, 2015, last accessed <https://www.facebook.com/ChristchurchIrishSociety/?fref=ts>

resistance of the older members of the society, again highlights the different needs and viewpoints of each migrant generation/wave.

In reverse the *GAA*, a recently established club, have an influx of younger members with three clubs now in Christchurch being the: *Christchurch McKennas*, *Waimack Gaels* (an all-female club), and *Canterbury Cusacks*. While the *GAA* clubs in Christchurch are thriving, this again shows gendered dynamics with in social connections with more members being male than female. Regardless of there being a female club, only two of my participants were involved in the *GAA* and this was due to their husbands' involvement. The proliferation and success of the club seems to be its "casualness" of the club. The members play a game with casual drinks afterwards no pressure or necessity to be Irish. This situation reflects theories expressed in the literature that state "however, these new friendships are usually with other migrants who occupy a similar social position."<sup>203</sup>

What is shown in these two examples is also portrayed in the literature. Ryan found in her own work that her participants had nothing in common with the older Irish generation, because they came out in a different time and in different circumstances.<sup>204</sup> This idea of different generations, experiences and expectations play heavily in the work of contemporary migration, especially those making connections. Breda Grey has coined the term "transnational memory" where the younger generation of migrants see previous generations as forced exiles who had to stick together forming clubs, pubs and organisations.<sup>205</sup> This contemporary generation of migrants highlight their free-will and choice, their desire for exploration and discovery and doing things like seeing unusual places and trying new food.<sup>206</sup> Technology, too, has certainly had an effect on this new wave, allowing them to accomplish in terms of mobility what was impossible for previous generations.

Furthermore, another significant finding of this chapter was that my participants all made local social connections. My participants all made connections through their children's play groups, work, or through local clubs they joined such as triathlon and horse riding clubs. Any Irish friends

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<sup>203</sup>Ryan, "Migrants' social networks and weak ties," 716.

<sup>204</sup>Ryan, "It's different now," 122.

<sup>205</sup>Gray, "Putting Emotion and Reflexivity to Work in Researching Migration," 938.

<sup>206</sup>Ryan, "It's different now," 123-124

made have been by coincidence and have not been purposely sort after. Moreover, scholarship done on local ties and gender has looked at a how mothers make strong local ties through play groups, school, or children's hobbies. Limited work has been done on women and strong local ties made through work or other hobbies outside of children. The findings of my participant interview show those who did not have children made just as strong local connections through other means. However, my participants who were mothers did not solely rely on their children to make local social connections and were eager to enter the work force and have other hobbies to help broaden their social network. Further research on gender and local ties would contribute greatly to migration scholarship as the findings would help discover how connections in a modern day setting are created. However, this would have to be sourced through oral methods and via informal organisations and is perhaps a reason significant research has not been embarked upon as of yet.

## Generation Emigration

*I talk to my mum on the phone or on Skype and then with again friends you are sending just ridiculous messages that aren't really consequential that are just kind of on Whatsapp but you can just kind of send your thoughts as they as they come to you, you know.*

*-Lisa*

While there is no doubt that the increase of accessible technology such as air travel, internet and smart phones affect migrants worldwide, Irish migrants have made their own special impact in this area. These new technological developments “evoke” the participants to highlight their mobility and freedom of choice instead of being perceived as stuck, sad and depressed like previous generation of migrants.<sup>207</sup> To understand this new historical development in the study of social networks and transnationalism this new generation of technology must be explained. There is a construct in migration scholarship to separate migrants into groups or waves. These groups or waves often get their names due to technological improvement.<sup>208</sup> In the 1980s and 1990s, for instance with the increase of air travel saw a generation of migrants called “Ryan Air migrants.”<sup>209</sup> More recently the term “Facebook generation” or “Generation Emigration” has come to explain this newest generation of migrant who has access to fast internet and can access Facebook, Skype, Whatsapp and Snapchat to communicate with those back home. The term *Generation Emigration* comes from a website of the same name launched by the *Irish Times* newspaper in 2011.<sup>210</sup> The website is a helpful tool for the Irish diaspora and has also been hugely influential for those researching contemporary Irish migration. The section, under the Life & Style banner in the *Irish Times*, produces a range of articles on all things migrant related with the articles often written by migrants themselves, and sometimes academics, involved in the migrant community. They offer help to those abroad and in Ireland keep

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid, 115-116.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid, 114-116.

<sup>209</sup> Breda Gray, “‘Generation Emigration,’ 22.

<sup>210</sup> Ryan, “It’s different now,” 114-115.

connected via this massive online forum. Each year a survey is put on the on-line platform with migrants all over the world taking part in helping to understand trends in Irish migration. This platform allows migrants to be part of the discussion within the diaspora network.<sup>211</sup> This access to technology must be kept in mind when studying contemporary migration, and when the right questions are asked, it can give a tremendous insight to the changing nature of migration, transnationalism, and social networks and connection.<sup>212</sup>

When asked about how my migrants used technology on their migration journey, all of them use, technology for the purposes of keeping in contact with those in Ireland than trying to find new connections. However, while the participants may have found this their main reason for on-line technology they still discussed how they use social media platforms such as Facebook, and “liked” pages such as the *GAA*, *The Christchurch Irish Society* and to keep in contact with new friends they had made through various groups.<sup>213</sup> However, what my interviews also revealed was that those with children used social media and technology differently than those without children. Those without children preferred to call their parents once a week on the phone, with Facebook, email, Whatsapp and maybe Snapchat to keep in contact with their friends. *The Irish Times* highlighted this trend in an article about a group of friends who used Whatsapp. The article explains the allure of the app, a large group of friends can message each other no matter what time of day with big and small news; constant communication with a close and established network.<sup>214</sup> Those with children however were very different they used Skype daily and of those with children they called their parents (in particular their mothers) every day.

*Ruth Larsen: Tell me about your contact with home, how often do you contact home and is kind of would you contact your mum via a different medium than your brother?*

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<sup>211</sup> Lee Komito, “Social Media and Migration: Virtual Community 2.0,” *Journal of the American Society for Information and Technology* 62/6 (2011): 1077.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid*, 1075.

<sup>213</sup> Dekker, Engbersen and Fabers, “The Use of Online Media in Migration Networks” discusses how strong ties can be formed due to on-line platforms, 541.

<sup>214</sup> Ciara Kenny, “How WhatsApp keeps our cross-continental friendship alive,” *The Irish Times*, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016, <http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/generation-emigration/how-whatsapp-keeps-our-cross-continental-friendship-alive-1.2526736>

*Ruth: Yeah all of them are well, yes mainly all through Facetime. So mum would be maybe once, maybe twice a day, the twelve hours difference is great (both laugh) twelve or thirteen depending on the time of the year. But I would in the morning if I was here in the morning making the kids lunches for school, I'll Facetime mum and she is just finishing her dinner over there and just having a chat with me.*<sup>215</sup>

While they still kept in contact with friends, family was the main personal contact. Lee Komito argues that this continual communication with family is perhaps due to the fact that the migrants do not want to stay long term and that continual contact is necessary for their integration when they return.<sup>216</sup> The same trends were also seen in air travel and those flying home. Those with kids had parents visit them more often, with the exception of one participant who also had a sister here. One participant never had a visit from Ireland. Interestingly, the participants visited Ireland more than they were visited, but did not often get the opportunity to catch up with friends as family was the main purpose of their visits. Trips were often worked around weddings and all the participants expressed pressure and disappointment they felt from family if they missed an event, such as a wedding or a holiday like Christmas. One participant, Lisbeth, who had previously lived in Aberdeen, Scotland, talks of the pressure she feels to go home for Christmas despite financially not being able to afford it and how traveling makes her feel sick:

*Um I know my family in Ireland are putting an awful lot of pressure for me to actually go home this year and think they were disappointed we didn't travel this Christmas. Um but realistically we just couldn't afford it yeah. Umm unfortunately so that is hard. I guess from the difference of living from Aberdeen and here I suppose, Aberdeen you know you save your pennies you jump on a Ryan Air flight you're home in two hours, three hours door to door, like you could theoretically do it three hours door to door. Here you know it's you need four weeks off work as a minimum, the flying makes me incredibly sick now so the last time I went home I was air sick for a week.*<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Through this Ruth got Facebook because of her migration. Emma-Louise contacts her parents twice a week.

<sup>216</sup> Komito, "Social Media and Migration," 1076.

<sup>217</sup> Lisbeth Interview

Most of the migrants have commented on how eventually over time family and friends understand that they cannot always be home for Christmas and weddings. However, the gentle pressure, from friends and family not often aware they are doing it, can affect the migrant. The participants highlight how they often feel pulled in multiple directions about when to travel home and in some cases this exacerbates their homesickness. While technology enables the migrant and the family to stay in constant and quick contact, with it comes some downsides such as home sickness and pressure for the migrant to be home more often. It could be argued that this new technology leaves migrants in limbo, having social connections in their country of destination, being heavily emotionally attached to Ireland, but being half the world away with no possibility of return in the near future. This can be seen in a few examples from one participant interview saying that indeed she does feel like she lives in limbo saying:

*And I was only talking to a woman at work about this a while ago she's from England and she's been here a long, long time and I said to her I said "I actually don't feel like I fit here anymore or less than I fit here." And I'm kinda in-between, she said she felt the same.<sup>218</sup>*

Another participant Ruth talks of how technology, at times, has made her away of her separation from Ireland saying,

*I bloody well curse mother nature in New Zealand again, because my uncle died of cancer back in September 2013 and during his funeral I was watching it on Skype, because the churches in Ireland there are all connected to the internet so you can watch it live. And I thought oh this is great, at least I feel like I'm there I'm watching it live. And there was one of these random wind storms that just knock the power out for a couple of hours, and I missed the whole bloody funeral. I just at that stage I had enough of mother nature in this country, I really did. Lovely country as it is Ruth (both laugh), I had had enough. So those times yeah you just want to be home.<sup>219</sup>*

It is important to note, and as the participants have portrayed to me off-recorded, that these moments of feeling lost, in-between or sad does not mean they regret their migration journey. It is part of being human, a part of any migration journey, no matter how much you love it.

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<sup>218</sup> Geraldine Interview

<sup>219</sup> Ruth Interview

This change in migrants and their use of technology has affected the political landscape in Ireland and how political views are discussed. For example in the 2015 a referendum on marriage equality, migrants used the hashtag #HomeToVote to show that they made the long trip home to vote on this political issue as those who are not in Ireland at the time of a referendum were not allowed to vote.<sup>220</sup> This referendum again highlights the tension between migrants and politicians, and how migrants feel neglected and in some cases pushed out of their own country. Lee Komito has written on the idea that due to social media and technology and keeping ties at home it allows migrant to take part in these political discussions “through transnational association.”<sup>221</sup> In an *Irish Times* article five Irish migrants from around the world wrote a short piece on their thoughts about not being able to vote in the referendum if they were not home. Some wrote that they booked tickets as soon as they knew the date, other were frustrated that they had to return to Ireland to vote. One of the migrants aptly created a new hash tag writing that instead of being #HomeToVote it should be #VoteWhereHomeIsNow.<sup>222</sup>

Likewise, in 2015 a campaign was launched with the hashtag #HomeToWork.<sup>223</sup> Produced by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, #HomeToWork aims to encourage more migrants to come home to Ireland to work. with the aim to have attracted 70,000 emigrants by 2020.<sup>224</sup> The campaign was launched from November to February, targeted at those who were travelling home for the Christmas holidays. The blurb on the website home pages talks of the 56,000 jobs created in the last year alone. Through this initiative an app was created called “Ireland’s call To Return Its Global Diaspora Home.” One of the apps functions is a ‘Global Skills Locator’, by answering some short questions you get a notification of jobs available in Ireland as they arise.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Elena Cresci, “#HomeToVote: Irish abroad return to vote in gay marriage referendum,” *The Guardian*, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/22/hometovote-irish-abroad-return-vote-twitter-gay-marriage-referendum>

<sup>221</sup> Komito, “Social Media and Migration,” 1075.

<sup>222</sup> Ciara Kenny, “Will migrants #HomeToVote in the general election?” *The Irish Times*, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016. <http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/generation-emigration/will-emigrants-come-hometovote-in-the-general-election-1.2532532>

<sup>223</sup> “An Ronn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádala/ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade homepage,” last accessed 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2017, <https://www.dfa.ie/global-irish/staying-in-touch/latest-news/home-to-work/#>

<sup>224</sup> Kenny, “Government ‘needs to be honest’ with emigrants, says Joe McHugh,” <http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/generation-emigration/government-needs-to-be-honest-with-emigrants-says-joe-mchugh-1.2674913>

<sup>225</sup> Possible photo <https://www.dfa.ie/global-irish/staying-in-touch/latest-news/home-to-work/#>



Irish migrants were angry because the government had not at that stage set up adequate arrangements for migrants to return home. *The Irish Times* produced dozens of articles through their Generation Emigration page on the Irish Diasporas feelings of Ireland trying to get migrants home to work. Many were critical of the government's efforts to make appropriate arrangements. Many articles talk of the difficulties migrants face returning back to Ireland. For example, if you married overseas you have to prove your marriage is genuine. Those who wish to work for international companies from Ireland face the trouble of ongoing broadband problem, an apparent sign of a city/rural divide. The 2004 Habitual Residency Scheme allows the state to decide who has the right to live in Ireland with the possibility that emigrants maybe turned down if they have returned to look after an elderly or sick member. And finally, migrants find themselves tied in knots because they do not have a credit rating, without a residence address they cannot have a bank account or other utilities, but they need proof of bank accounts to get the utilities and vice versa.<sup>226</sup> Another continual theme in the articles is that many migrants do not feel they are welcome home with one article writing,

But to create policy for returning emigrants based on economic attractions alone is to completely miss the point.

A quick scan through the most read articles in 2015 on the Generation Emigration website shows that the existential issue of belonging or feelings of not belonging are at the fore in many of the stories, whether the person is living in Ireland or overseas.<sup>227</sup>

While technology has enabled families to contact each other regularly it also allows the migrant to still be involved in the political conversation. Irish news outlets, like many others across the world, have apps to get fast access of news, and pages on Facebook allow you to read articles. But much like reasons for leaving the participants in my study varied on whether they wanted to be aware of the current affairs in Ireland. For example, when asking one participant whether she keeps up to date with current affairs in Ireland she replied, "*No, it just makes me angry I don't bother.*"<sup>228</sup>

Another participant thoroughly still enjoyed being a part of the political discussion saying, "*Yes, big*

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<sup>226</sup> Fr Hilliard, "Emigrants won't return if they don't feel they don't belong," <http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/abroad/returning-to-ireland/emigrants-won-t-return-to-ireland-if-they-feel-they-don-t-belong-1.2493949> ; Rory Broughal, "Moving back to Ireland hasn't been as easy as I thought," *The Irish Times*, December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015, <http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/abroad/returning-to-ireland/moving-back-to-ireland-hasn-t-been-as-easy-as-i-thought-1.2476016>

<sup>227</sup> Fr Hilliard, "Emigrants won't return if they don't feel they don't belong."

<sup>228</sup> Suzie Interview

*time because it interests me and it is likely that I live again there at some stage so I like to know what it happening.*<sup>229</sup> Whereas other participants were perhaps more apathetic saying

*I vaguely, as I said I listen to Rte radio (both laugh) and look at the Irish times every day online you can only look at ten articles a week now so... I know it's a kind a scan the titles and read the good ones, so I suppose I, certainly not out of touch but I'm probably not I wouldn't be as well versed as if I was actually there you know.*<sup>230</sup>

In recent scholarship researchers have noted that despite all the improvements made via modern technology and contact of migrants with Ireland is more prolific than any time in history, there is still a strong sense of grieving when talking about Irish migration. While the migrants talk about how they chose to move rather than being forced, they still talk of the sense of sadness that comes with migration. Ruth, for example, said that her parents would not acknowledge her migration or help her move.<sup>231</sup> Sarah spoke about the heart-breaking scenes at Cork airport when families were crying in the departure lounge not only because a family member was leaving but that they might never come home.<sup>232</sup> This again highlights the point that each migration journey is different and that some migrants indeed may felt pushed to leave, making the grief more heart-wrenching. Ruth explains why her family reacted so badly to her migration was that her mother's family had all migrated to America in the sixties. Ruth's mother rarely saw her sisters again and had contact once or twice a year.<sup>233</sup> I believe this works into the idea of transnational memory, as mentioned in a previous section of this chapter. While contemporary migrants do not want to talk about the hardship of migration or compare themselves to previous waves of migration as a sign of respect to those who were exiled/ forced to migrate in previous waves, so does the older generation perceive that migration cannot be anything but what they have experienced growing up. Scholars have noted a sense of mourning when "Ireland" talks about migration, particularly in the media, and while more work need

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<sup>229</sup> Geraldine Interview

<sup>230</sup> Lisa Interview

<sup>231</sup> Ruth Interview

<sup>232</sup> Sarah Interview

<sup>233</sup> Ruth Interview

to be done in this area, hopefully historians get more involved when talking about contemporary migration to help understand the sense of grieving portrayed and how this may be relived.

### **Reflection on Migration**

Throughout the interviews I provided opportunities for the migrants to reflect on their migration journey thus far, and explain what they thought was important and their thoughts on migration without the construct of questions. The participants highlighted their mobility, but realised not every migrant may say this. They emphasised their sense of adventure and how technology allows them to explore the world but keep in contact with their family and friends back at home in Ireland. All of my participants were very aware of the privilege they have with modern technology and all said at some part of the interview they do not know how previous waves of migrants managed.

*Um, I think social media has become a huge thing in migration and like you can you know, see people now you know you can see changes you know whereas, I think going back to the 1950s when they had nothing it was you know a telephone call maybe once a year, twice a year.<sup>234</sup>*

A few of the participants were grateful for technology not only to keep in contact but mediums such as Skype and Facetime allowed them to see their parent age, with one participant commenting,

*The one thing that quite good with Facetime is that you can see your parents age. And so when I go home it will be four years since I have seen my parents and so I think if I was to leave that length of time without visualizing them, seeing how they move around the kitchen and what I see through Facetime I think that would be upsetting. I often do think back to my grandmother how, how little contact she had with her daughter when they went to the states. And that just must have been heart-breaking on both sides. But, I mean mum even says that to her, just with the technology it is how we both cope. It is how my mother copes as well, so.<sup>235</sup>*

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<sup>234</sup> Edel Interview

<sup>235</sup> Ruth Interview

In terms of staying in New Zealand long term nearly all of my participants have, or are in the process of, applying for permanent residency. And while they comment that they may not stay in New Zealand permanently they are also unsure when they can return to Ireland, and as such are creating a life in New Zealand that may see them living here longer term. Recent migration scholarship has looked in to the idea of “homecoming.” Although some of my participants believe this is home for now, others believe they will return back to Ireland, however they are not sure of when. As Alistair Thomson writes “Even for the most settled of migrants, return is always possible.”<sup>236</sup> The main driving force for return migration is homesickness. Holidays such as Christmas and birthdays often remind migrants, especially stark for those from the Northern hemisphere, of the absence of family friends and rituals.<sup>237</sup> In my own participant interviews discussions about fond memories of Christmas, Halloween and Easter took up pages in the transcripts. The participants also talk about how different it is to have Christmas in the southern hemisphere, and that the lack of friends and family around this time often made them homesick. Home food comforts such as chips, tea and chocolate too made the participants homesick and parcels from home often involved these treats. A few of the participants took great delight in feeding me *Barry’s Tea* or different types of chocolate and biscuits they had received from Ireland. The participants also talked about how they missed “The Craic” which is chatty, humourous, fun conversation often explain as Irish version of “banter” we have in New Zealand. While they talked about having fun with their New Zealand friends, there was something missing from their interactions. While they tried to explain this concept of “The Craic” to me and I attempted to comprehend it to the best of my abilities, I believe it is something that has to be experienced.

When asked “where is home?” the majority of the participants reply with things such as, “*If I’m being honest we are sitting in my home. This house is has been my first real my home... that I found, that I pay for that I live in with my partner and it is our life.*”<sup>238</sup> The participants talk of the

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<sup>236</sup> Thomson “My wayward heart”, 124.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid, 121.

<sup>238</sup> Geraldine Interview

realisation they had when they found they no longer called Ireland “home.” However, they comment that perhaps this answer is reactionary and when they think about the question further, Ireland is home, or at least their heart is in two places. This can be seen in Emma-Louise’s reflection with her saying:

*Home... I got a text off my friend the other day and she said to me are you at home and I said yeah, and she said oh is it a flying visit, and I said what are you talking about I’m at home in my house in New Zealand, and she said oh I saw something on Facebook and I thought you were at home in Ireland. So that I thought was very funny I was like, to me my initial was like oh yeah I’m at home um but I didn’t read to deeply in to it. So if you ask me straight off where your home is I’m sitting in it now.<sup>239</sup>*

Another example can be seen of Edel talking of calling New Zealand home and the realising what she has said.

*Edel: I took a photograph outside of home and she was like how would you take a photograph outside of home and she thought I was talking about.*

*Ruth: Ireland.*

*Edel: Ireland, but I was like no it is actually here. So like I always say home is where the heart is and at the moment I have half my heart at home and half my heart is here. So time will tell Ruth.<sup>240</sup>*

When asked if the participants had any final comments for the record they answered with the same theme. They talked about how at times migration has been hard, but that they are proud of themselves for doing it and for persevering a few years into the migration process. These women feel that their decision has paid off and they feel that they have made a life for themselves in New Zealand. Upon reflection and looking over the interviews the participants were very realistic of the realities of migrating and as such realised that network and making contacts were necessary for their survival. As Louise Ryan has commented “networks may also be a key element in facilitating

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<sup>239</sup> Emma-Louise Interview

<sup>240</sup> Edel Interview

community formation and permanent settlement.”<sup>241</sup> And indeed this seems to be the case for my participants. They were aware they needed to make networks and through their hard work they have a life into which they could permanently settle if they so desired.

As with their motivations for leaving, my participants also do not seem to fit in a prescribed framework to make contacts. While some have experienced lonely days, they have seen this as a challenge, gone forth, and over time been successful. The key to success for my participants is that they seemed to be self-driven. They wanted to migrate to look for a better life; they wanted to stay in New Zealand for however long they could and they wanted to make friends. Most importantly, they wanted to take part in this migration journey. While my participants highlighted their agency to migrate there will be many migrants who feel that they were forced and this may impact their social integration. Other factors such as gender, age and, marital/ family status, and social-economic considerations also affect the migration experience. Further research into each of these factors and how they affect the migration experience is much need to further our understanding of contemporary migration.

As this thesis has shown through informal networks we see the migrant settlement in action, the opportunities and obstacles available to them and how they navigate their migration journey.<sup>242</sup> With the addition of technology being a type of network there are many areas to be looked into and older theories of migrant network and connection will need to be revised.<sup>243</sup> More importantly for contemporary migrants, technology is now seen as a resource which affects their migration journey, by not only aiding in the construction of weak ties by finding work, jobs and accommodation to make migration possible. But also in strengthening new social contacts and helping keep old contacts alive and helping with homesickness for the migrant and those left in Ireland.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>241</sup>Ryan, “Migrants’ social networks and weak ties,” 708-709.

<sup>242</sup>Ibid, 720.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Komito, “Social Media and Migration,” 1077; Dekker and Engbersen, “How social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration,” 414.



## Conclusion

*Ruth: Final question, where is home?*

*Geraldine: Ooh (sighs) if I'm being honest we are sitting in my home. This house is has been my first real my home... that I found, that I pay for that I live in with my partner and it is our life... and when I think of home home I don't think of my parents' house I think of Ireland the country. Whereas when I think of home here I think of my little house, because I have made it my little sanctuary I suppose you could call it, it's my space. I don't I don't think I have..., one or the other I'm both.<sup>245</sup>*

Geraldine's thoughtful response shows the multi-faceted emotions and issues faced when asking a participant where is home. This question was asked in all my interviews. This question in particular really made my participants think for a few moments and when the recorder was turned off they all talked about how they enjoyed that question; many of them giving answers similar to the quote above. Despite the shared feelings of my participants, however, little has been written on the emotional reflection of contemporary migrants. This thesis on, women's experiences in Christchurch, New Zealand, underlines both an oral history methodology and inter-disciplinary approaches for the study of these kind of questions.

Throughout this thesis the idea of using interdisciplinary scholarship has been at the forefront. Many historians find themselves unsure of how to grapple with another discipline with different methodology, terms, referencing and ways of collecting data and information. The aim of many historians, who follow Von Ranken methodology, is to interpret the past with a strict insistence that an unbiased interpretation of primary source will produce an accurate interpretation of particular events or actions. Yet this becomes an impossible goal when we are confronted by the human elements of emotion and feeling in oral testimony. Sociologists, geographers and anthropologists also

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<sup>245</sup> Geraldine Interview



observe the past and human behaviour to understand why and how something happened and the effect that it had both on the individual and society. Moreover, they share our concern with questions of structure and agency, “otherness” and change overtime. But they seem more adept at handling issues such as human mobility and emotion in fruitful ways and deserve closer attention by migration historians. We have much to gain from an interdisciplinary dialogue.

Furthermore, oral history has been fundamental to this study and an important reason why migration is represented as an ongoing journey. Scholars like, Rosemary Baird and Alistair Thomson rightly argue that an oral history methodology provides a unique addition to our understanding of migration.<sup>246</sup> Using personal testimony offers those who have not been heard an opportunity to place their voices on the historical record. It also provides researchers with insights into the ways that class, gender and age affect the complexity of the migration process and the ongoing nature of human mobility.

This question of “where is home?” made my participants realise how far they had come in their migration journey. For some, the idea that they could call a place away from Ireland home, a place they had created a full of love, brought a sense of pride, they happily identified as “Irish” and still felt this sense of national pride. For others, however, it brought a sense of confusion. The centrality of emotion in their accounts was neatly illustrated during one participant interview. When asked if Geraldine had any final comments for the record she replied:

*Um, just thanks for giving me an opportunity to talk about this, it's, it's nice to say things like this out loud. And I don't often sit and analyse and think about it but yeah it is interesting and I've enjoyed it.*<sup>247</sup>

For many of my participants it was the first time they were able to fully reflect on their migration journey, and with reflection, sometimes, comes emotion. It was not all sad; all of my interviews at

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<sup>246</sup> Rosemary Baird, “Across the Tasman: Narratives of New Zealand Migrants to and from Australia, 1965-95” (PhD diss., University of Canterbury, 2012), 284; Thomson, *Moving Stories*.

<sup>247</sup> Geraldine Interview

some point are full with laughter. As with any human experience there are high and low points. It then becomes the responsibility of the oral historian to frame this human experience in the scholarship for further understanding and interpretation.

In Chapter two I explored the key questions of why these women chose to migrate. I explored why my participants chose to migrate and how they feel about that decision both then and now with hindsight. The idea of a forced exodus of people due to the Celtic Tiger, or due to job progression via the brain drain phenomenon was disproved. My interviews show that there is no single definitive reason or explanation for the departure of these Irish women. Some moved for a better lifestyle, some felt they arrive here by accident. Others said that they came here looking for work they were not forced. As one Mac Éinrí notes that despite all these details “if 40 per cent felt they left involuntarily... it’s little consolation to them to be told that the other 60 per cent left by choice.”<sup>248</sup> This statement is the foundation argument of chapter one. That people leave for their own reason, even if it is due to societal, political, economic, or geographical forces around them the choice of where and why they personally move comes down to the migrant. Big structural-level explanations for the movement of Irish people abroad are important but they tend to obscure the agency of ordinary women. This is why an oral history methodology is important, because simply if we do not ask individual migrants why they move we will never know the complexity of their reasons and therefore make broad assumptions.

Throughout Chapter two I examined the way migrants made connections through different social avenues. My interviews revealed that female migrants felt no desire to join GAA clubs or Irish societies. The reason for this was a part of a definitive need for contemporary migrants to distinguish themselves from an older generation of migrants. The current generation seem to want to highlight their agency and mobility and end the grieving rhetoric so frequently seen in Irish media. The unique

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<sup>248</sup> “Leaving Ireland: a question of lifestyle or necessity?” <http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/letters/leaving-ireland-a-question-of-lifestyle-or-necessity-1.486000>

and different ways each of the migrants made connections has also been highlighted. In this study, while my migrants maintained transnational connections with friends and family at home, they also made friends from local connections in the city. It was through their children's schools, play groups, work or other hobbies within Christchurch that my migrants made strong ties and found support. Again, the idea that each personal experience and narrative is different came out in this chapter.

I also argued in Chapter two that technology has made a huge impact to the lives of the current wave of migrants. It has been show that technology is important for migrants to maintain transnational connections. Online letters to the editor and websites, such as Generation Emigration, show Irish migrants from all over the diaspora commenting on Irish current affairs and issues. This phenomenon has never been seen before and gives the Irish migrant a closer and instant connection to home. Within my interviews, my participants highlighted all the different types of technology they use to keep in contact with friends and family back in Ireland, such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Viber and Skype. However, to make new social connections within Christchurch, technology did not play a big part in the formation of these new contacts. Again, without oral history testimony scholars would be unable to know how migrants maintain transnational networks and how they make local connections. It is through oral history testimony we also find the motivations for making new contacts, how migrants maintain and create new networks, how this is different from previous waves of migration, and the affect it has on the migrants journey.

This thesis is unique study of the lives of eight Irish women whom migrated to Christchurch, New Zealand. Their contributions have not only highlighted the limited scholarship of female Irish mobility, particular to New Zealand, but also the strength of personal testimony. It is through my participants' interviews that I am able to conduct this thesis, without these interviews it would not have been possible. It is also through my participant interviews that migrant women's voices have been able to be heard and added to the historical record. My participants have given eloquent, emotional and thought provoking accounts of the nature of migration, and times, challenged the dominative narrative about the migrant experience. Through their stories I have been able to highlight

the emotional nature of migration, often forgotten in the scholarship, and that migration is in fact a continual journey. By looking at the whole journey of migration we are able to see all the emotions and complexities involved instead of expounding the experience of migration based on one snapshot. Further research in this field is needed, and hopefully historians will add to this growing scholarship. With the use of oral history my participants reveal the continual nature of migration and that we as academics has a lot to learn from the migrants and their life stories.

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