

Quality of Life in Ireland

Social Indicators Research Series

Volume 32

General Editor:

ALEX C. MICHALOS

*University of Northern British Columbia,
Prince George, Canada*

Editors:

ED DIENER

University of Illinois, Champaign, USA

WOLFGANG GLATZER

J.W. Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

TORBJORN MOUM

University of Oslo, Norway

MIRJAM A.G. SPRANGERS

University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

JOACHIM VOGEL

Central Bureau of Statistics, Stockholm, Sweden

RUUT VEENHOVEN

Erasmus University, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

This new series aims to provide a public forum for single treatises and collections of papers on social indicators research that are too long to be published in our journal *Social Indicators Research*. Like the journal, the book series deals with statistical assessments of the quality of life from a broad perspective. It welcomes the research on wide variety of substantive areas, including health, crime, housing, education, family life, leisure activities, transportation, mobility, economics, work, religion and environmental issues. These areas of research will focus on the impact of key issues such as health on the overall quality of life and vice versa. An international review board, consisting of Ruut Veenhoven, Joachim Vogel, Ed Diener, Torbjorn Moum, Mirjam A.G. Sprangers and Wolfgang Glatzer, will ensure the high quality of the series as a whole.

The titles published in this series are listed at the end of this volume.

Tony Fahey • Helen Russell
• Christopher T. Whelan
Editors

Quality of Life in Ireland

Social Impact of Economic Boom

 Springer

Editors:
Tony Fahey
University College
Dublin
Ireland

Helen Russell
Economic and Social Research Institute
Dublin
Ireland

Christopher T. Whelan
Economic and Social Research Institute
Dublin
Ireland

The work has been previously published by IPA, Institute of Public Administration, Dublin, Ireland.

Original title: *Best of Times? The Social Impact of the Celtic Tiger*
Paperback published July 2007, ISBN 978-1-904541-58-5 (PB)

ISBN 978-1-4020-6980-2 (HB)
e-ISBN 978-1-4020-6981-9

Library of Congress Control Number: 2008928684

© Tony Fahey, Helen Russell, Christopher T. Whelan, 2007

No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, microfilming, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the Publisher, with the exception of any material supplied specifically for the purpose of being entered and executed on a computer system, for exclusive use by the purchaser of the work.

Printed on acid-free paper

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

springer.com

Contents

Contributors	ix
Foreword	xi
Chapter 1: Quality of Life after the Boom	1
Tony Fahey, Helen Russell and Christopher T. Whelan	
<i>Best of times or worst of times?</i>	1
<i>Objectives</i>	2
<i>What can be said?</i>	3
<i>Outline of chapters</i>	6
<i>The overall picture</i>	10
Chapter 2: How Do We Feel? Economic Boom and Happiness	11
Tony Fahey	
<i>Happiness: issues and trends</i>	12
<i>Economic growth and happiness</i>	13
<i>What about mental disorders?</i>	20
<i>National morale</i>	23
<i>Conclusion</i>	24
Chapter 3: Economic Growth and Income Inequality:	
Setting the Context	27
Brian Nolan and Bertrand Maître	
<i>Introduction</i>	27
<i>Growth and average living standards</i>	27
<i>Trends in income inequality during the economic boom</i>	29
<i>Top incomes in Ireland during the boom</i>	33
<i>Income inequality in Ireland in comparative perspective</i>	35
<i>Widening gaps during the boom?</i>	38
<i>Conclusions</i>	40

Chapter 4: Employment and the Quality of Work	43
Philip J. O’Connell and Helen Russell	
<i>Introduction</i>	43
<i>Principal trends in the labour market</i>	44
<i>The quality of employment in Ireland – the best of times?</i>	54
<i>Conclusions</i>	64
Chapter 5: Opportunities for All in the New Ireland?	67
Christopher T. Whelan and Richard Layte	
<i>Introduction</i>	67
<i>The boom, inequality and meritocracy</i>	68
<i>Marginalised groups, social classes and equality of opportunity</i>	70
<i>The changing pattern of social classes in Ireland</i>	72
<i>Is increasing mobility accompanied by increasing equality of opportunity?</i>	77
<i>Explaining inequality of opportunity</i>	80
<i>Increasing equality of opportunity?</i>	82
<i>Conclusions</i>	84
Chapter 6: Consistent Poverty and Economic Vulnerability	87
Christopher T. Whelan, Brian Nolan and Bertrand Maître	
<i>Introduction</i>	87
<i>Incorporating measures of lifestyle deprivation</i>	89
<i>Reconfiguring the measurement of consistent poverty</i>	90
<i>Economic vulnerability</i>	94
<i>Income poverty, material deprivation and economic pressures profile by economic vulnerability and consistent poverty</i>	97
<i>Socio-economic status by economic vulnerability and consistent poverty</i>	101
<i>Conclusions</i>	102
Chapter 7: Health and Health Care	105
Richard Layte, Anne Nolan and Brian Nolan	
<i>Introduction</i>	105
<i>Are the Irish becoming healthier as well as wealthier?</i>	105
<i>Social class differentials in death rates</i>	110
<i>Improving health?</i>	110
<i>Changing health care in Ireland</i>	113
<i>Issues of concern</i>	118
<i>Summary</i>	122

Chapter 8: The Housing Boom	123
Tony Fahey and David Duffy	
<i>Introduction</i>	123
<i>Prices and output</i>	124
<i>Why the boom?</i>	127
<i>Effects on affordability and household formation</i>	130
<i>Location of housing</i>	135
<i>Housing inequalities</i>	135
<i>Conclusion</i>	138
Chapter 9: Changing Times, Changing Schools?	
Quality of Life for Students	139
Emer Smyth, Selina McCoy, Merike Darmody and Allison Dunne	
<i>Introduction</i>	139
<i>Changing times?</i>	142
<i>School and part-time employment</i>	143
<i>Changing schools? Recent changes in the Irish educational system</i>	145
<i>Power relations within Irish schools: change or continuity?</i>	150
<i>Conclusions</i>	153
Chapter 10: Family and Sexuality	155
Tony Fahey and Richard Layte	
<i>Introduction</i>	155
<i>A new consensus?</i>	157
<i>Changing sexual attitudes and behaviour</i>	160
<i>Stabilisation in birth rates</i>	162
<i>Non-marital births</i>	165
<i>Recovery in marriage rates</i>	166
<i>Marital breakdown</i>	169
<i>Conclusion</i>	172
Chapter 11: Ties that Bind? The Social Fabric of Daily Life in New Suburbs	175
Mary P. Corcoran, Jane Gray and Michel Peillon	
<i>Introduction</i>	175
<i>Neighbourhood, markers of identity and quality of life</i>	180
<i>Family-friendly communities?</i>	185
<i>Social participation</i>	191
<i>Conclusion</i>	196

Chapter 12: Gender, Work–Life Balance and Quality of Life	199
Frances McGinnity, Helen Russell and Emer Smyth	
<i>Introduction</i>	199
<i>Trends in labour market behaviour among women and men</i>	200
<i>Gender differences in paid work, unpaid work, caring and leisure</i>	205
<i>Quality-of-life outcomes and work–life tensions</i>	208
<i>Conclusions</i>	214
Chapter 13: The Impact of Immigration	217
Gerard Hughes, Frances McGinnity, Philip O’Connell and Emma Quinn	
<i>Introduction</i>	217
<i>Recent migration experience</i>	218
<i>The impact of immigration on the economy and society</i>	226
<i>The experience of migrants: racism and discrimination</i>	235
<i>Racism: Irish policy responses and the extent of racism in Ireland</i>	239
<i>Conclusion</i>	241
Chapter 14: Crime and its Consequences	245
Ian O’Donnell	
<i>Introduction</i>	245
<i>Trends in recorded crime</i>	247
<i>Lethal harm</i>	251
<i>Victimisation</i>	256
<i>Has the public reaction to crime changed?</i>	257
<i>Concluding comment</i>	262
Chapter 15: Soaring in the Best of Times?	265
Robert Erikson	
<i>Evaluating societal change</i>	265
<i>Quality of life: what dimensions are important?</i>	266
<i>Subjective well-being and expectations</i>	267
<i>A concentration on bad conditions</i>	268
<i>Ireland after the Celtic Tiger – the quality-of-life balance sheet</i>	268
<i>The best of times? An outsider’s view</i>	274
References	277
Index	297

Contributors

Mary P. Corcoran is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, National University of Ireland at Maynooth

Merike Darmody is Research Analyst at the Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin

David Duffy is Research Officer at the Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin

Allison Dunne, until recently a research assistant at the Economic and Social Research Institute, is a PhD student in the European University Institute, Florence

Robert Erikson is Professor at the Swedish Institute for Social Research and a member of the Council of the Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin

Tony Fahey, until recently a Research Professor at the Economic and Social Research Institute, is Professor of Social Policy at University College, Dublin

Jane Gray is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, National University of Ireland at Maynooth

Gerard Hughes is Research Professor (retired) at the Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin

Richard Layte is Research Professor at the Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin

Selina McCoy is Research Officer (Higher) at the Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin

Frances McGinnity is Research Officer at the Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin

Bertrand Maître is Research Officer at the Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin

Anne Nolan is Research Officer at the Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin

Brian Nolan, until recently a Research Professor at the Economic and Social Research Institute, is Professor of Public Policy at University College, Dublin

Philip J. O'Connell is Research Professor at the Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin

Ian O'Donnell is Director of the Institute of Criminology at University College, Dublin

Michel Peillon is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology, National University of Ireland at Maynooth

Emma Quinn is Research Analyst at the Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin

Helen Russell is Senior Research Officer at the Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin

Emer Smyth is Senior Research Officer at the Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin

Christopher T. Whelan is Research Professor at the Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin

Foreword

*Frances Ruane, Director,
Economic and Social Research Institute*

Irish and international scholars continue to be curious about Ireland's exceptional economic success since the early 1990s. While growth rates peaked at the turn of the millennium, they have since continued at levels that are high by any current international or historical Irish measures. Despite differences of view among Irish economists and policymakers on the relative importance of the factors that have driven growth, there is widespread agreement that the process of globalisation has contributed to Ireland's economic development. In this context, it is helpful to recognise that globalisation has created huge changes in most developed and developing countries and has been associated, *inter alia*, with reductions in global income disparity but increased income disparity within individual countries.

This book reflects on how, from a social perspective, Ireland has prospered over the past decade. In that period we have effectively moved from being a semi-developed to being a developed economy. While the book's main focus is on the social changes induced by economic growth, there is also recognition that social change has facilitated economic growth. Although many would regard the past decade as a period when economic and social elements have combined in a virtuous cycle, there is a lingering question as to the extent to which we have better lives now that we are economically "better off". In the context of economic change, there are always winners and losers, which gives rise to the issue of how we determine whether and to what extent we are better off as a society. Those who see the glass as being half-full point to increased employment opportunities, better housing, greater participation in education, reduced poverty and long-term unemployment, etc. Those who focus on the half-empty glass point to greater inequality at the top end of the wealth spectrum, greater commuting times, greater stress, longer waiting lists for health care, some increase in crime, etc.

However the glass is viewed, all agree that the change has generated new opportunities and created great challenges. If we are to realise the opportunities and face up to the challenges, we need to understand and appreciate the combined economic, social and environmental implications of the change. In effect, we need to understand in a more analytical way the issues which have been raised in the media by many commentators, perhaps most effectively by David McWilliams. Only with this type of analysis, can we be sure that our policy responses are strategic and evidence-based rather than reactive and anecdotally driven. We need to get a handle on the heterogeneity of people's experiences in the context of this massive social and economic change.

The chapters in this volume cover all of the main issues one would expect to see in a collection looking at the social changes induced by rapid economic growth. This coverage includes employment, health, education, housing, income inequality, immigration, social cohesion, work–life balance and quality of life. The chapters review the current state of knowledge and understanding about this social change, drawing on a range of recent research and data sources, most particularly within the ESRI and the CSO. In addition, the final chapter by the distinguished Swedish sociologist, Professor Robert Erikson, reflects on the overall picture created by the book and on the extent to which it meets its own objectives.

In essence, therefore, this volume brings together what we know from research about how Irish society has changed as it has become more prosperous. And while we know a lot, it is clear that there is more to be known. Some steps are already in place to begin to fill in some of the current gaps in our knowledge. For example, Ireland is finally about to undertake its first longitudinal study of children – this will inform us about what determines the outcomes for our children as they grow up in a very different context to that experienced by their parents and by the nation's policymakers. Steps are in motion to develop longitudinal studies of older people, which will help inform us about the health and care needs of a more numerous older population. It may also be timely to contemplate a longitudinal study of migrants so that we are better placed to evolve policy and avoid the huge social problems being encountered by some of our EU neighbours. And to understand life–work balance, should we now invest in collecting time-use data, which is key to understanding how economic and social factors operate at the household level? In a knowledge-driven society, it seems imprudent to under-invest in programmes whose objective is to gain a better understanding of ourselves, so that our policy interventions serve us well. For this understanding, we need more data to be collected and more research to be undertaken.

The breadth of this book reflects the very broad scholarship of researchers at the ESRI across a range of key social issues. It is enhanced by the addition of the aforementioned chapter by Robert Erikson, as well as by the chapter by Mary Corcoran, Jane Gray and Michel Peillon at NUIM on the quality of life in the new suburbs surrounding Dublin, and Ian O'Donnell of UCD on how crime and social cohesion have been impacted by growth. To these authors and to my colleagues at the ESRI, we are indebted for a collection of scholarly articles on how our society has changed in the face of rapid growth.